

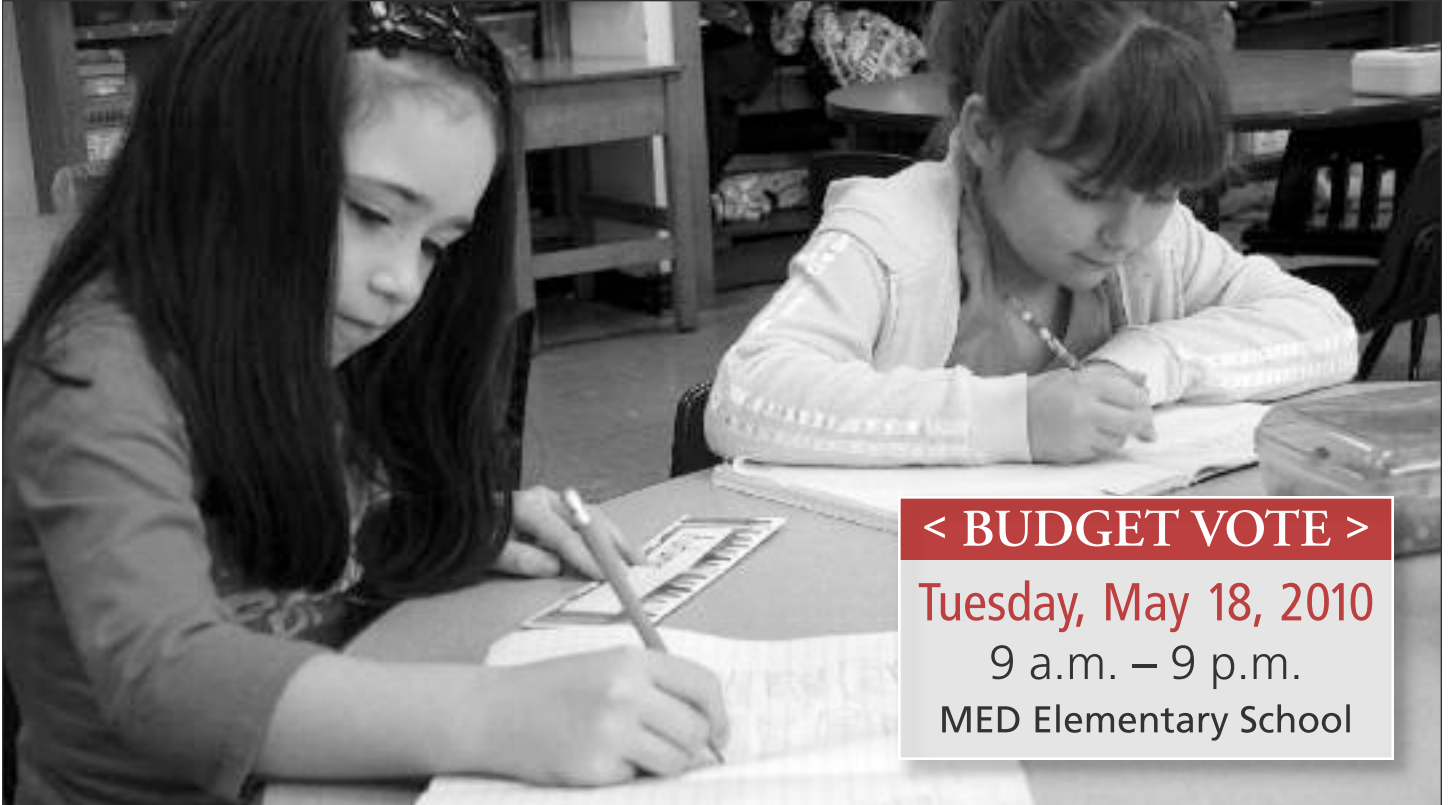


# Chatham Connections

SPECIAL BUDGET ISSUE

SPRING 2010

A NEWSLETTER FOR CHATHAM STUDENTS, PARENTS & COMMUNITY



< BUDGET VOTE >

Tuesday, May 18, 2010

9 a.m. – 9 p.m.

MED Elementary School

## EDUCATING MORE EFFICIENTLY

# Preserving Program in Tough Economic Times

On May 18th, Chatham Central School District voters will go to the polls to decide on a \$26,614,687 budget for the 2010-2011 school year. The proposed budget reduces spending by \$194,279, a 0.72 percent decrease from the current budget. Despite these cuts, this budget projects a tax levy increase of 2.54 percent, largely due to a \$617,027 cut in state aid for the district, as proposed by Governor Paterson's executive state budget.

Voting will take place from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the Mary E. Dardess Elementary School Gymnasium. Residents will also elect two school board members to fill two open seats on the Board of Education.

The 2010-2011 budget preserves Chatham's core educational program while keeping a focus on the long term

financial health of the district. Sensitive to taxpayers and the current economic climate, school officials cut spending in a number of areas and instituted changes to operate more efficiently. Spending cuts were spread out over nearly all areas to minimize the impact on any one program.

"Not only does this budget allow us to continue to provide an excellent education for our students, it is mindful of our taxpayers and keeps the tax increase low," said Superintendent of Schools Cheryl Nuciforo.

Staffing was adjusted to better reflect Chatham's enrollment, with the elimination of 11 instructional positions. Any staff reductions will be carried out through attrition whenever possible. Changes to instruction are expected to be minimal, given Chatham's steadily declining enrollment.

Last fall the district implemented a cost saving one-bell transportation system. In order to support the one-bell system, and to keep our fleet in a safe, reliable operating condition, \$314,121 is included in the budget for the purchase of one 65 passenger bus, two medium buses with wheelchair lifts, and two 7 passenger suburban buses.

Information on the 2010-2011 budget and educational plan is posted on the district website at [www.chathamcentralschools.com](http://www.chathamcentralschools.com). A Public Hearing on the budget was held May 11, at 6:30 p.m. in the HS Library.

"These difficult economic times are not going away tomorrow," continued Nuciforo. "This is a responsible budget that places the Chatham Central School District in the best possible position to weather the economic storm, both for next year, and for the years that follow."

# HOW IS THE DISTRICT REDUCING COSTS?

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*Chatham CSD is continually looking for ways to operate more efficiently and reduce costs. Examples of cost-cutting measures include:*

## **Personnel**

Based on program needs and enrollment, 11 teaching positions were eliminated or reduced. The District also cut two teaching assistants and one teacher aide.

This year begins an administrative restructuring that will result in the elimination of one administrative position by July 2011. An assistant principal will be hired, and will be assigned next year to the high school and then later shared with the middle school, as retirements occur in those buildings.

Scheduling of maintenance staff will be reorganized to reduce the need for substitutes and overtime.

Certain clerical positions will be reduced from 12 month to 11.5 month positions to adjust staffing levels during times when the students are not in attendance.

Where they would result in a budgetary savings, one-time state and local retirement incentives were offered to eligible staff.

## **Energy**

The District is working on long and short term actions to reduce energy consumption and costs. They include:

- Applying for and receiving a grant to install solar panels on the roof of the MED building. These panels will provide electricity for the building and lower energy costs.
- Purchasing software that automatically shuts off computers at the end of the day.
- Using the recently passed capital project to increase energy efficiency, such as by replacing large and inefficient light fixtures in cafeterias and gymnasiums.

## **Supplies and Equipment**

Copy machines will be consolidated to a central location. As a result, the District will spend less on photocopier leases.

General supply and equipment budgets have been reduced.

# HOW WAS THE BUDGET DEVELOPED?

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**O**n January 19, Governor David Paterson released his executive budget for the State of New York, which included a \$617,027 reduction in state aid for Chatham schools. In late January, school officials began to develop revenue projections and analyze the impact of these cuts. This process was guided by a commitment to preserve Chatham's core educational program, adjust staffing to reflect enrollment, remain sensitive to the current economic climate, and provide for the long-term financial well-being of the district.

Officials began by reducing operational expenditures and seeking means to centralize services and operate more efficiently. Spending on materials and supplies was reduced by 5%, equipment expenditures by 19%, and professional development by 10%. Overtime, summer help, and substitute procedures were examined and adjusted. Utilities were reviewed and proposed expenditures revised.

Staffing levels were adjusted to reflect program needs and declining enrollment, resulting in the elimination or reduction of eleven teaching positions, 2 teaching assistants, and one teacher aide. A two-year plan to restructure and reduce admin-

istrative costs was developed and implemented. Non-instructional staffing was also adjusted based on need, including a change to the scheduling of custodial staff, and a reduction in the work year of some clerical positions.

With the actual amount of state aid available to schools still unknown, officials projected revenues conservatively. If lawmakers choose to restore any funding, it could positively impact the final tax rate.

Beginning on March 9, draft budgets were presented at each of the regularly scheduled Board of Education meetings. Additional budget presentations were scheduled in each of the District's townships and for community groups that requested them. Copies of presentations and other budget information were posted on the district website. Residents were encouraged to participate, ask questions and make comments at meetings and through the website.

A final budget was adopted by the Board on April 20 that reduced spending by \$194,279 (0.72%) from 2009-2010. A 2.54 percent tax levy increase is projected.

A Public Hearing on the adopted budget was held May 11 at 6:30 p.m. in the Chatham High School Library.

# WHAT HAPPENS IF THE BUDGET IS DEFEATED?

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**I**f voters do not approve the budget on May 18, the district has three options: put the same budget up for a second vote, put a revised budget up for vote, or adopt a contingency budget.

If the budget is defeated twice, the board is required by law to adopt a contingency budget, which caps spending based on a state formula and restricts how schools operate.

A contingency budget limits spending for equipment, supplies, furniture, and new capital projects. However, all state

mandated programs, whether funded by state aid or not, would be retained.

These regulations mean that in a contingent budget the Board would have to cut \$882,271 from the proposed budget to lower the contingency budget to \$25,732,416. This would include the elimination of any projected purchases of new equipment. It is also possible that staffing positions and certain non-mandated and enhanced programs could be lost.

# WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF PROPOSED STAFFING CHANGES?

Based on program needs and declining enrollment, Chatham Central Schools is eliminating or reducing a number of positions in the 2010-2011 budget. The total student enrollment is 170 students fewer than it was five years ago, and this year those smaller numbers will reach seventh grade.

Due to the lower enrollment, the split 7/8 team at Chatham Middle School will be eliminated, resulting in a cut of one position each in math, science, English Language Arts, and social studies. Average class sizes will increase, but all will remain within acceptable limits, with grade 7 averaging 22 students, and the average size of Grade 8 at 23 students. The only potential impact on program as a result of this change is the potential elimination of separate reading classes for eighth graders.

Two special education positions will also be eliminated. As a result, the Academic Support configuration at MED will change, with special education teachers focusing only on delivering special education services. Academic Intervention (AIS) in reading will be delivered by a certified reading teacher, and Math AIS

will be integrated into the computer lab schedule. Enrichment will be provided through classroom differentiation, and time reserved in the schedules of special area teachers.

District-wide, one physical education position will be eliminated, and art and music will each be reduced by a half of a position. This addresses a reduced need for special area classes based on the reduction of classroom sections. Even with this reduction, the special area class cycle will be increased from a six to a five day rotation at MED, giving students more frequent class time. One foreign language position will also be eliminated based on reduced demand.

One counseling position, which supports prevention and Character Education at MED, will be eliminated. These programs will now be delivered by other staff, including teachers, counselors, and teaching assistants.

Two teaching assistant positions will also be eliminated, as well as one teacher aide. The assignments of existing personnel will be adjusted to absorb those responsibilities.

## WHAT WILL I BE VOTING ON MAY 18?

### A \$26,614,687 budget for the 2010-2011 school year.

- This budget is \$194,279 less (0.72 percent) than the 2009-2010 budget.
- This budget has a projected 2.54% percent tax levy increase.

### Selection of two candidates for the Board of Education, who will appear on the ballot in the following order:

- MELONY SPOCK
- GAIL BEHRENS DAY



Programs like Columbia Festival Orchestra's All Strings Attached give Chatham students the opportunity to perform alongside professional musicians. This program was made possible through the generosity of the CEF.

### FUNDING EXCELLENCE:

## The Chatham Education Foundation

The goal of the Chatham Education Foundation (CEF) is to support programs that enrich and supplement learning within the Chatham Central School District. Since its inception in 2002, the CEF has provided over \$100,000 to help fund important and innovative projects that have impacted Chatham students at every grade level.

The Foundation is comprised of two funds: The Arts and Humanities Fund, which is dedicated to supporting projects in the creative arts; and The Alexander M. White Fund, which supports projects across all disciplines. These funds are maintained entirely through private donations.

Through these endowments the Foundation has supported programs in all three Chatham schools, giving students the opportunity to work with professional artists, perform and have their work published, create film and media projects, learn dance, take literary classes, and participate in political science projects, just to name a few. They have enriched learning in reading, writing, science, social studies, and the arts.

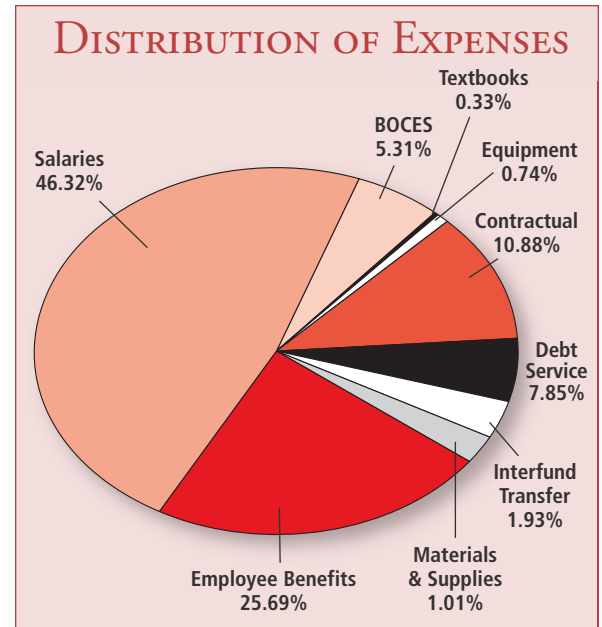
"The CEF has made a big difference for us," said Jacqueline Hoffman, a Middle School counselor who organizes the school's Service Learning Program, a program that teaches students the value of serving their community, made possible this year through a grant from the CEF. "Through their sponsorship we are able to extend opportunities to our students that we couldn't otherwise."

Seeing the impact their generosity has had on the Chatham school community, the Foundation is looking to increase their endowment. "The interest from teachers, artists, and the community has been tremendous," said Elizabeth MacFarlane, Chairwoman of the Chatham Education Foundation Board of Governors. "We are looking to raise funds so that we can provide more exciting opportunities for Chatham students."

The Foundation's endowments are provided for entirely through private donations. For more information about the Chatham Education Foundation, or to find out how you can help support their mission, contact the Office of the Chatham School Superintendent.

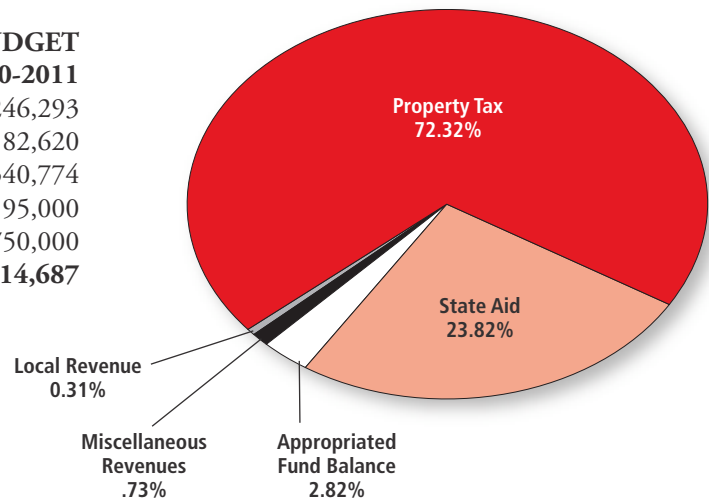
## 2010-2011 PROPOSED BUDGET

	BUDGET 2009-2010	PROPOSED 2010-2011
Instructional & Occ. Education	\$ 7,201,086	\$ 6,637,477
Special Education	2,449,851	2,448,661
Summer School	21,498	21,892
Student Services	1,382,495	1,502,914
Extracurricular	76,264	76,294
Inter-Scholastic	249,881	242,760
Community – Adult Education	25,719	26,363
Administrative/Board of Education	1,419,712	1,459,072
Supervision/Curriculum	1,127,892	1,045,829
Transportation	1,739,626	1,717,791
Operations & Maintenance	2,094,978	2,010,068
Employee Benefits	6,295,598	6,822,152
Debt Service	1,846,435	2,089,740
Interfund Transfers	877,931	513,676
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 26,808,966</b>	<b>\$ 26,614,687</b>



## ESTIMATED REVENUES

	BUDGET 2009-2010	BUDGET 2010-2011
Property Tax	\$ 18,769,724	\$ 19,246,293
Local Revenue	82,620	82,620
State Aid	6,799,563	6,340,774
Miscellaneous	300,000	195,000
Appropriated Fund Balance	857,059	750,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 26,808,966</b>	<b>\$ 26,614,687</b>



## PROPERTY TAX REPORT CARD

<b>Total Proposed Budget</b>	2009-2010	2010-2011	Percent Change
	\$26,808,966	\$26,614,687	-0.72%
<b>Total Estimated Tax Levy</b>	2009-2010	2010-2011	Percent Change
	\$18,769,724	\$19,246,293	2.54%
<b>Public School Enrollment</b>	2009-2010	2010-2011	Percent Change
	1,255	1,217	-3.03%
<b>Consumer Price Index</b>			Percent Change
			-0.4%



# 2010 Board of Education Candidates

*This year there are two candidates running for two open seats on the Board of Education. Each seat is for a three-year term. The candidate who receives the most votes will also fill the remainder of the unexpired term caused by the resignation of Jeannean Cheney. That term runs from May 18 through June 30, 2010.*



## **Melony Spock**

I want to continue to serve as a Chatham Board of Education member so that I can have a role in maintaining and enhancing the future of the Chatham Central School District and the education of our students.

One of things I most value about Chatham is its great sense of community. I feel that my children are very fortunate to

attend school in Chatham. I love raising my children in a small town rich in traditions.

I feel that the Chatham School Board needs to focus on giving the students of Chatham the best possible education that will prepare them for the advanced technological world we live in. I am looking forward to continuing my participation on the new Board Curriculum Committee that will work towards improving the education of all Chatham students, regardless of their abilities, and preparing them for the future.

I was appointed to serve on the Chatham School Board in September of 2009. Prior to being a Board of Education member I served as the Mary E. Dardess Elementary School's PTA President for three years. I enjoyed working with families, teachers, staff and administration to help provide the children with the best possible educational experience.

To be an effective Board member you have to be a good communicator and listener, and look at the broader picture. By joining the Finance, Policy, and Library Board Committees I learned how Chatham functions. By being on the Finance committee I have learned just how tough it is to provide a good educational program while facing educational funding cuts. I am committed to working hard to learn as much as possible to make important decisions that affect Chatham Schools.

I have a vested interest in this district as both a parent and a taxpayer. I am dedicated to ensuring that the Chatham School District continues to do what is best for students, while remaining fiscally responsible to taxpayers.

*Melony lives in Chatham with her husband Jim and their three children.*



## **Gail Behrens Day**

I would like to serve on the Chatham School Board because of my attachment to and concern for our community and its schools. My three children, graduates of the Chatham schools, are now grown so I have the time to contribute to the District.

I've been involved with Chatham's schools since my first year of kindergarten, graduating in 1969. As a parent, I have chaperoned field trips, helped out at numerous track meets, and cheered for our athletic teams. I served as a parent advocate on the Committee on Special Education, also initiating a Special Education Support Group. I currently serve as Secretary on the Board of the Chatham Education Foundation, a non-profit group that funds school enrichment programs.

The most important task currently facing the Board of Education, given the on-going financial crisis, is to develop budgets that support a solid education, reward our faculty, maintain our physical plant, while keeping taxes within reason. I would hope to help preserve what I find most special about the Chatham district: its strong sense of community and the comfortable and safe atmosphere it provides for learning, as well as its strong commitment to offering a variety of disciplines that expand students' horizons and enable them to become well-rounded citizens.

A graduate of St. Lawrence University with a B.A. in Art History, I also have a Masters in Library Science from SUNY Albany. I have worked for the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, for the sculptor George Rickey's Workshop, and I assist my husband Steve with his sculpture repair service. With Steve's help I have also managed my parents' dairy farm, where I grew up.

I believe my education, my working experience both in art libraries and on the farm have provided me with organizational skills and a common sense approach that could be put to good use on the Board. I am committed to familiarizing myself with district policies, NYS Education Law, and the current issues and challenges faced by public schools.

*Gail lives in Old Chatham with her husband Steve and their three children.*

## **WHY VOTE?**

**Because you can.** In many nations of the world, and in many states of our union, citizens do not have the right to vote on the spending plans developed by their school districts.

**Because you set an example.** The students we serve notice whether or not the adults in their lives exercise their civic responsibilities. We set an example whether or not we vote.

**Because you show respect for what educators do.** Preparing students for success in life is a very difficult challenge for educators. By taking the time to vote, you acknowledge this challenge.

**Because your response is needed.** Your school board has developed a spending plan based on input from district employees and community members. These individuals have spent countless hours considering options and making spending decisions for your consideration. Please respond by voting.

**Because your community and its children depend on you.** The folk wisdom that "it takes a whole community to raise a child" fits here. You share the responsibility to see that all children are educated. While you may not be actually in the classroom, you can make your opinion known on what happens there by voting.

# UNSUNG HEROES: PTA & Booster Club Volunteers



Spirit Week at the Middle School



Panther Pride Day

**B**ook fairs, concession stands, raffles and pancake breakfasts are just a few of the ways the hard working, dedicated volunteers of our PTAs and Booster Clubs raise money to help support Chatham students. Their fundraising efforts are particularly crucial in today's economic climate, but these groups provide our schools with far more than money. They strive to help our students succeed, and recognize and honor them when they do.

Chatham has two parent-teacher organizations; the Parent Teacher Association at MED, and the Parent Teacher Student Association at the Middle School. Both groups focus on what students need to be successful in their learning, including nutrition, health, school safety, physical fitness and general well-being. PTA and PTSA volunteers help fund a variety of learning programs and organize events like health and wellness fairs, educational assemblies, and school spirit events. They encourage family participation in our schools and instill a sense of pride in our students. They help parents, school staff, and our community to work together to share ideas about programs and activities that benefit students. "PTA members are

always coming to my office and asking me what they can do to help," said MED Principal Kristen Reno. "They act as a great liaison between our school and the community."

These volunteers help in other small ways that can make a big difference to students. Often help comes in the form of covering unexpected costs. "When we learned that all the Middle School kick balls had popped, the PTSA bought new kick balls for the school," said PTSA president Karen Kellogg. "Children who enjoy being in school do better, so we help to keep things fun for them."

The Chatham Athletic Booster Club, now in its 35th year, supports and promotes Chatham's athletes and athletic programs. The club's volunteers organize and sponsor events like Homecoming, Panther Pride Day, and all of our sports awards nights. Sports letters, trophies and gym banners are all purchased by the booster club. They also offer scholarships for athletes to attend summer sports camps. "It's important that the athletes know their accomplishments are recognized," said CABC co-president Teri Howard. "We let them know their achievements are appreciated."

The PTA invites family and community members to read to students to encourage an interest in reading.



Student art on display at a local bank

The Fine Arts Booster Club is new to Chatham, being officially recognized by the Board of Education in September of 2009. Modeled after the Athletic Booster Club with an emphasis on achievement in art, music, and literature, the FABC provides opportunities for students K through 12. "We wanted to acknowledge students of the arts," said club president Teri Conte. "For the first time this year, High School seniors can letter in Art or Music, just like athletes letter in sports." The FABC also facilitates student art exhibitions, art and music awards nights, and offers scholarships to summer arts camps. The FABC plans on expanding their activities in the coming years.

Studies prove that students do better when parents are involved. Grades are higher, test scores improve, and attendance increases. If it were not for the involvement of PTA, PTSA, CABC and FABC, many of the programs and events our students look forward to and benefit from would not be possible. The Chatham Central School District would like thank these volunteers for all the hard work they do, and for the big difference they make everyday in our school community.

## ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE ON MAY 18?

To be eligible to vote on May 18 you must be...

- a citizen of the United States, 18 years of age or older,
- a resident of the Chatham Central School District for a period of 30 days or more preceding the day of the vote,
- registered to vote with either the School District or the Columbia County Board of Elections.

If you have not previously registered and you would like to vote in this election, you must register with the School District Board of Registration. The next Voter Registration Day is Wednesday, May 12 from 1:00-6:00 p.m. in the M.E.D. Elementary School Lobby.

# CHATHAM CSD BUDGET NOTICE

## ADMINISTRATORS

Cheryl Nuciforo 392-1501  
*Superintendent*  
 Diane Malecki 392-1503  
*School Business Administrator*  
 Jean Scheriff 392-2417  
*Director of Pupil Services*  
 Kristen Reno 392-2255  
*Mary E. Dardess Elementary School Principal*  
 Gordon Fitting 392-1560  
*Chatham Middle School Principal*  
 Larry Burud 392-1560  
*Chatham Middle School Assistant Principal*  
 Ronald Davis 392-4142  
*Chatham High School Co-Principal*  
 John Thorsen 392-4142  
*Chatham High School Co-Principal*

## BOARD MEMBERS *Term Expires*

John Wapner 2012  
*President*  
 Elizabeth Macfarlane 2011  
*Vice President*  
 Michael Clark 2012  
 Denise Dapice 2010  
 Fred Hutchinson 2013  
 Francis Iaconetti 2011  
 David O'Connor 2012  
 Melony Spock 2010  
 James Toteno 2011

### Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2009 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2010(+1) School Year	Contingency budget for the 2010(+1) School Year
<b>Total budgeted amount</b>	\$ 25,026,966	\$ 26,814,687	\$ 25,732,416
Increase/decrease for the 2010 (+1) school year		\$ (198,279)	\$ (1,076,550)
Percentage increase (decrease) in each proposed budget		-0.72%	-4.02%
Change in the consumer price index		3.80%	
Resulting est. property tax levy for the 2010 (+1) school year		\$ 19,246,293	\$ 18,364,022
Administrative component	\$ 2,827,147	\$ 2,346,734	\$ 2,346,734
Program component	\$ 15,149,000	\$ 19,486,884	\$ 19,486,884
Capital component	\$ 4,702,443	\$ 4,781,069	\$ 4,781,069

\* Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2010(+1) school year, should the proposed budget be defeated.<sup>1</sup>

### Basic STAR Exemption Impact

Estimated Basic STAR <sup>2</sup> Exemption Savings:	Budget Proposed for the 2010(+1) School Year
Basic STAR Tax Savings	\$ 369.11

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2010-2011 by the qualified voters of the Chatham Central School District, Columbia County, New York, will be held at the Mary E. Dardess Elementary School in said district on Tuesday, May 18th, 2010 between the hours of 9:00 am and 9:00 pm, prevailing time in the Mary E. Dardess Elementary School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting machine.

<sup>1</sup> Provide a statement of assumptions made in estimating the contingency budget pursuant to section 2025 of the Education Law.

<sup>2</sup> the basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax law.

## BUDGET DETAILS AVAILABLE ONLINE!

Information about the 2011-2011 budget is available on the Chatham Central School District webpage at:

[www.chathamcentralschools.com](http://www.chathamcentralschools.com)



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