

# CAPITAL education

2011 SPECIAL  
BUDGET EDITION

## District downsizing continues with 2011-12 proposed budget

The City School District of Albany has proposed a \$206.5 million budget for the 2011-12 school year that uses 60 percent of the district's unrestricted savings and includes a 1.7 percent tax-levy increase that could be lowered through ongoing labor talks.

The plan that the Board of Education approved unanimously April 12 includes the loss of 90 jobs. Some jobs could be saved pending the outcome of labor negotiations (*see related story, this page*).

If the job cuts remain, they will bring

to more than 300 the total number of positions the district has eliminated over the last three years amid one of the worst financial crises in the country's history.

If voters approve the plan Tuesday, May 17 the budget will continue to support the vast majority of programs and services the district currently provides.

"Even in these difficult economic times, the board believes this budget achieves our goals of providing the best possible programs and services for all students while remaining mindful of our community's financial realities," said President Daniel Egan.

Board members agreed on the plan after months of efforts to reduce a deficit of more than \$10 million resulting from declining state aid and increases in salaries, benefits and charter-school



The City School District of Albany's annual budget supports a wide range of programs and services for all students, from full-day prekindergarten through high school.



## Budget proposal supports quality programs that serve all students

Amid the talk of money, job cuts and savings this time of year, an important fact remains: Your tax dollar supports a wide range of programs and services in Albany's public schools.

The City School District of Albany's proposed \$206.5 million budget that voters will consider Tuesday, May 17 would support the academic, social and emotional needs of all of the 8,500-plus students in the district's 15 schools.

"The budget seeks to strike a balance between providing what students need and what the community can afford during these difficult economic times," said Superintendent Raymond Colucciello, Ed.D. "We have tried to maximize our resources to raise achievement for all students and keep spending in line at a time when our enrollment is growing and our state aid is shrinking."

### The Three Rs and more

The 2011-12 budget plan continues supporting core academic programs in math, English, science, social studies and physical education.

It also continues support for academic-intervention services, special-education services, alternative-education programs at all levels and breakfast and lunch programs in every school.

If voters approve the budget, the district also will continue to provide rich programming at every level, including:

### Elementary school

- Full-day prekindergarten and kindergarten at all 12 schools
- Three themed magnet schools
- The bilingual Dual-Language Program at Delaware Community School
- Health education
- Art, music and library
- Band, chorus and orchestra
- Health-screening services
- Literacy coaches
- Before- and after-school programs

### Middle school

- Technology
- Family and consumer sciences
- Foreign language (Spanish and French)
- Health education

### SCHOOL BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday, May 17

7 a.m. – 9 p.m.

### Where do I vote?

Check out page 4 for information on polling locations, or call 475-6010.

payments.

The budget proposal includes \$9.3 million from the district's unrestricted fund balance, 60 percent of the \$15.4 million available. The \$6.1 million remaining in the fund balance represents about three weeks of the district's payroll and less than 3 percent of the total budget proposal, within state regulations.

Taxpayers will see an estimated increase of about \$33 for every \$100,000 of their home's assessed value. With the Basic STAR exemption, taxpayers would see an estimated increase of \$21 per \$100,000, and with Enhanced STAR for seniors an estimated increase of \$10 per \$100,000.

Voters will have a variety of opportunities to learn more about the proposed budget and to ask questions during community meetings in the weeks leading up to the May 17 vote.

You can check out a list of upcoming budget presentations on page 2, or call 475-6010 to schedule a presentation for your group.

## Labor talks could bring more savings

When the City School District of Albany Board of Education approved the 2011-12 budget plan April 12, the district still was negotiating with its three unions for additional savings that could reduce the proposed tax-levy increase and save jobs.

The board-approved budget proposal includes a 1.7 percent tax-levy increase and 90 job cuts.

The board has asked all district employees to accept a pay freeze for 2011-12 to help save jobs and reduce the burden on taxpayers as the state and nation continue to reduce education funding.

Superintendent Raymond Colucciello, Ed.D., was hopeful that an agreement could be reached with one or more of the bargaining units, which represent teachers, administrators and non-instructional staff – all but about 30 district employees.

A pay freeze for all employees would save the district \$2 million. Any savings realized through labor negotiations would be used to lower or eliminate the tax-levy increase and reduce the number of job cuts, said board President Daniel Egan.

Last year, the district's administrators agreed to a pay freeze that helped save \$250,000. Dr. Colucciello already has accepted a pay freeze for 2011-12, the second year in a row he has done so.

## No-cost plan to improve Giffen, Abrookin and Albany High School

For the second year in a row, the City School District of Albany has the opportunity to update schools **at no cost to taxpayers**.

Voters will be asked to consider an \$11.4 million plan that would expand the cafeteria at Giffen Memorial Elementary School, fix the roof, windows, and heating, ventilation, air-conditioning and electrical systems at Abrookin Vocational-Technical Center, and add a nine-classroom addition and other improvements at Albany High School (*see page 3 for more information*).

The entire project would be paid for by regular and EXCEL building aid from the state.

The district also will continue with the \$7.6 million no-cost facilities project at Albany High that voters approved last year, renovating bathrooms and locker rooms, updating ceilings and lighting, and replacing carpet in classrooms.

- Modified sports
- ELA and math coaches
- Art, music and library
- Band, chorus and orchestra
- Before- and after-school programs
- Summer transition program to prepare eighth-graders for high school
- Summer technology camp for sixth- and seventh-graders

### High school

- 17 Advanced Placement courses
- International Baccalaureate program
- A variety of summer programs to benefit students at all levels
- More than 40 clubs
- Freshman, JV and varsity sports
- Health education
- Tutoring and mentoring programs
- Saturday academies

### A range of choices for families

From prekindergarten through high school, the district provides families with options.

For the early years, the district gives  
(continued on page 3)

## How is my final school tax bill and tax rate determined?

Your school tax bill and tax rate are determined by combining three factors, only one of which is set by the school district:

1) Local school tax levy.

• This is the total amount of money raised for the school district through local property taxes – \$108.9 million in the proposed 2011-12 budget.

• **Proposed 2011-12 increase:** 1.71 percent

2) New York State STAR aid.

• The School Tax Relief Program provides property-tax exemptions for homeowners (see related table, this page).

• Last year, the state decreased STAR funding. This added 1.2 percent to the total school tax bill.

• **2011-12 update:** The state has increased STAR funding slightly for 2011-12. This will result in a small benefit for Albany residents rather than increasing the bill.

3) Changes in assessments between homestead and non-homestead.

• Each summer, the New York State Office of Real Property Tax Services finalizes the percentages of local taxes to be paid by homeowners and business owners. This is the final factor in determining the school tax rate.

• Last year, this resulted in an increase of about 5 percent on the school tax bill for homeowners. The district has no way to project this factor for 2011-12; it is handled at the state level.

Once all three factors are set, the final tax rate determines how much of the total tax levy each property owner must pay. No matter how the tax levy is disbursed, the district receives only the amount of money in the tax levy approved by voters – in this case, a 1.71 percent increase over 2010-11, or about \$1.8 million in new revenue for 2011-12.

### PROPOSED EXPENDITURES

	2010-11 Budget	2011-12 Proposed	Dollar Change
<b>Program Budget</b>	<b>\$158,034,311</b>	<b>\$162,496,005</b>	<b>\$4,461,694</b>
Instruction	123,698,436	120,540,869	-3,157,567
Charter School Payments	26,500,278	33,817,087	7,316,809
Pupil Transportation	6,716,119	6,950,742	234,623
Athletics	869,478	852,307	-17,171
Lunch Program Assistance	250,000	335,000	85,000
<b>Capital Budget</b>	<b>\$30,648,567</b>	<b>\$29,919,780</b>	<b>-\$728,787</b>
Debt Payments & Borrowings	12,720,300	15,446,694	2,726,394
Building Rentals	176,570	171,408	-5,162
Operations/Maintenance/Capital	10,190,697	9,606,678	-584,019
Utilities	5,561,000	3,945,000	-1,616,000
Tax Refunds & Judgments	2,000,000	750,000	-1,250,000
<b>Administrative Budget</b>	<b>\$14,158,072</b>	<b>\$14,112,854</b>	<b>-\$45,218</b>
School Supervision	12,328,278	12,418,538	90,260
Property & Liability Insurance	552,700	533,406	-19,294
Printing, Mailing & Data Processing	1,045,412	916,228	-129,184
Legal & Other Services	231,682	244,682	13,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$202,840,950</b>	<b>\$206,528,639</b>	<b>\$3,687,689</b>

### ESTIMATED REVENUE

	2010-11	2011-12	Dollar Change
Federal Aid	\$850,000	\$815,000	-\$35,000
Fund Balance	6,000,000	9,279,825	3,279,825
Local Revenue	11,804,020	12,039,020	235,000
State Building Aid	6,423,609	11,761,879	5,338,270
Other State Aid	71,649,951	64,887,731	-6,762,220
Property Tax Levy	107,113,370	108,945,184	1,831,814
Allowance for Deferred Taxes	(1,000,000)	(1,200,000)	-200,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$202,840,950</b>	<b>\$206,528,639</b>	<b>\$3,687,689</b>

### Budget Presentations

May 4

• 6:30 p.m., Council of Albany Neighborhood Associations, Albany Public Library Main Branch, 161 Washington Ave.

• 7 p.m., William S. Hackett Middle School, 45 Delaware Ave.

May 7

• 10:30 a.m., Shaker Park/Bishops Gate Neighborhood Association, Atria, 345 Northern Blvd.

May 9

• 6:45 p.m., Albany High School, 700 Washington Ave.

May 11

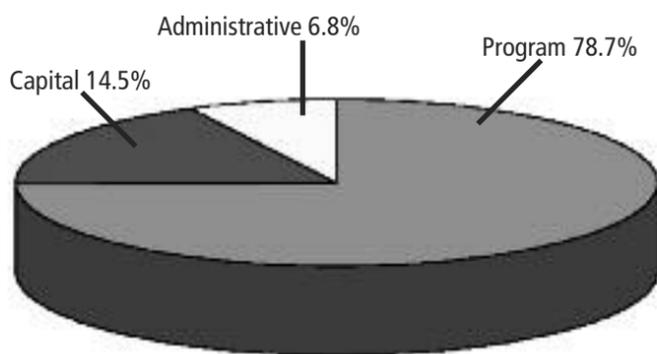
• 6 p.m., Pine Hills Elementary School, 41 North Allen St.

May 12

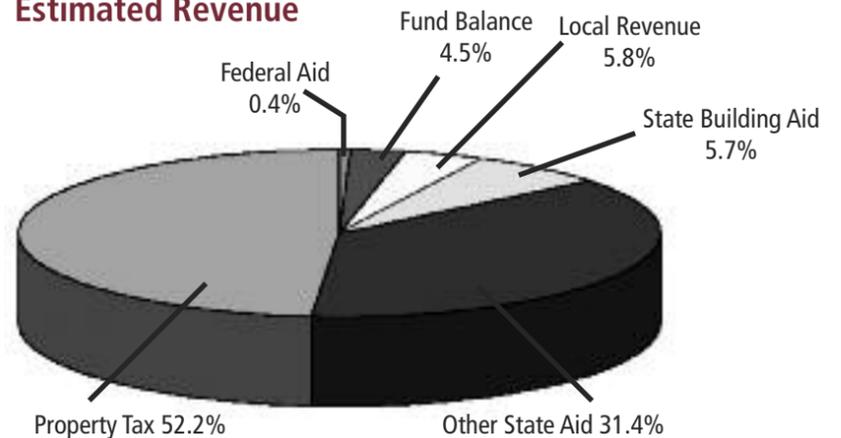
• 7 p.m., Montessori Magnet School, 65 Tremont St.

If you would like to schedule a budget presentation for your organization, please call 475-6010.

#### Estimated Expenditures



#### Estimated Revenue



**CAPITAL  
education**

Capital Education is published by the City School District of Albany.

Please direct comments about the newsletter, story ideas and questions to Ron Lesko at (518) 475-6065 or [rlesko@albany.k12.ny.us](mailto:rlesko@albany.k12.ny.us), or Lisa Angerame at (518) 475-6066 or [langerame@albany.k12.ny.us](mailto:langerame@albany.k12.ny.us).

City School District of Albany  
Academy Park  
Albany, New York 12207

### Estimated tax bill

A property assessed at \$100,000

	2010-11	2011-12	Estimated change
Without STAR exemption	\$1,923	\$1,956	\$33
With Basic STAR for homeowners	\$1,339	\$1,360	\$21
With Enhanced STAR for senior citizens	\$753	\$763	\$10

\*These estimates are preliminary and ultimately will be adjusted by final assessment data, which are not known in New York state until July.

## Propositions on the May 17 ballot

Albany voters will be asked to consider the following propositions on the May 17 ballot. Four are directly related to the City School District of Albany.

The first proposition asks voters to consider the proposed \$206.5 million school budget for 2011-12. Here's what will appear on the ballot:



### Proposition #1

Shall the resolution adopted by the Board of Education on April 12, 2011, authorizing the City School District of Albany to expend the sum in the amount of \$206,528,639 during the 2011-2012 school year and levy a tax therefore be approved?

YES  NO

The second proposition authorizes the sale of district property used as space for Buildings and Grounds staff. Here's what will appear on the ballot:



### Proposition #2

Shall the Board of Education of the City School District of Albany be authorized to sell the real property, located at 270-272 Central Avenue, Albany, N.Y., for a selling price not less than \$100,000?

YES  NO

The third proposition authorizes the sale of the former Philip Livingston Magnet Academy. Due to market conditions it is necessary to lower the minimum selling price. Here's what will appear on the ballot:



### Proposition #3

Shall the Board of Education of the City School District of Albany be authorized to sell the real property commonly known as Philip Livingston Magnet Academy, located at 315 Northern Boulevard, Albany, N.Y., for a selling price of not less than \$3,250,000?

YES  NO

The fourth proposition – **which will have no effect on school taxes** – authorizes the district to spend \$11.4 million in **existing dollars** on construction projects at Albany High School, Abrookin Vocational-Technical Center and Giffen Memorial Elementary School. State law requires taxpayer authority to spend these dollars, which come from a special state fund for construction projects (*see related story, page 1*).



### Proposition #4

Shall the Board of Education be authorized to (1) construct additions to and/or reconstruct portions of Giffen Elementary School, Albany High School and Abrookin Vocational-Technical Center, including in each case, site work thereat and the acquisition of original furnishings, equipment, machinery or apparatus required for the purpose for which such buildings are to be used, at a maximum aggregate cost of \$11,400,000; (2) expend such sum for such purposes, (3) levy the necessary tax therefore, to be levied and collected in annual installments in such years and in such amounts as may be determined by the Board of Education, taking into account state aid, and (4) in anticipation of the collection of such tax, issue bonds and notes of the district at one time or from time to time in the principal amount not to exceed \$11,400,000, and levy a tax to pay the interest on said obligations when due?

YES  NO

Voters also will be asked to consider a \$6.9 million tax levy proposed by the Albany Public Library. **This proposition is unrelated to the school district budget and has no impact on school taxes.** Here's what will appear on the ballot:



### Proposition #5

Shall the sum of \$6,943,972 be raised by annual levy of a tax upon the taxable real property within the City School District of Albany for the purpose of funding the operating budget of the Albany Public Library?

YES  NO

There also will be a vote for two open seats on the Albany Public Library Board of Trustees. This vote also is unrelated to the school district. For more information about the library budget or trustee vote, please call Stephanie Simon at 427-4344.

## Budget proposal supports quality programs ...

(continued from page 1)

families the option of sending their children to one of nine neighborhood elementary schools or three magnet schools. The magnet schools are focused on different themes and open to students from across the city through an annual lottery.

In middle school, the district provides three state-of-the-art facilities: Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School and William S. Hackett Middle School (both serving grades 6-8), and North Albany Academy (serving prekindergarten-grade 8), which also features a unique partnership with the North Albany YMCA.

Each middle school offers a range of resources and services, from fully equipped science and technology labs to specially equipped resource rooms and social-worker offices to help students that struggle academically or emotionally.

### Redesigning Albany High School

Albany High School will be a new place this September, building on its strengths to create an environment designed to better meet the needs of all students.

Thanks to a \$7.5 million federal grant, Albany High will be divided into four

smaller learning communities, or academies, each with its own unique theme: Citizenship, Discovery, Innovation and Leadership.

Albany High will continue to offer its acclaimed Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses to students in all four academies.

The 2011-12 budget will supplement efforts to make AP, IB and Honors classes accessible to more students. These efforts include Saturday academies, which started this year. The weekly academies are supported by teachers and feature APEX Learning, a Web-based program that helps students catch up and get ahead on their school work.

The budget also would add AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), a college-readiness program designed to increase the number of students who enroll in four-year colleges.

### Staff and program cutbacks

Continued cutbacks at the state and national levels meant that the district once again had to find ways to save. The 2011-12 proposal calls for eliminating 90 positions throughout the district, though some of those positions could be

saved through labor negotiations that were ongoing when *Capital Education* went to press (*see related story, page 1*).

Four of those positions are administrators (9 percent of the district's 47 administrators), 52.5 are teachers (7 percent of 777 teachers) and 33.5 are non-teaching staff (5 percent of 613 total employees).

Nine of the 31 prekindergarten classes offered in district schools will be operated and staffed by community agencies in 2011-12. This would bring to 21 the number of pre-K classes operated by community agencies in district schools. All pre-K classrooms will continue to provide the same programs and services for all students.

The budget proposal also calls for starting foreign language in seventh grade instead of sixth grade, and eliminating three vocational programs at Abrookin Vocational-Technical Center due to low enrollment.

Additional electives with low enrollment at Albany High also will be discontinued based on students' requests for courses.

## Albany's public schools by the numbers

- **1** – High-school choir invited to perform at Gov. Andrew Cuomo's inauguration (*Albany High's Albanettes*)
- **1.7** – Percent of the tax-levy increase in this year's budget
- **2** – Albany High's rank among area high schools on the annual *Newsweek/Washington Post* list of America's top high schools
- **4** – New academies offered at Albany High School starting in September (*Citizenship, Discovery, Innovation and Leadership*)
- **6** – Elementary schools with voluntary school-uniform policies
- **7** – Summer enrichment camps available to high-school students
- **7.58** – Seconds it took Albany High track star Dashawn Gates to win a state championship in the 55-meter hurdles in March
- **9** – Years since Albany High's last state championship (*from swimmer Laura Hotaling in '01 to hurdler Dashawn Gates this year*)
- **12** – Elementary schools offering full-day pre-K and kindergarten (*all of them!*)
- **17** – Advanced Placement classes at Albany High this school year
- **36** – Classes at Albany High that can confer college credit
- **39** – Languages spoken by district students
- **49** – Sports teams at our middle and high schools
- **59** – Individuals lauded nationally in 2011 with an FBI Director's Community Service Award, including Abrookin teaching assistant David Graham.
- **81** – Percent of games the Albany High varsity girls' basketball team won en route to its first Big 10 title
- **91** – SMARTBoards throughout the district
- **96** – Pounds, the weight class of Section II wrestling champion Shawn Berman
- **100** – Percent of elementary schools with after-school programs
- **154** – Pints of blood collected at Albany High's first two blood drives of the year (*stay tuned for the third on May 11!*)
- **263** – Students performing in this year's New York State School Music Association annual festival
- **591** – Spots for prekindergarteners this fall
- **841** – Students singing in chorus
- **899** – Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exams Albany High students will take this May
- **930** – People signed up for School News Notifier (*You can join them by visiting [www.albanyschools.org](http://www.albanyschools.org), clicking the Albany SNN logo and following the easy registration steps!*)
- **1,461** – Students playing an instrument in band or orchestra
- **3,800** – Pieces of pizza served every Friday in district elementary schools
- **4,300** – Computers in the district
- **40,000** – The average number of e-mails sent to and from district computers every day

## Board of Education

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Communications Office, Academy Park, Albany, N.Y. 12207 | (518) 475-6065 | Fax: 475-6069 | [www.albanyschools.org](http://www.albanyschools.org)

## Polling locations

7 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Find your voting location below, or visit the searchable online directory in the 2011-12 Budget News section at [www.albanyschools.org](http://www.albanyschools.org). If you have additional questions, please call 475-6010.

1st Ward, Election Districts 1-3 Hackett Middle School 45 Delaware Ave.	8th Ward, Election Districts 1-3, 9, 11 & 12 Albany School of Humanities 108 Whitehall Road
1st Ward, Election Districts 4-10 City Parks & Recreation Building 7 Hoffman Ave.	8th Ward, Election Districts 4-8 & 10 Mater Christi School 35 Hurst Ave.
2nd Ward, Election Districts 1-3, 5-13 & 15-17 Giffen Memorial Elementary School 274 South Pearl St.	9th Ward, Election Districts 1-9 New Scotland Elementary School 369 New Scotland Ave.
2nd Ward, Election Districts 4 & 14 City Parks & Recreation Building 7 Hoffman Ave.	10th Ward, Election Districts 1-8 Albany High School 700 Washington Ave.
3rd Ward, Election Districts 1-15 Sheridan Preparatory Academy 400 Sheridan Ave.	11th Ward, Election Districts 1-8 First Lutheran Church 646 State St.
4th Ward, Election Districts 1-5 & 12 North Albany Academy 570 N. Pearl St.	12th Ward, Election Districts 1-3, 5 & 11 Harriet Gibbons/Central Registration 75 Watervliet Ave.
4th Ward, Election Districts 6-11 Arbor Hill Elementary School 1 Arbor Drive	12th Ward, Election Districts 4 & 9 North Albany Academy 570 N. Pearl St.
5th Ward, Election Districts 1-12 Arbor Hill/West Hill Library 148 Henry Johnson Blvd.	12th Ward, Election Districts 6-8 & 10 Montessori Magnet School 65 Tremont St.
6th Ward, Election Districts 1-7 & 9 Hackett Middle School 45 Delaware Ave.	13th Ward, Election Districts 1-6, 8 and 9 Pine Hills Elementary School 41 North Allen St.
6th Ward, Election District 8 First Lutheran Church 646 State St.	13th Ward, Election District 7 Eagle Point Elementary School 1044 Western Ave.
7th Ward, Election Districts 1, 4-6, 8 & 9 Delaware Community School 43 Bertha St.	14th Ward, Election Districts 1-10 Eagle Point Elementary School 1044 Western Ave.
7th Ward Election Districts 2 & 3 New Scotland Elementary School 369 New Scotland Ave.	15th Ward, Election Districts 1-3 & 8 Eagle Point Elementary School 1044 Western Ave.
7th Ward, Election District 7 Albany School of Humanities 108 Whitehall Road	15th Ward, Election Districts 4-7 Teresian House 200 Washington Avenue Extension

## Voting requirements

To vote on the City School District of Albany's proposed 2011-12 budget, you must be:

- Registered to vote with the Albany County Board of Elections by Tuesday, May 3;
- At least 18 years old; and
- A citizen of the United States and a resident of the City of Albany for at least 30 days before the vote.

You must provide identification when you register and vote. For more information, please contact Catherine Cutting, clerk of the Board of Education, at 475-6010.

## Absentee ballots

The City School District of Albany automatically sends absentee ballots to people designated as having a permanent disability by the Albany County Board of Elections.

Others who want to vote with an absentee ballot because of illness, hospitalization, vacation, studies, business or incarceration must apply for the absentee ballot.

You can call 475-6010 to have an application mailed to you or download one from the 2011-12 Budget News section of our Web site, [www.albanyschools.org](http://www.albanyschools.org). You also can pick up an application from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday at the district clerk's office in Academy Park on Elk Street.

If you want the absentee ballot mailed to your home, you must mail the completed application to the district clerk seven days before the vote – Tuesday, May 10. If you want to pick up your ballot at the district clerk's office, you must have your completed application to the district clerk by 5 p.m. the day before the budget – Monday, May 16.

All absentee ballots must be returned to the district clerk by 5 p.m. the day of the school budget vote – Tuesday, May 17.

## What happens if the budget is not approved?

State law gives the Board of Education three alternatives if voters do not approve the proposed budget on May 17:

- Put the same budget up for another vote
- Present a revised budget for voter consideration; or
- Adopt a contingency budget.

The board opted for a contingency budget in 2007-08 after voters rejected the proposed budget in May 2007.

If the board presents a revised budget for consideration and it is turned down, a contingency budget must be adopted. For 2011-12, a contingency budget would be \$205,950,007 – about one-half of 1 percent below the proposed 1.7 percent tax-levy increase.

The state closely regulates any district operating under a contingency budget, prohibiting spending on student supplies, equipment and certain raises, to name a few items.

Also, community groups have to pay to use school buildings during a contingency budget.