

Reflections



2017 Budget Edition

Published for the residents of the Croton-Harmon School District

Illuminating the Future:

The 2017-18 budget proposal, which will go before the Croton-Harmon School District community on May 16, represents a plan that takes into account the current needs of our students and district, as well as the needs of the future. After months of discussion and analysis with all district stakeholders, as well as contending with New York State mandates, our Board of Education is proud to put forth a proposal that takes into consideration both these needs and those of our taxpayers.

FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE BUDGET PROPOSAL MOVES DISTRICT FORWARD

At its core, the Croton-Harmon School District is responsible for preparing our students for the real world. Our vision and mission call for the education of students who are able to contribute to the well-being of society and become lifelong, independent, responsible individuals. Our goal of providing Croton-Harmon students with the best education possible is balanced

by our responsibility to remain fiscally accountable to our taxpayers.

This special issue of Reflections highlights how our district's vision and mission are put into practice through learning opportunities for students at each of our schools. It also details how the proposed budget breaks down through appropriations and revenues, and offers projected tax rates.

DELIVERING A DYNAMIC EDUCATION

Our teachers, administrators and Board of Education believe in delivering a high-quality education to our students every day while keeping in mind the bigger picture: to help them build skills that foster their development as successful, confident and independent adults.

This budget proposal supports the addition of a new world language teacher at Carrie E. Tompkins Elementary School and an English as a new language teacher who will have a presence in all three schools. In addition, an elementary-level (K-6) teacher contingency would be added, along with part-time CET reading and math support teachers. At the middle/high school level, the



proposed budget supports the addition of an athletic trainer.

Additionally, this budget supports the transfer of funds to the school lunch fund for the future development of a school lunch program; first, at the high school, and later CET and PVC.

Our district continues to move forward as our five-year educational plan is fleshed out by our Strategic Coherence Planning Committee. The infrastructure of our schools and district will also continue to see improvements as part



continued on page 2...

VOTE: May 16 • Croton-Harmon High School • Gymnasium • 6 a.m. – 9 p.m.

For more information about the budget, please refer to the district website at www.chufsd.org.

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of the approved capital projects, which are funded independently of this budget proposition.

CONSIDERING FISCAL OBLIGATIONS

In developing the 2017-18 budget proposal, our district contended with financial restrictions such as monies owed from New York State.

These include nearly \$16 million in Foundation Aid and payments from prior year claims totaling more than \$1 million, as well as the tax levy cap.

Increases to the district's debt service, health insurance, contractual obligations, contributions to the Employees' Retirement System and a transfer to the school lunch fund are also noted in the proposal.

Despite these limitations, this budget falls within the tax levy cap for the Croton-Harmon School District. The \$46,499,826 proposal represents a budget-to-budget increase of \$593,851, or 1.29 percent, over the current year's adopted figure. The proposed levy carries a marginal increase of 0.86 percent, compared to the current year. This falls well below the maximum tax levy cap calculation for our district of 1.89 percent, or \$728,359. It is anticipated that the proposed budget will yield a tax rate decrease of -2.43 percent for Town of Yorktown residents and a 0.94 percent increase for Town of Cortlandt residents.

Thank you to our supportive community for your active involvement in our budget process. It is only due to an invested community that the opportunities for our students continue to be unique and dynamic.

Please read this issue of Reflections and visit our website, www.chufsd.org, for more information about the budget proposition. You are also invited to call the superintendent's office at 914-271-4793 with any questions or feedback. The public budget hearing will be held in the Croton-Harmon High School Community Room on Thursday, May 4 at 7:30 p.m. All are welcome to attend. Please remember to vote on Tuesday, May 16.

Sincerely,

Iris Bugliosi, Board of Education President
Dr. Edward R. Fuhrman, Jr., Superintendent



WHAT A CROTO

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE

The Croton-Harmon School District is dedicated to providing an education to our students that will allow them to develop the habits of mind and social skills to become lifelong learners, able to contribute to the well-being of society. This is achieved through an assessment of the opportunities offered at each school across a wide spectrum of disciplines. By providing students with real world learning opportunities, they are set up for success in environments of higher education, employment and our society at large.

DYNAMIC LEARNING AT CET

Students at Carrie E. Tompkins Elementary School are enjoying a number of exciting initiatives this school year. Fourth-graders are continuing their French language pilot, while the World Language Committee made a recommendation to offer Spanish to all students. This budget proposes the addition of a full-time world language teacher.

New technology continues to enhance student learning. This year, additional Chromebooks were purchased for fourth-graders so each class now has 20 laptops. This has enabled teachers and students to utilize Google Classroom, a program that supports peer collaboration and feedback. First-graders now have access to an additional 15 iPads that can be loaned out gradewide.

Teachers also continue to expand their use of web-based subscriptions such as Lexia, IXL, RAZ Kids, Headsprout, Brain Pop and Pebble Go, among others. Another program, learning.com, teaches students digital skills and about digital citizenship. CET's library program now includes coding and engineering opportunities for all students with Ozobots and STEAM challenges which are changed every two weeks.

The school continues to implement the Science 21 curriculum, which is aligned with the new state science learning standards. Kindergartners are studying this new curriculum this year, which includes an engineering component in each unit.

Students continue to have the opportunity to participate in our popular music programs – the strings program is offered to first- through fourth-grade students without interruption to their academic day, while fourth-graders may take part in the band or chorus programs.

INNOVATION HEADLINES AT PVC

One highlight at Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School this year is the addition of an engineering space. The Innovation and Design Lab (INDE Lab) has increased opportunities for students to practice critical and creative thinking skills to solve problems.

Eighth-graders chose between two high school science Regents courses this year: Earth Science and Living Environment. Next year, eighth grade students will also be able to choose Science and Engineering, a course that will challenge them to build a better future through hands-on experiences in the INDE Lab.

A major focus at PVC is meeting the social and emotional needs of all students. An advisory program that pairs students in small groups with a school staff member holds bi-weekly meetings and emphasizes skills such as developing friendships, building confidence and taking responsibility. Students also receive instruction in developing leadership skills to live and work as upstanders with the two school counselors. This is part of PVC's Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.

PVC students choose one of three languages (French, Spanish or

CROTON-HARMON EDUCATION DELIVERS...

Mandarin) to study during middle school. Students learn to speak, read, and write in these languages. During the February break, 18 eighth-grade students studying French traveled to Quebec City, where they had an opportunity to practice the French language and experience the culture.

Teachers work with students to individualize curriculum and instruction based on their needs. With “Math at Your Own Depth,” students are individually assessed and move forward through the curriculum as they demonstrate a level of proficiency in each concept and show the deep development of mathematical thinking.

Students receive instruction in mindfulness education as part of health, physical education and media communication courses. Through mindfulness, students learn strategies to focus and to relieve stress. Being more mindful helps them develop an awareness of their own learning needs and strategies for living a happy, stress-free life.

Students in grades 6-8 are enrolled in Media Communications, a unique class to PVC in which students create public service announcements and gain an understanding of safe internet procedures while learning effective practices for communicating. This course has become extremely important as our world is ever more challenging due to technology.

DIVERSE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AT CHHS

The small, personal atmosphere of Croton-Harmon High School provides a learning environment in which there is continuous attention given to individual student needs. The faculty develops curriculum and approaches instruction to ensure that every graduate is an effective communicator, researcher and problem-solver.

Students at CHHS have access to a wide variety of courses, including 19 Advanced Placement classes. In the 2015-16 school year, CHHS average AP test scores exceeded the global average in every single course offered.

In 2017-18, an honors option is being added in the grade 9 Global History course. The high school offers three world languages: French, Spanish and Mandarin. Additionally, there are opportunities for students to participate in cultural exchanges and experiences for each of the three languages taught.

In the fall of 2016, the high school opened up a state-of-the-art video production studio. Students are creating news broadcasts and school service announcements that are broadcast to each classroom.

This past year, a new science elective course, Foundations of Engineering, was offered for the first time. The course exposes students to various areas of engineering to help those planning to pursue an applied math or science major to become more knowledgeable about the different careers open to them.

The budget also provides funding to survey CHHS graduates so that they can provide the district feedback about their preparation for college and the school in general.

In 2017-18, the high school will continue to “modernize” the library to provide collaboration spaces for students and faculty and update the technology in the computer lab. Much of this work is being accomplished through a grant from the Croton-Harmon Education Foundation.

ATHLETES STAND OUT

The Croton-Harmon Tigers continue to make the district proud. The

fall season was highlighted with the varsity girls soccer team winning a league title and the field hockey team winning the league title and reaching the Section 1 Class C final. In the fall, 28 athletes were named All-League and three athletes were named All-Section. In addition, eight teams earned the New York State Public High School Athletic Association scholar athlete team award.

The winter season was highlighted by the wrestling team’s league title and 16 student-athletes being named All-League and one earning All-Section status. A track athlete also won the Section 1 pole vault title and a wrestler won a section title. These two athletes earned a trip to their respective state competitions. Four teams earned the NYSPHSAA scholar athlete team award. The boys and girls basketball programs hosted the third annual Hoops for Heroes event, which raised \$7,600 for the Barry Fixler Foundation and the Hope for Warriors.

TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES

Students and teachers in all buildings continue to grow and learn as they embrace the ongoing developments in G-Suite (formerly known as Google apps for Education). This year, both the middle and high school math departments have embraced G-Suite and the district is supporting them with Chromebook carts for student use. At CET, fourth graders created anti-bullying videos in Powtoons using their Chromebooks and wrote movies on colonial themes using the WeVideo app.

Only in its first year, the INDE Lab at PVC is already booked solid by both teachers and students. This new design lab is enabling teachers to collaborate on STEM curriculum and allowing students to use creative and critical thinking for problem solving.

Moving forward, the district is awaiting approval from the state to use its Smart Schools Bond funds to create active learning spaces in the high school library computer lab. Working with the facilities department, the current space would be redesigned to allow for a flexible environment supporting small group and whole group work. The space will be furnished with mobile furniture and devices to allow students to collaborate in a wide range of work environments. The space is designed to support fluid transitions among multiple teaching modes and inspire students to take ownership of their learning.

At the district level, the new district app was launched this year. You can download it from both Google Play and the iTunes app store.

PUPIL PERSONNEL COLLABORATION

This year, the Pupil Personnel Services department is placing an emphasis on professional development, K-12. Teachers are building their skills by developing co-teaching models for the classrooms. Teachers from each building participated in workshops and hands-on coaching provided by G&R Consultants.

Dr. Devin Thornburg continued to work with staff to increase cultural sensitivity and to better understand micro-aggressions.

PVC and CHHS staff also participated in a three-hour workshop with Dr. Marc Brackett, a well-known researcher on an international level whose work focuses on the role of emotional intelligence in learning.

Additionally, building level supports as part of the Response to Intervention plan have been increased this year, which has resulted in more students being provided with academic and social/emotional support as needed.

PROPOSITION #3

TRANSPORTATION PURCHASES

The Croton-Harmon School District will have a proposition for the purchase of vehicles for the Departments of Transportation and Operations & Maintenance in an amount not to exceed \$290,000 which will be funded using Bond Anticipation Notes over a five (5) year period. The Directors of Transportation and Operations & Maintenance each maintain replacement schedules for all district vehicles and heavy equipment.

Replacement schedules are vital to ensure that the district maintains the proper number of vehicles necessary to cover bus runs when buses are taken off the road for mandatory inspections by the Department of Transportation. Replacement schedules are also important so that the district does not find itself needing to purchase extra vehicles or equipment in any one year which would spike expenditures. The three (3) transportation vehicles being replaced are as follows:

- Bus # 96 – 2002 Thomas 75 passenger bus – 90,741 miles
- Van #108 – 2002 GMC 28 passenger van - 112,229 miles
- Van #109 – 2002 GMC 28 passenger van – 95,280 miles



The district proposes purchasing the following vehicles:

- Two (2) 30 passenger mini-vans
- One (1) 66 passenger bus
- One (1) maintenance vehicle

Due to the ages of the buses and the conditions of the bodies, the buses being replaced will no longer be viable transportation for our students. The plan is to replace older buses with buses that have cleaner, more efficient emission systems which are healthier for our students, staff and the environment. Several of the buses are not equipped with diesel particulate filters as these were not required at the time of their purchase.

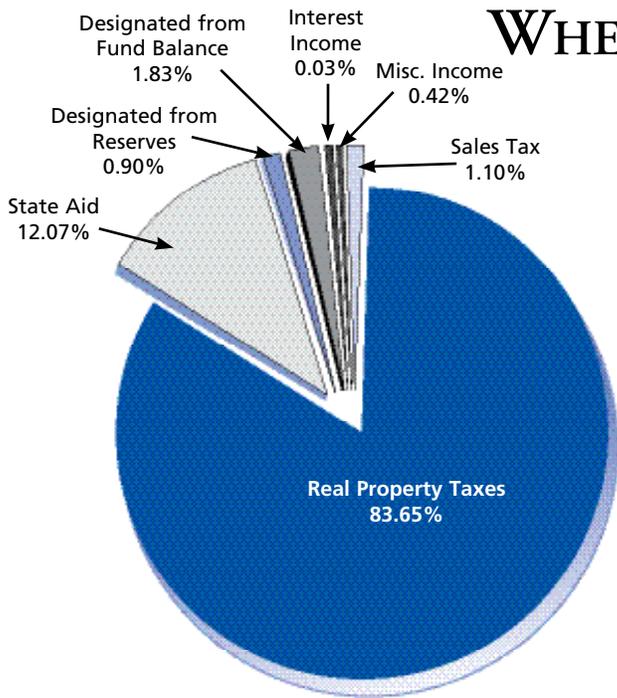
Proposed 2017/18 Budget Expenditures by Category

	Approved 2016/17	Proposed 2017/18	Change	% of Budget
Instructional Salaries	\$17,598,481	\$18,239,925	\$641,444	39.2%
Non-Instructional Salaries	6,271,891	6,327,388	55,497	13.6%
Fringe Benefits	9,397,351	9,074,343	(323,008)	19.5%
Total	\$33,267,723	\$33,641,656	\$373,933	72.3%
Special Ed (salaries/benefits not included)	1,013,284	1,242,149	228,865	2.7%
BOCES – Special Ed	998,807	952,984	(45,823)	2.1%
BOCES – All Other Services	1,485,311	1,459,196	(26,115)	3.1%
Total	\$3,497,402	\$3,654,329	\$156,927	7.9%
Textbooks (does not include Special Ed)	94,497	109,610	15,113	0.2%
Supplies	1,056,254	1,049,972	(6,282)	2.3%
Durable Materials	228,002	323,782	95,780	0.7%
Equipment	104,000	106,000	2,000	0.2%
Total	\$1,482,753	\$1,589,364	\$106,611	3.4%
Other Contractual Services	3,877,794	3,831,679	(46,115)	8.2%
Debt Service	3,572,303	3,612,798	40,495	7.8%
Interfund Transfers	208,000	170,000	(38,000)	0.4%
Total	\$7,658,097	\$7,614,477	(\$43,620)	16.4%
TOTAL BUDGET	\$45,905,975	\$46,499,826	\$593,851	100.0%

Budget 2017-2018 Appropriations & Revenues

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM...

Revenues



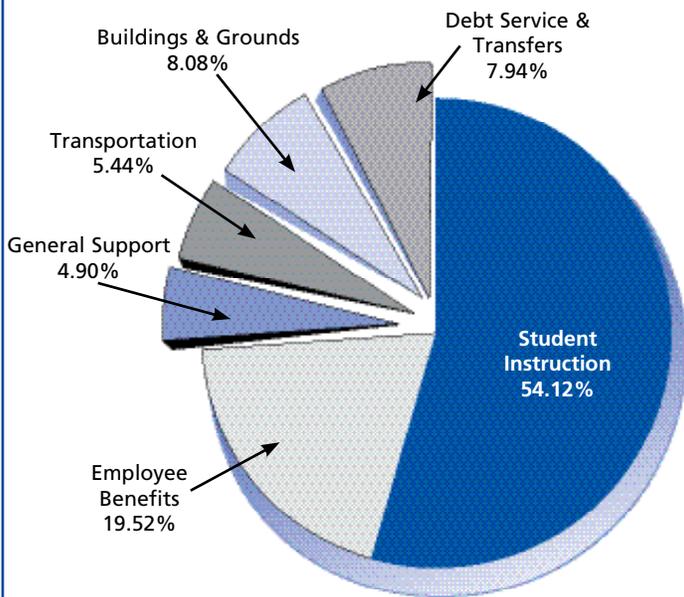
Real Property Taxes	\$38,898,465	83.65%
State Aid	5,613,861	12.07%
Misc. Income	195,000	0.42%
Designated from Fund Balance	850,000	1.83%
Designated from Reserves	420,000	0.90%
Interest Income	14,000	0.03%
Sales Tax	508,500	1.10%

Total Estimated Revenues \$46,499,826 100.00%

The Westchester County sales tax and interest income have remained flat year-to-year. Monies from the district's fund balance and reserves are again being used to contain the tax levy impact.

....AND WHERE IT GOES

Appropriation by Department



Student Instruction	\$25,166,627	54.12%
Employee Benefits	9,074,343	19.52%
General Support	2,276,098	4.90%
Transportation	2,531,039	5.44%
Buildings & Grounds	3,758,921	8.08%
Debt Service & Transfers	3,692,798	7.94%

Proposed Budget Total \$46,499,826 100.00%

- The proposed budget estimates a tax rate of \$1,179.39 per \$1,000 assessed valuation in the Town of Cortlandt, up from \$1,168.45.
- A homeowner whose property is worth \$500,000 has a taxable assessed value of \$8,550 using the equalization rate of 1.71%.
- The estimated annual tax bill for 2017 would be \$9,990.25, an increase of \$83.53.

ESTIMATED Tax Rate per \$1,000 of Taxable Assessed Valuation

	Cortlandt	Yorktown
ESTIMATED Tax Rate per \$1,000	\$1,179.39	\$819.82
Change from Prior Year	\$10.94	(\$20.46)
% Change from Prior Year	0.94%	-2.43%

BUDGET DETAIL IS AVAILABLE IN THE SCHOOLS, THE CROTON FREE LIBRARY, THE DISTRICT OFFICE, or by calling Diane L. Chaissan, Assistant Superintendent for Business, at 271-4713, ext. 4211.

Dr. Edward R. Fuhrman, Jr., Superintendent

Board of Education:

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Patrice Davidson, Vice President
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is a tax levy?

The school tax levy is the total amount of money to be raised by the district through school property taxes.

Are property owners eligible for New York State property tax rebates?

Yes, since Croton-Harmon's tax levy is within the allowable tax levy limit, those homeowners who are eligible for a STAR exemption, will receive a property tax rebate from New York State for increases in local property taxes on their primary residence.

What happens if the proposed budget is defeated on May 16, 2017?

The Board of Education has three options:

- Propose the same budget
- Propose a revised budget
- Adopt a contingency budget

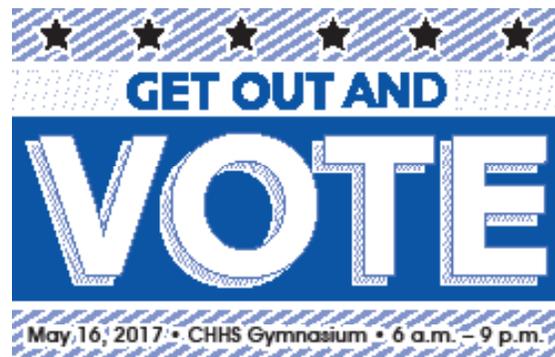
If the budget is defeated a second time, the district must operate under a contingency budget. By law, non-contingent expenses include all equipment purchases (including state-aided technology), salary increases for non-instructional, non-unionized employees, student expenses such as planners and

writing instruments and custodial coverage for use of facilities by outside groups. The non-contingent expenses contained in the proposed budget for 2017-2018 are estimated to be \$142,870. Additionally, if the community does not support the budget and the Board of Education adopts a contingency budget, the law prohibits the free use of facilities, including fields, by any group. The district would also need to cut an additional \$187,181 to keep the tax levy at the 2016-17 limits required by law.

How will the proposed school lunch fund monies be used?

The Board of Education endeavors to hire a consultant to aid the district and its school lunch program committee in implementing a school lunch program. The proposed program would begin in the high school and later expand to Carrie E. Tompkins Elementary School and Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School.

The district's school lunch program committee is made up of students, faculty and community members and chaired by CHHS Assistant Principal Mark Maxam and Board of Education Trustee Todd Freebern.



VOTER INFORMATION

Eligibility: To be eligible to vote in the May 16, 2017 school district budget vote and trustee election, you must be a citizen of the United States, 18 years of age or older, and a registered voter who has resided in the district for at least 30 days.

Registration: You may register to vote in the school election on Tuesday, May 9, 2017, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., or Wednesday, May 10, 2017, from 4 to 8 p.m. in the District Office, 10 Gerstein Street.

Absentee Ballots: Applications for absentee ballots can be picked up at the District Office, 10 Gerstein Street, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and are available on the website at www.chufsd.org.

Voting: Voting will take place on Tuesday, May 16 at the Croton-Harmon High School gymnasium from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The Ballot:

- Proposed Croton-Harmon Union Free School District budget in the amount of \$46,499,826;
- Proposed Croton Free Library tax levy of \$832,072;
- Authorization to purchase various vehicles for the Transportation Department through the use of bond anticipation notes over a five-year period, not to exceed \$290,000; and
- The election of three candidates to the Board of Education for terms of three years.