

STILLWATER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET 2023 NEWSLETTER

Voters to decide on \$29.9 million budget for 2023-24 school year

Proposed budget maintains programming; tax levy under ‘cap’

On Tuesday, May 16, Stillwater Central School District residents will vote on a proposed \$29,988,245 budget for the 2023-24 school year. The spending plan preserves existing programs and services, includes the purchase of three new school buses, and includes funding for debt service payments, salary increases for faculty and staff, and increases in employee benefit costs. The vote will be held from 12-9 p.m. in the district auditorium.

Spending under the proposal would increase by 5.06%, or \$1,443,640, over the current-year budget. The increase in spending is being driven by increased salaries for faculty and staff; increased costs associated with health insurance and other employee benefits; and increases in utilities, diesel, gasoline and fuel oil.

“The proposed 2023-24 budget supports our vision to promote student success through continuous improvement while remaining fiscally responsible to district residents,” Superintendent Patricia Morris said. “School safety and continued enhanced opportunities for students and staff remain our top priorities.”

District officials estimate that school tax rates, which are the amount of taxes residents pay per \$1,000 of assessed

property value, will increase by approximately 1.93% for residents in the District. Final school tax rates are set in August when assessment rolls are finalized. *(See page 3 for more about the tax rates).*

If voters approve the proposed budget, the projected tax levy—the total amount of money a school district raises through property taxes—would increase by 4.48%. This increase is below Stillwater’s maximum allowable tax levy increase as determined by the state’s tax levy “cap” formula (6.12%).

On May 16, voters will elect three members to the Board of Education to serve three-year terms.

District residents will also vote on a proposed budget and trustees for the Stillwater Public Library. *(See page 5 for more information).*



**BUDGET VOTE
AT-A-GLANCE**

WHEN & WHERE:
TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2023
 12-9 P.M.
 STILLWATER AUDITORIUM

PROPOSED BUDGET
\$29,988,245

Spending Increase	Tax Levy Increase	Projected Tax Rate Increase
5.06%	4.48%	1.93%

PROJECTED TAX RATES			
	2022-23*	2023-24*	% Change
Stillwater	\$15.02	\$15.31	1.93%
Saratoga	\$14.45	\$14.73	1.93%
Easton	\$11.41	\$11.63	1.93%
Schaghticoke	\$64.30	\$65.54	1.93%

*Tax rates are only estimates and are per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Rates and % change calculations are rounded from six decimal places.

Letter to the community...

Dear Stillwater School District Residents,

Looking ahead to the next school year, our focus is set firmly on the future and our ability to maintain the strength of programs and offerings to support our children's growth and development. We are presenting a proposed budget that will allow us to continue the educational experience our students, families, and community have come to expect, value and appreciate.

The proposed budget for the 2023-24 school year is increasing by \$1.44 million, or 5.06%, maintaining all instructional programs and student opportunities. The proposed budget also reflects a significant increase in health insurance costs, employee retirement costs and utility costs, and salary increases that were negotiated through collective bargaining agreements.

We remain resolute in our commitment to deliver the finest education that our community has come to expect as we work collectively to see our students realize their fullest potential. We thank our community for their ongoing support. It remains an honor to serve on the Board of Education with a group of devoted trustees who put education first and foremost.

May your families continue to stay safe and well.

— **Sincerely, Jimel Williams, Board President**

The proposed budget would continue to fund:

- ✓ Expanded Career and Technical Education, work-based learning, summer enrichment, and credit recovery opportunities.
- ✓ The elementary STEAM program.
- ✓ Preventive maintenance programs for HVAC systems, boilers and equipment.
- ✓ Rising diesel, gasoline and fuel oil costs.
- ✓ The purchase of new buses.
- ✓ The \$100,000 capital outlay project.



Helping shelter pets find homes

Students in Heidi Giebel's fourth and fifth grade art classes and Samantha Conboy's high school art classes put their artistic talents together to help find homes for pets at the Saratoga County Animal Shelter. Portraits they created from photos of dogs and cats were displayed first at their schools and then at the shelter, beautifully capturing the pets' personalities and warmth.

BUDGET



Q What's different in the proposed budget?

A The 2023-24 budget proposal increases spending by \$1,443,640, or 5.06%, over the current year. The 2023-24 spending plan includes funding for rising costs associated with salaries, employee pensions and benefits, as well as state and federal mandated programs and services. In addition, the proposed budget would fund debt service payments associated with previously completed capital projects.

TAXES

Q What is the difference between the tax levy and tax rate?

A The tax levy is the total amount of money a school district raises in taxes each year from all property owners in the district. Tax rates are calculated by dividing the total amount of the levy by the total taxable assessed value in a community. Tax rates are affected by changes in both municipal assessments and state equalization rates, which are determined during the summer after the budget is adopted. The tax rate is used to calculate each individual property tax bill.

Q How would the proposed budget affect my taxes?

A While the tax levy would increase by \$554,267 next year, total property assessments within the district are also growing, meaning there are more properties across which to distribute the tax levy. So, while the tax levy is increasing by 4.48%, the estimated tax rate increase is approximately 1.93% because there is projected to be more taxable value sharing that cost.

Actual tax rates are set in August when assessment rolls for the year are finalized.

These rates are based on final property assessments (provided by each town) and equalization rates for each town, which are provided by the state Office of Real Property Services.

REVENUES

Q What is the district's maximum allowable tax levy?

A Under New York State law, the amount that the district can increase its tax levy is limited to a certain amount based on a tax levy limit calculation. Using a formula developed by the Office of the State Comptroller, Stillwater's 2023-24 maximum allowable tax levy limit is 6.12%. However, the proposed 2023-24 budget would increase the tax levy by 4.48%, or \$554,267, which is below what the law allows.

Q How does the Global Foundries PILOT affect the district's budget?

A The Global Foundries PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) continues to provide a guaranteed source of revenue for the district. The district is planning to receive \$1,200,000 through the PILOT in 2023-24. Although this is a decrease from the current year based on the terms of the agreement, the PILOT continues to provide revenue that supports programs and services for students.

VOTING

Q Why is there a vote for the Stillwater Public Library on the ballot?

A On May 16, residents will vote on a separate proposition to approve the Stillwater Public Library budget and elect trustees. This is separate from the school district's budget. The library is seeking to increase its budget from \$320,298 to \$348,757, to support and maintain services. This money will be collected by the district and then forwarded to the library. The Stillwater Public Library has the same service boundary as the school district; however, the library is not governed by the district.

Q What happens if the budget is not approved?

A Under New York State law, if the school budget is defeated, the Board of Education typically has two options: put the same or a modified budget up for another vote on the third Tuesday in June or immediately adopt a contingent budget. If residents defeat the proposed budget during a second vote, the Board must adopt a contingent budget.

TAX RATES

Town of	2022 Rate Per \$1,000 Assessed Value	2023 Rate Per \$1,000 Assessed Value	*2024 Rate Per \$1,000 Assessed Value
Stillwater	\$14.92	\$15.02	\$15.31
Saratoga	\$14.25	\$14.45	\$14.73
Easton	\$593.90	\$11.41	\$11.63
Schaghticoke	\$59.67	\$64.30	\$65.54

* The rates projected for the next year are only estimates. The estimated tax rates do not reflect any STAR or other tax exemptions that may reduce individual tax bills. This chart reflects projected tax rates based on the anticipated growth in property assessments. Easton previously had a revaluation and went to full value assessment.

Hitting the highest note

Stillwater senior and valedictorian Nurshinta Berry was accepted into the prestigious All Eastern Chorus, a multi-state and international group of high school students who performed in Rochester, NY, in April. A chorus member since fourth grade, Nurshinta qualified for All Eastern based on her exceptional 2021-22 New York State School Music Association solo score and after working her way up through All County, Area All State, and All State.



Estimated Revenues: Where the money comes from

	2022-23	2023-24	Change
Real Property Taxes and STAR	\$12,380,282	\$12,934,549	\$554,267
Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)	\$1,355,000	\$1,200,000	-\$155,000
Interest and Penalties on Real Property Taxes	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$0
Tuition Students, Non-Resident	\$0	\$0	\$0
Admissions	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Charges for Services	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$0
Interest and Earnings	\$80,000	\$200,000	\$120,000
Medicare Retiree Drug Subsidy	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$0
Refund BOCES Services Approved	\$85,000	\$100,000	\$15,000
Miscellaneous	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0
State Aid	\$12,384,323	\$12,728,696	\$344,373
Other Federal Aid	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$0
Federal Medicaid Aid	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$0
Transfer from Debt Service	\$275,000	\$290,000	\$15,000
Revenue Subtotal	\$26,694,605	\$27,588,245	\$893,640
Fund Balance Applied	\$1,850,000	\$2,400,000	\$550,000
TOTAL Revenues	\$28,544,605	\$29,988,245	\$1,443,640

S We're proud of our student-athletes

Excellence in the athletic and academic arenas

Stillwater's athletic teams excelled in sports and the classroom, with several named NYSPHSAA Scholar-Athlete teams for earning an average of 90 or above.



Kara Moran medals at states

Stillwater senior Kara Moran placed sixth among all triple jumpers in the state, and fifth among all public school athletes and 10th overall in the long jump at the NYS Indoor Track & Field championships. Kara, pictured here with just some of her many medals, will bring her talent to the University of Buffalo's D1 program in the fall.



Basketball team has a great season

Our boys varsity basketball team had another great season, winning game after game, winning the Class CC semifinals and advancing to the Section 2 finals in early March. We're proud of their outstanding performance on the court and their sportsmanship.



Bowlers are sectional champs

Our bowling team captured the 2023 Section 2 Class C championship in February, rolling by Hoosick Falls by just 16 pins. Connor Julian earned a spot on the section's All-Star team, representing our school at the bowling states in Syracuse March 11-12.

Estimated Expenditures: Where the money goes

ADMINISTRATIVE (10.4% of total budget)	2022-23	2023-24	Change
Board of Education	\$15,277	\$15,628	\$351
Central Administration	\$259,635	\$271,100	\$11,465
Finance	\$452,889	\$490,612	\$37,723
Staff (Legal, Personnel, Public Information)	\$137,875	\$137,875	\$0
Central Data Processing	\$239,000	\$239,000	\$0
Special Items (Insurance, Dues, BOCES Admin.)	\$320,750	\$335,750	\$15,000
Curriculum Development and Supervision	\$928,648	\$978,927	\$50,279
Employee Benefits	\$611,375	\$646,375	\$35,000
Subtotal	\$2,965,449	\$3,115,267	\$149,818
PROGRAM (69.6% of total budget)	2022-23	2023-24	Change
Program Legal Fees	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$0
In-Service Training	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$0
Teaching – Regular School	\$7,430,803	\$7,561,333	\$130,530
Programs for Students with Disabilities	\$2,934,763	\$3,265,600	\$330,837
Career and Technical Education	\$490,000	\$525,000	\$35,000
Teaching – Special Schools	\$46,600	\$46,600	\$0
Instructional Media	\$794,031	\$847,022	\$52,991
Pupil Services	\$1,985,419	\$2,024,698	\$39,279
Pupil Transportation	\$1,880,945	\$1,904,550	\$23,605
Employee Benefits	\$4,194,437	\$4,491,937	\$297,500
Transfer to Federal Fund	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$0
Subtotal	\$19,961,998	\$20,871,740	\$909,742
CAPITAL (20% of total budget)	2022-23	2023-24	Change
Central Services	\$1,606,520	\$1,667,100	\$60,580
Special Items	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0
Bus Purchase	\$380,000	\$475,000	\$95,000
Employee Benefits	\$372,438	\$394,938	\$22,500
Debt Service	\$3,148,200	\$3,354,200	\$206,000
Transfer to Capital Fund	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0
Subtotal	\$5,617,158	\$6,001,238	\$384,080
TOTAL Expenditures	\$28,544,605	\$29,988,245	\$1,443,640

Who lives in a pineapple under the sea?

The Stillwater High School Drama Club presented their joyous production of "The SpongeBob Musical" March 23-25 to enthusiastic audiences in our auditorium. Bravo to all involved!



PROPOSITIONS & BOE ELECTION

Public library proposition

Community members will vote on a proposition requested by and for the Stillwater Public Library to raise \$348,757, separate and apart from the annual school district budget, to support, maintain and fund the operating budget of the library. This money will be collected by the district and then forwarded to the library. The Stillwater Public Library has the same service boundary as the school district; however, the library is not governed by the district. Voters will also elect four Library Board of Trustees members, three for at-large terms running from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2026, and one for an at-large term running from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2025.

Board election

There are three seats on the Board of Education for which terms expire June 30, 2023. Voters will elect candidates to the three "at-large" seats for three-year terms that will run from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2026. At the time this publication went to print, the final slate of candidates was not yet available.

Rewarding achievement

A day of free miniature golf and ice cream in June awaits middle school students who meet academic achievement goals. "Over my last seven years as middle school principal, we have promoted academic achievement by offering a special incentive at the end of the year," said Principal Timothy Hulihan. "There are three ways for students to qualify: earn an overall grade point average of 93+ for at least two of the first three quarters, improve their overall GPA by at least 5 points between the first and third quarter, or have zero absences during the first three quarters. The exciting news is that more than 74 students have already qualified, and every student is capable of improving their GPA in the third quarter to earn this reward!"

School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2022-23 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2023-24 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$28,544,605	\$29,988,245	\$29,298,576
Increase/Decrease for the 2023-24 School Year		\$1,443,640	\$753,971
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		5.06%	2.64%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		8.0%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$12,380,282	\$12,934,549	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$0	\$0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$0	\$0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$0	\$0	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$12,380,282	\$12,934,549	\$12,380,282
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$751,767	\$864,932	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$11,827,815	\$12,379,278	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$11,628,515	\$12,069,617	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$199,300	\$309,661	
Administrative Component	\$2,965,449	\$3,115,267	\$3,102,493
Program Component	\$19,961,998	\$20,871,740	\$20,809,845
Capital Component	\$5,617,158	\$6,001,238	\$5,386,238
<p>* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2023-24 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.</p> <p>The contingency budget for 2023-24 assumes the elimination of all equipment purchases and eliminates funding for a capital outlay project for 2023-24.</p>			
<p>** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)</p>	Description	Amount	
		\$0	
		\$0	
		\$0	

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$463
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The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2023-24 by the qualified voters of the Stillwater Central School District, Saratoga County, New York, will be held at the Stillwater Central School District Auditorium in said district on Tuesday, May 16, 2023, between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

1. The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law

Celebrating our TOP SENIORS

Class of 2023 Valedictorian Nurshinta Berry

Nurshinta Berry describes music as “a hobby that keeps me grounded,” but based on her success as a choral soloist, she’s reached the stars. Nurshinta recently qualified for All Eastern Chorus after progressing to the highest level in New York State School Music Association competition (see article on page 4).

As for Nurshinta’s future profession, Stillwater’s Class of 2023 valedictorian would like to focus on the environment. “I’m attending Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh where I’ll be an undeclared engineering major. I also plan to continue my education past a bachelor’s degree toward something that’s environmental,” she said. “I’m interested in climate change, agriculture and genetically modified organisms.”

A Stillwater student since pre-kindergarten, Nurshinta has long been active in Drama Club, most recently performing as Squidward in “The

SpongeBob Musical.” She also serves as treasurer and class representative in Student Government, treasurer of Key Club and member of the National Honor Society.

Outside of school, Nurshinta works as an afterschool program and camp counselor at the Stillwater Area Community Center, is active in Theatre Arts Programming of Stillwater (TAPS), and tutors. In her free time, she enjoys music, hanging out with her brother, Stevie, and viewing drama productions at other area schools.

Nurshinta recognized her friends at Stillwater for their guidance. “I thank my best friend Josh for just reminding me of what’s important and what’s not,” she said, “and my friends Liam and Amoun for helping me academically.” She thanked her parents and brother Stevie for their support and her teachers at Stillwater, “for being very passionate about what they do.”



When asked what she will miss most about Stillwater, Nurshinta said, “I’ll definitely miss the friends I’ve made here. I’ve been with them for what feels like forever, and knowing that they won’t be close distance-wise will be a tough adjustment for me.”

When asked what advice she’d offer fellow Stillwater students, Nurshinta said, “Don’t be scared of honoring your needs and your wants. You’re always going to do your best work when you’re happy.”

Class of 2023 Salutatorian Amoun Ghorayeb

Stillwater Class of 2023 Salutatorian Amoun Ghorayeb describes his high school years as a “most rewarding period of time,” where he’s worked hard but also made many good friends and grown as a person.

Amoun, who has attended Stillwater schools since third grade, recognized his family and Stillwater’s faculty and staff for their support. “I want to thank my entire family: my mom, dad, brother and sister,” Amoun said. “They’ve been my biggest supporters and are always there for me. I’ve also enjoyed my coaches and teachers at Stillwater.”

When asked what he will miss most about Stillwater after graduation, Amoun said, “There’s a lot. Probably the closeness of everybody. I just feel

really close to everyone, and sports have been like a family.”

Amoun has been active in the National Honor Society, participated in indoor track, outdoor track and cross country, and served as captain of the soccer team.

Outside of school, Amoun enjoys hanging out with his friends, swimming during the summer and volunteering at the food pantry.

In the fall, Amoun will attend SUNY Oneonta to major in biology and study pre-medicine. His career goal, since elementary school, is to become a general practice physician. “My mom’s in the medical field, and I like to help people,” he said.

When asked what advice he would give to fellow students, Amoun



said, “Make sure you keep up with your studies and work, but also don’t let that get in the way of enjoying high school.”

“It’s the most rewarding period of time, with the friends I’ve made,” he said. “I’ve made a lot of memories, and I’ve become a better person through high school.”

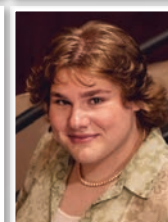
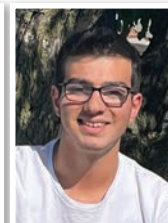
Class of 2023

TOP 10 STUDENTS

The Stillwater Central School District Class of 2023 top 10 students were named in late March.

Congratulations to

Nurshinta Berry (Valedictorian),
Amoun Ghorayeb (Salutatorian),
Kendall Clements, Isabella DeGrasse,
Liam Brady, Joshua Hoyt,
Katelyn Koval, Kara Moran,
Frank Perniciaro and Julianne Morris.



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MAY 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**School Budget Vote &
Board of Education Election:
Tuesday, May 16, 2023
12-9 p.m.
Stillwater Auditorium**

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

To vote, you must be:

- ✓ A resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote.
- ✓ 18 years of age or older.
- ✓ A citizen of the United States.
- ✓ Registered with either the school district or the county Board of Elections.

What's on the ballot?

- ✓ Proposed \$29,988,245 budget for the 2023-24 school year.
- ✓ Elect three (3) members to the Board of Education.
- ✓ Proposed \$348,757 budget for the Stillwater Public Library and election of four trustees for the library.

Absentee Ballot Information

All completed absentee ballots must be received by the district no later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 16, 2023, in order to be counted. Applications are available from the District Clerk.

Winning essays show American pride

American pride and freedoms are the focus of the Mechanicville-Stillwater Elks annual essay contest, which is open to middle school students from throughout the area. Stillwater is proud to participate, and winning the contest has become an annual tradition. This year, six of the 12 winners hail from Stillwater, including sixth graders Henry Nadler and Tayler Mondoux, seventh graders Mya Price, Joshua Donovan and Brooklynne Russo, and eighth grader Cecilia Ford. Five of these students are moving on to the district level of the competition and then hopefully to the state level. Congratulations to all!



In the photo, from left: Joshua Donovan, Henry Nadler, Tayler Mondoux, Mya Price, Cecilia Ford and Brooklynne Russo

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