



Chatham Connections

SPECIAL BUDGET ISSUE

SPRING 2017

A NEWSLETTER FOR CHATHAM STUDENTS, PARENTS & COMMUNITY

< BUDGET VOTE >

Tuesday, May 16, 2017
9 a.m. – 9 p.m.
MED Elementary School

What Will I be Voting on May 16?

A \$30,836,975 BUDGET FOR THE 2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR

- This budget is \$294,559 (0.96 percent) more than the 2016-2017 budget.
- This budget carries a projected 1.3 percent tax levy increase which is under the limit set by the NYS property tax cap.

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION

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

1. Winnie Hoffman Legere
2. Dawn-Marie Blasl
3. Rachel Galvin

Proposition #1:

Capital Reserve Fund 3

Allows for the District to create a capital reserve account where money, not to exceed \$4,574,179, could be set aside for capital construction and building/grounds upkeep projects.

Proposition #2:

Repair Reserve Fund

Allows for the District to set aside up to \$100,000 in a reserve account to pay for repairs to facilities or equipment.

Proposition #3:

Student Representative

Allows for a Chatham High School student to be appointed to the Board of Education to serve as a non-voting member

2017 – 2018 BUDGET:

Funding Continuous Improvement

School officials focused on strengthening educational programs for students and being good stewards of our community's resources when developing the budget for Chatham Central School District. On May 16th, 2017, residents will head to the polls to decide on a \$30,836,975 budget for the 2017-2018 school year. This budget is part of a five-year fiscal plan the District uses to balance the long-term financial stability of our school with current economic conditions and the needs of our community. It contains no cuts to our educational program and strengthens what we offer our students.

The budget carries a projected tax levy increase of 1.3 percent, which is under the limit set by NY State's property tax cap. Because CCSD's budget is under the cap, most District homeowners will be eligible to receive NY State's STAR Property Tax Rebate in the fall.

Spending is up a total of \$294,559, a 0.96 percent increase from the current year's budget. This increase is largely due to factors such as inflation, contractual obligations, program initiatives, and rising health insurance premiums. Staffing was adjusted to match program needs and enrollment. The District sought savings through efficiencies, where possible, and applied reserves and fund balance to reduce the impact of budget increases on the tax levy.

Budget highlights include the addition of an academic intervention services teacher for grades K-2 math, and the addition of a special education teacher to meet an increased need for special education services at the Elementary School. The budget includes the addition of a modified girls volleyball team and an additional special education summer school class at Chatham Middle School, and a full-year Drawing & Painting Course (previously a half-year course) at Chatham High School. The budget also now provides funding to fully support the Fall Festival of Shakespeare and Robotics Club, both popular afterschool programs.

"Careful management of our resources has allowed Chatham Central Schools to remain



financially stable and build upon our educational program for the benefit of our students," explained Superintendent of Schools Cheryl Nuciforo. "This budget does more than just meet the needs of every student; it gives children more opportunities to flourish while keeping taxes below what the tax cap allows."

Included in the budget are the purchases of two large school buses and one medium wheel-chair-accessible bus. These buses replace older, high-mileage vehicles as part of the District's ongoing bus replacement plan to keep our transportation fleet running safely and efficiently. Also in the budget is a small capital project to replace the security access system at the Elementary School.

A Public Hearing on the budget is scheduled for May 9, at 6:30 p.m. in the Chatham High School library

Voting on the budget will take place from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the Mary E. Dardess Elementary School gymnasium. Voters will also be asked to elect three candidates to the Board of Education as well as decide on three propositions: one that would allow the District to create a capital reserve fund; one that would allow the District to set aside money in a Repair Reserve Fund; and one to allow a student representative to sit on the Board of Education as a nonvoting member.

More information on the 2017-2018 budget and educational plan can be found at www.chathamcentralschools.com.

CAPITAL RESERVE FUND 3

Proposition #1 on the ballot would create a Capital Reserve Fund to assist the District in financing future construction projects. The maximum amount of money the District could place in the fund would be a total of \$4,574,179 over a ten-year period.

A Capital Reserve Fund is similar to a savings account and helps our school plan for long-term needs with little impact on the general budget. The District can use it to set aside money only for future building and grounds improvements. Voter approval is required to create the fund.

Money for the Capital Reserve Fund would primarily come from areas where budgeted expenses prove to be less than projected. If there is excess money left at the end of the school year, the District may put it in the Capital Reserve Fund. Before the District can spend any money in the Capital Reserve Fund, it must receive voter approval.

REPAIR RESERVE

Proposition #2 on the ballot would allow the District to set aside up to \$100,000 in a reserve account to pay for repairs to facilities or equipment. The District would use this money to pay for repairs that are not eligible for state aid and do not occur on an annual basis. The Board of Education has

The District would provide details on such spending and residents would decide on it in future budget votes or possibly a capital referendum.

The District completed a state-mandated building condition survey in 2015 and anticipates the need for capital work (construction and maintenance) to keep our facilities properly maintained and updated, as well as renovations to benefit our educational program.

With voter approval, the District created a Capital Reserve Fund in 2008 that currently holds \$2,084,472 and a second Capital Reserve Fund in 2015 that holds \$2,000,000. Both accounts have reached their maximum limits and the District can no longer add to these funds. Projected capital work costs are greater than what the District currently has in these capital reserves, and therefore the District is seeking an additional Capital Reserve Fund.

created the Repair Reserve as part of its reserve plan. In order to place money in this account, the Board must seek voter approval. In order to spend any money from this account, the Board must hold a public hearing, except in an instance where emergency repairs are necessary.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Proposition #3 on the ballot asks voters to reapprove a provision that allows a Chatham High School student to be appointed to the Board of Education. The student representative serves a one-year term as a non-voting member and acts as a liaison between the student body and the Board of Education.

This provision was first approved by voters in 2009 and a student representative currently sits on the Board. Education Law requires the District to seek voter approval of this provision every two years. The current voter-approved provision will expire June 30, 2017.

HOW IS THE DISTRICT REDUCING COSTS?

The District is continuously finding ways to minimize budget increases through efficiency measures and other cost-saving initiatives. Examples of efficiency measures that Chatham CSD took this budget cycle to offset budget increases include:

Insurance

The District increased the deductible on its general insurance policy, reducing the District's insurance premiums by approximately \$10,000 per year.

Cafeteria

This year, kitchen staff increased production of food items in house as opposed to purchasing ready-made items from vendors (such as baked goods and pizza). This provides fresher options for students and an additional cost savings of approximately \$4,000.

Staffing

The science department at the High School was reorganized to reflect declining student enrollment in the District, allowing for one science teacher position to be eliminated from the budget; an estimated savings of \$60,000. The downsizing was done following a teacher resignation and did not require a layoff.

Contracts

By offering cleaning staff more flexible options for work clothing, the District was able to reduce its uniform contract expenses by \$2,000 dollars this year.

Affordable Care Act reporting requirements are carried out by existing District staff rather than a private contractor, providing \$15,000 in cost avoidance.

Energy

Chatham CSD participates in an energy consortium which combines the buying power of multiple school districts to lock in lower electric rates.

The District reduced its transportation fuel budget by \$20,000 to reflect lower oil prices.

Solar panels installed on the roof of MED in 2011 provide the District with approximately \$5,000 in energy savings a year, with a total of \$30,000 in energy savings to date. The panels were paid for entirely through a grant from NYSERDA.

CCSD Homeowners Eligible for STAR Property Tax Rebate

NYS has implemented a STAR Rebate program for the years 2016-19. The rebate applies to homeowners who receive the STAR Exemption and who live in school districts that pass budgets at or below their tax levy cap. Because Chatham's 2017-2018 budget keeps the tax levy below its 1.496 percent cap, eligible homeowners earning \$275,000 or less will receive a rebate check from NYS in the fall. Beginning in 2017, the rebate will be a percentage of the homeowner's STAR Exemption benefit, with lower incomes receiving a higher percentage benefit. The STAR Rebate is in addition to the tax savings residents already see through their STAR Exemption.

HOW IS THE DISTRICT STRENGTHENING PROGRAM?

At Chatham, we are continually updating our academic program to provide our students with an education that prepares them for success in our rapidly evolving world. Below are examples of program initiatives for next year.

Technology rollouts in all our schools this year reflect an investment to significantly increase our students' access to technology in the classroom. This past fall, the District used reserve funds to purchase Chromebooks and iPads, giving our schools enough smart devices for every student. Next year's budget provides support for this learning technology initiative.

Academic Intervention Services at the Elementary School will have their delivery strengthened with the addition of a math academic support teacher for kindergarten through grade 2.

Visual Arts programs at Chatham High School continue to be reconfigured to better enable students to develop competitive portfolios and acquire essential skills for a successful future in the fine arts. This includes expanding Drawing & Painting (previously a half-year course) to a full-year course, replacing Studio In Sculpture with a more beneficial Ceramic Arts course, and discontinuing a half-year Crafts course.

Modified Girls Volleyball will be added to the extracurricular athletic offerings at Chatham Middle School, allowing more

students to participate in interscholastic sports during the fall season. This gives Chatham's girls volleyball program three levels of competition, allowing athletes to develop competitive skills at a younger age and translate their experience to the JV and Varsity levels.

The Fall Festival of Shakespeare will receive full funding from the school budget. This highly popular afterschool enrichment program is in partnership with Shakespeare & Company of Lenox, MA and brings professional directors, actors, costumers, and more to Chatham High School to work with our student in all aspects of the-atre production. Previously, the Shakespeare program relied on the generosity of private donations for a large portion of its funding.

Robotics Club will be funded by the school budget. This popular afterschool club, which was introduced to the High School this year, involves students in building a multi-function robot to compete against other schools in regional competitions. They relied on grants for a significant portion of their funding in their startup year. With steady funding from the District, this club is assured to have the resources its students need each year to be competitive.



HOW WAS THE BUDGET DEVELOPED?

The proposed budget is part of a long-term fiscal plan to manage the financial stability of our school and provide our students with a first-class education. School officials carefully weigh how budgeting decisions will affect not only the current budget year, but also how those decisions will impact District finances over the next five years. The District's Finance Committee, comprised of Board members, school officials, and community members, reviews all aspects of the budget throughout its development and makes recommendations to the Board of Education, beginning in November with a review and update of Chatham's Financial Reserve Plan.

In developing the budget, school officials follow several guiding principles: provide a strong educational program that prepares students for success after graduation; base staffing on enrollment and program needs; remain sensitive to the economic climate and to taxpayers; maxi-

mize available resources; seek savings through efficiency measures; and do not use one-time funding sources to pay for ongoing expenses.

In January, the District developed revenue projections for next school year based on Governor Cuomo's proposed state budget, which included a 1 percent increase in foundation aid but an overall decrease in total state aid for Chatham Central Schools.

In February, the District calculated its tax levy cap using the required state formula, which capped Chatham's 2017 tax levy increase at 1.496 percent.

As in every budget cycle, the District completed a line-by-line review of the budget to identify areas where efficiencies could be realized. Staffing, equipment, and supplies were adjusted to meet program needs, student enrollment, efficiency measures, and state mandates. The District also applied money from reserve accounts and allocated fund balance to hold the proposed tax levy below the allowable limit set by the cap.

On April 9th, the NYS legislature adopted the NYS budget, which included a 2.74 percent increase in operating aid and an overall increase in state aid for Chatham of 0.68 percent. This unexpected bump in aid allowed the District to reduce the tax levy increase to 1.3 percent as well as reduce its reliance on reserves to balance the budget.

The Board of Education adopted a proposed 2017-18 budget for Chatham Central Schools on April 10th that totals \$30,836,975, reflecting a total spending increase of 0.96 percent.

Public budget presentations were made at regularly scheduled Board of Education meetings beginning in January. Copies of these presentations and other budget information are posted to the school website as they become available.

A Public Hearing on the proposed budget and educational plan is scheduled for May 9 at 6:30 p.m. in the Chatham High School library.

HOW IS THE DISTRICT USING RESERVES AND FUND BALANCE?

For the past several years, Chatham has used reserve accounts and fund balance to help keep the tax levy down. Use of reserves and fund balance are part of the District's multi-year fiscal plan to provide for the long-term financial health of the District.

Due to recent increases in state aid, the District was able to reduce its reliance on reserves to make up miscellaneous revenues in the budget. School officials will use reserves as necessary to cover revenue in areas where costs commonly fluctuate, such as retirement health insurance, unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, and tax certiorari. However, the state budget allows New York to take back aid to schools midyear if state funding is affected by anticipated shifts in federal budgeting priorities this fall (when the federal budget is adopted). The District therefore

moved some of the additional state aid for next year into reserves to reduce the impact of any possible mid-year cuts to aid.

The District also allocated \$1,341,600 of fund balance to reduce the tax levy increase. Fund balance is a reserve much like a savings account. When District expenses are less than what was expected, or revenues are higher than projected, the remaining money is held in the fund balance. The District utilizes fund balance each year as revenue in the budget to minimize spending cuts and hold down tax increases.

Chatham's 2016-2025 Financial Reserve Plan is available on the Budget Information page at www.chathamcentralschools.com.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE BUDGET IS DEFEATED?

If voters do not approve the proposed budget on May 16th, the Board of Education has the following options: put the same budget or a revised budget up for vote on June 20th, or adopt a contingency budget. If the budget is again defeated on June 20th, the Board must adopt a contingency budget.

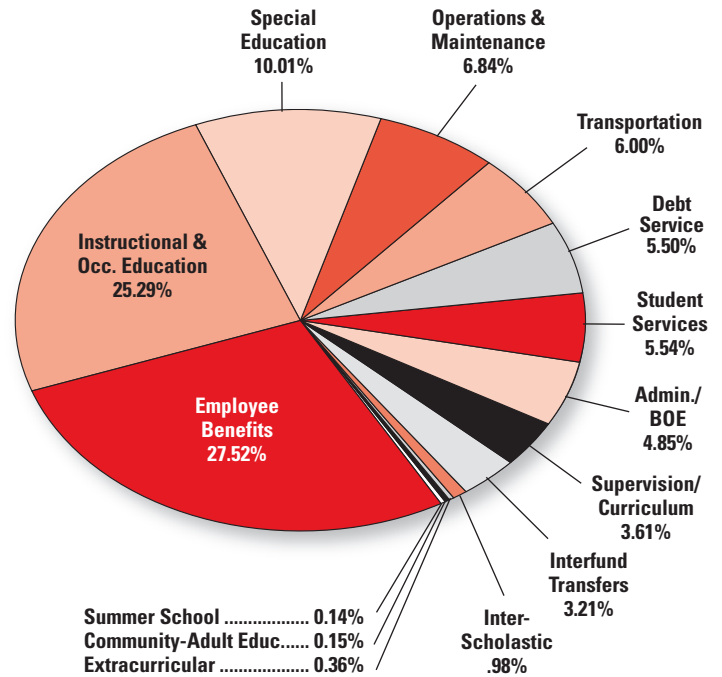
The NYS property tax cap law holds a contingency budget's tax levy increase at 0 percent, requiring the District to levy the same amount of taxes or less as in 2016, regardless of inflation, contractual obligations, and other cost drivers.

A contingency budget prevents spending on new equipment, except when concerning safety. It also limits public use of District facilities. However, all state mandated programs, whether funded by state aid or not, would need to be retained.

These regulations mean that in a contingent budget, the Board would need to make \$219,094 in cuts from the current budget proposal. Therefore, the District would be required to eliminate any projected purchases of new equipment from the budget, including replacement buses, and would consider other cuts to our instructional and non-instructional budgets.

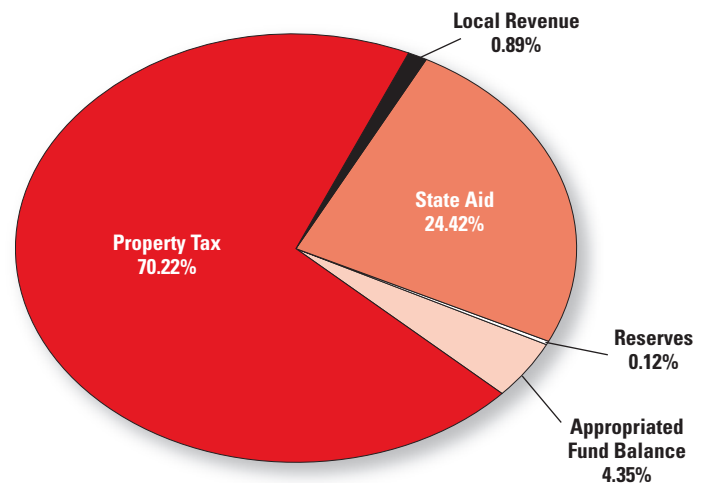
2017-2018 Proposed Budget

	BUDGET 2016-2017	PROPOSED 2017-2018
Instructional & Occ. Education	\$7,481,047	\$7,800,141
Special Education	\$3,253,821	\$3,086,009
Summer School	\$41,975	\$43,435
Student Services	\$1,647,223	\$1,707,904
Extracurricular	\$100,900	\$110,900
Inter-Scholastic	\$301,039	\$301,625
Community-Adult Education	\$47,718	\$47,718
Administrative/BOE	\$1,528,778	\$1,496,353
Supervision/Curriculum	\$1,084,789	\$1,114,673
Transportation	\$1,790,657	\$1,850,178
Operations & Maintenance	\$2,092,638	\$2,109,074
Employee Benefits	\$8,496,890	\$8,484,827
Debt Service	\$1,692,205	\$1,695,405
Interfund Transfers	\$982,736	\$988,733
TOTAL	\$30,542,416	\$30,836,975



Estimated Revenues

	BUDGET 2016-2017	BUDGET 2017-2018
Property Tax	\$21,375,578	\$21,653,460
Local Revenue	\$266,752	\$274,051
State Aid	\$7,478,486	\$7,529,635
Reserves	\$80,000	\$38,229
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$1,341,600	\$1,341,600
TOTAL	\$30,542,416	\$30,836,975



Property Tax Report Card

	2016-2017	2017-2018	% Change
Total Budgeted Amount, not Including Separate Propositions	\$30,542,416	\$30,836,975	0.96%
Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy	\$21,375,578	\$21,653,460	1.30%
Permissible Exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit	\$887,987	\$837,253	
School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$20,487,591	\$20,858,140	
Total Proposed Tax Levy for School Purposes, <u>Excluding</u> Permissible Exclusions	\$20,487,591	\$20,816,207	
Difference: (G - H); (negative value requires 60.0% voter approval)	-	41,933	
Public School Enrollment	1,049	1,045	-0.38%

2017 Board of Education Candidates

There are three candidates running for three open seats on the Board of Education. All seats are for three-year terms that run July 1st, 2017 through June 30th, 2020. The three candidates who receive the most votes will be elected to fill these terms. The candidates were asked to write a brief article about why they are running for the Board of Education, which appear below.



DAWN-MARIE V. BLASL

With over 25 years of experience as a professor, administrator, teacher, coach, and mentor, I have extensive experience in education. I am a graduate of Manhattan College (BA) and NYU (MA), possess several NYS certifications and am the recipient of the PTA Lifelong Achievement Award in Education as a school principal.

I believe that students deserve a quality education. I believe that decisions, goals, and policies need to be based upon each student's unique gifts and talents. Respectful communication with all stakeholders is paramount to ensure that all students in our community receive the quality education that they deserve. As a board member, it is important to hold the superintendent accountable, to trust and applaud employees for a job well done, and to be fiscally responsible so that students can thrive and soar in a positive learning environment.

For the past 14 years, my husband Mike owner of the Blasl Funeral Home and I have resided in Chatham. We are involved in many community-based organizations. Our son, Michael Jr. (fiancée Dawn Litke) is a 2016 CHS graduate.



RACHEL GALVIN

As Chatham alumni, my husband and I returned to raise our children in the community that gave us our start - as many Chatham alumni choose to do.

To the board, I would bring the perspective of a CCSD parent and a skill set in project management and administration from the managerial and sales branches of American securities firms and a regional bank. Parents and faculty can count on me to consider and listen to all perspectives involved with our students' education. I will advocate and collaborate to ensure an environment that is fair and effectual, by concept and application, to suit the varying needs of our families. Tax payers can expect me to be rational on spending and hawkish on waste. And students can count on me to recognize their individuality and advocate for curriculum that is relevant to their generation and varied to their needs.

In choosing Chatham, we chose community. For this community, I will contribute in fostering an environment of civic consciousness and solid foundations for individual success.



WINNIE HOFFMAN LEGERE

A Chatham village resident. I am a graduate of the Chatham Central School as well as Tufts University and Western New England University School of Law. My husband and I raised our family in western Massachusetts and moved back in September of 2015.

Since my return I have volunteered at the Chatham Public Library, I am a mentor at the Chatham Middle School, I serve on the Board of Directors of the Louis F. Payn Foundation and am secretary for Friends of the Tracy.

I believe I am a solid candidate for the School Board because I am a firm believer in the strength of an excellent public school education. With a new Superintendent coming on board, it will be an exciting time for the district. I would like to be an active participant in the upcoming changes and growth in our schools and I would like to see a stronger bond between the school and the community.

Chatham's Next Superintendent of Schools

In January, the Board of Education appointed Dr. Salvatore "Sal" DeAngelo as the next superintendent of Chatham Central School District. Dr. DeAngelo will take over the District on July 1, 2017 following the retirement of current superintendent Dr. Cheryl Nuciforo.

Dr. DeAngelo has over 30 years' experience leading and coordinating public school district programs and comes with exemplary recommendations, having earned great respect from the professionals he works with. He holds a doctorate in Educational Leadership from the Esteves School of Education at Sage Graduate School, and a master's degree in Business Education from Norwich University.

"I am truly looking forward to this opportunity to continue the excellent programs that already exist in Chatham and finding ways to make our school even stronger," said Dr. DeAngelo. "I strongly believe in being a good steward of the community's resources and want to engage the larger community and all our stakeholders in the process. Everyone's contribution will be needed to ensure our future success. Through collaboration, together we will find the best solutions to the challenges facing our District."

Dr. DeAngelo currently works for the

Bethlehem Central School District as their Chief Technology and Information Officer. Prior to that, he served as Business Administrator for the Schenectady City School District. Earlier, he served as Schenectady CSD's Technology Services

"I strongly believe in being a good steward of the community's resources."

Coordinator, Project Director and Coordinator of Technical Services for ProjectVIEW (a program focused on strengthening education through interactive technology), and Manager of Technical Services.

He lives in Niskayuna with his wife and two daughters (one in high school and the other in college), as well as the family's three dogs and two cats. In his spare time, he likes to pursue his passion for photography, and he is also a certified SCUBA diver.

The Board offered Dr. DeAngelo the position following an extensive search and interview process. As part of that search, the Board asked community stakeholders to provide the desired characteristics of the next superintendent, and from those conversations the Board developed a candidate



profile for the position. Consultant Dr. Lucy Martin assisted the Board in their search and the Board had the pleasure of interviewing several qualified candidates.

"The Board of Education is confident that Sal is a great fit for Chatham and will lead us in providing the best possible education for the students of Chatham," said Board president Melony Spock. "He is an innovative visionary leader, a collaborator with great communication skills, and someone who believes creating trusted relationships rooted in integrity form the foundation for successful leadership."



Upgrades to Building Access System at MED

Included in the 2017-18 budget is a small capital project to replace the security access system at the Mary E. Dardess Elementary School. The existing employee swipe-card system is outdated and no longer supported by the company that produced it, making system upgrades impossible and replacement parts for general maintenance hard to come by. The project would not exceed \$100,000 and would be completed during the 2017-18 school year. This project does not increase next year's budget because money to support small annual capital projects has already been built into the budget. Because Chatham is entitled to approximately 50 percent state aid on capital projects, the District would be reimbursed for approximately 50 percent of the project's cost. The District's plan is to update the building access systems at the Middle School and High School through similar annual capital projects in following years.

CAR-RT SORT POSTAL CUSTOMER

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ADMINISTRATORS

Cheryl Nuciforo, Ed.D. 392-1501
Superintendent

Michael Chudy 392-1534
School Business Administrator

Brian Simon 392-2417
Director of Special Education

Kristen Reno 392-2255
*Mary E. Dardess
Elementary School Principal*

Michael Burns 392-2255
*Mary E. Dardess
Elementary School Assistant Principal*

Amy Potter 392-1560
Chatham Middle School Principal

John Thorsen 392-4142
Chatham High School Principal

Eric Papandrea 392-4142
Chatham HS Assistant Principal

BOARD MEMBERS

Melony Spock 2019
President

Teri Conte 2017
Vice President

Denise Barry 2018

Muriel Faxon 2019

Beth Hover 2018

Chris Kelly 2017

Edward Knight 2017

David O'Connor 2018

Craig Simmons 2019

Maggie Huston 2017
Student Representative

SCHOOL BUDGET VOTE AND BOARD ELECTION

Tuesday, May 16, 2017

9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

in the Mary E. Dardess Elementary School Gymnasium
50 Woodbridge Avenue, Village of Chatham

ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE ON MAY 16, 2017?

To be eligible to vote on May 16 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 directly 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 would like to vote in this election, you must register with the School District Board of Registration. **The next Voter Registration Day is Tuesday, May 9th, from 2:00-7:00 p.m.** in the MED Elementary School lobby.

WHY VOTE?

Because you can. In many nations of the world, and in many states in 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 your response is needed. Your school board has developed a spending plan for your consideration based on input from district employees and community members. 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.

BUDGET DETAILS AVAILABLE ONLINE!

Information about the 2017-2018 budget is available on
the Chatham Central School District webpage at:

www.chathamcentralschools.com