

CAPITAL education

2009 SPECIAL
BUDGET EDITION

District proposes \$2.9 million cut in spending for the 2009-10 school year

The City School District of Albany's annual budget would be reduced by \$2.9 million from the current fiscal year under a \$203,840,950 plan the Board of Education approved unanimously this spring.

The proposal to reduce spending for 2009-10 recognizes the difficult economic times the state and nation are facing. However, it also would maintain, and in some cases expand when coupled with federal stimulus aid, nearly all educational, social, health and extracurricular services for all of the district's students.

"This has been the most challenging budget development process our district has faced in many years," said President Barbara Gaffuri, who in her 12th year is the board's longest-tenured member.

"The board views the proposed budget

as an investment that continues to support high-quality core academic programs for all students, including early childhood programs."

The proposed spending plan carries a 2.55 percent tax levy increase and is about \$7.9 million below the district's state-calculated contingency budget cap. The district's proposed budget represents an estimated increase of \$41 per \$100,000 of assessed value for city residents.

Due to the reduction in STAR aid passed by the Legislature, those with Basic STAR will see an additional one-time increase of \$53 and seniors with Enhanced STAR will see an additional one-time increase of \$97 in 2009-10.

The proposal calls for the elimination of 113.6 jobs, including 11 percent of the administrative workforce (six positions),

SCHOOL BUDGET VOTE
Tuesday, May 19
7 a.m. – 9 p.m.

7.2 percent of the support staff (46.8 positions) and 6.8 percent of the teaching workforce (60.8 positions).

More than three-quarters of the teaching positions would be realized from the discontinuation of the middle school program at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy, as well as changes in course scheduling at Albany High School and the delivery of some special education services.

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 19 vote, beginning with the May 5 budget hearing at 7 p.m. at Albany High School.

New polling locations for May 19 school budget vote

Voters in five of the city's 15 wards will have new polling locations this year for the City School District of Albany's budget vote Tuesday, May 19.

Renovations at Arbor Hill Elementary School and Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST), and the completion of the renovation project at New Scotland Elementary School (the former School 19) have changed voting locations in those neighborhoods.

The Arbor Hill Elementary voting location has been moved to Capital Woods Apartments, 200 Lark Dr.

Residents who voted last year at St. Teresa's School will vote at New Scotland Elementary, 369 New Scotland Ave.

The TOAST polling site has been relocated across the street to William S. Hackett Middle School, 45 Delaware Ave.

Voting at all 18 locations will be from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Polling sites for the budget vote are different from the polling sites used for city-wide elections. Follow the chart on the back page of this newsletter to learn where you vote in a school budget.

You also can find a searchable directory online at www.albanyschools.org.

Visit the 2009-10 Budget News section. If you have additional questions, please contact Catherine Cutting, clerk of the board, at 475-6010.

Please refer to page 4 for voting locations.



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



Maintaining strong programs for all students, fiscal responsibility for all residents

A school district faces two challenges each year in preparing its budget. It must fulfill its primary mission to provide high-quality programs for all of its students, and it must be mindful of its community's financial realities.

The City School District of Albany's proposed budget for 2009-10 seeks to strike that balance in a difficult economic climate.

On the one hand is a broad range of programs and services critical to the academic, social and emotional growth of our community's children, from prekindergarten through high school. On the other are rising costs in areas such as charter school payments and employee benefits, and falling revenue in state aid and interest income.

The \$203.8 million budget voters will consider May 19 cuts spending \$2.9 million from the current year, including the elimination of 113.6 jobs. However, it maintains nearly all programs and services, and, in some cases when coupled with federal stimulus aid, expands and adds programs with an eye toward the future.

"We have been able to maintain nearly all of our current programs in spite of the financial difficulties all school districts in New York state are facing," said Superintendent Eva C. Joseph, Ed.D.

Maintaining strong programs and services

The district will continue to support early childhood programs, including

full-day prekindergarten in all 12 elementary schools and a number of community-based locations.

Small class sizes will be maintained, with averages of 20 students at the elementary level, 24 in middle school and 25 in high school.

Music and art enrichment at all grade levels also will be maintained, as will **after-school programming** that serves more than 2,000 students daily.

The district will continue to invest in its teachers through **professional development programs** such as the National Urban Alliance for Effective Education, Columbia University Teachers College Writing Project, math and literacy coaches, and teacher mentoring.

(continued on page 3)

Budget Presentations

- May 5 – Albany High School, 700 Washington Ave., 7 p.m. (budget hearing)

- May 6 – Council of Albany Neighborhood Associations (CANA), Albany Public Library-Main Branch, 161 Washington Ave., 6:30 p.m. (community welcome)

- May 14 – Pine Hills Elementary School, 41 North Allen St., 7 p.m.

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

About the budget

The City School District of Albany's proposed 2009-10 budget represents a decrease of \$2.9 million from the budget for the current fiscal year. It is believed to be the first time that the district has cut spending from year to year, a reflection of the desire to minimize the impact of the economic downturn on taxpayers.

In a year in which the district again

faces rising costs in several areas, the proposal includes almost no cutbacks in programs and services while also recognizing the stark financial realities facing the state and nation.

The proposal includes the elimination of 113.6 jobs:

- 6 administrators (11 percent of that workforce)
- 46.8 support staff (7.2 percent of that workforce)

- 60.8 teachers (6.8 percent of that workforce)

Expenditures are being held flat or decreased in 76 percent of the line items. However, the district will face higher expenses in areas such as charter school payments and employee benefits.

The district will be required to file a Contract for Excellence again this year, mandating the fixed expenditure of \$2.4 million to continue educational initiatives



implemented under the contract for the current year.

The largest increase in the budget is the district's payments to charter schools, which will rise nearly \$1.4 million to \$26 million in spite of a state-mandated freeze on charter school tuition for 2009-10.

Projected STAR tax savings

New York state's STAR school property tax relief program is projected to continue this year both for qualifying senior citizens and other property owners.

The state has reduced the exemption in 2009-10 for Basic STAR from \$36,160 to \$32,180. For seniors, the exemption will decrease from \$68,940 to \$60,960. The negative impact of the changes in STAR aid can be seen in the box below titled "Estimated tax bill."

Senior citizens age 65 and older with an annual household income of less than \$73,000 per year are eligible for the Enhanced Star exemption. For all other homeowners, the Basic STAR exemption is applicable for a primary residence.

STAR savings are not automatic. Homeowners must apply through the city assessor's office to be eligible for the tax break. Senior citizens who qualify for Enhanced STAR must reapply each year. If you have questions, please contact the city assessor at 434-5155.

STAR does not provide the district any additional revenue, nor does it result in a loss of tax dollars. The state reimburses Albany dollar-for-dollar for the tax relief it provides district property owners.

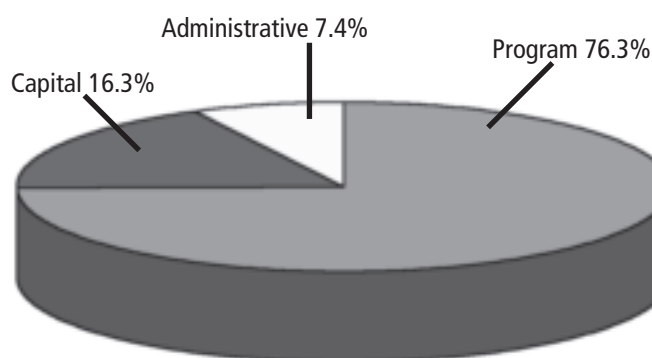
PROPOSED EXPENDITURES

	2008-09 Budget	2009-10 Proposed	Dollar Change
Program Budget	\$154,745,128	\$155,589,502	\$844,374
Instruction	122,370,139	121,146,060	-1,224,079
Charter School Payments	24,610,337	26,008,044	1,397,707
Pupil Transportation	6,681,662	6,874,509	192,847
Athletics	882,990	860,889	-22,101
Lunch Program Assistance	200,000	700,000	500,000
Capital Budget	\$36,357,690	\$33,157,590	-\$3,200,100
Debt Payments & Borrowings	17,143,651	14,253,788	-2,889,863
Building Rentals	412,438	181,306	-231,132
Operations/Maintenance/Capital	9,960,781	10,232,840	272,059
Utilities	6,471,820	6,120,656	-351,164
Tax Refunds & Judgments	2,369,000	2,369,000	0
Administrative Budget	\$15,638,670	\$15,093,858	-\$544,812
School Supervision	13,767,352	13,114,373	-652,979
Property & Liability Insurance	585,013	559,050	-25,963
Printing, Mailing & Data Processing	1,063,168	1,184,033	120,865
Legal & Other Services	223,137	236,402	13,265
Total Expenditures	\$206,741,488	\$203,840,950	-\$2,900,538

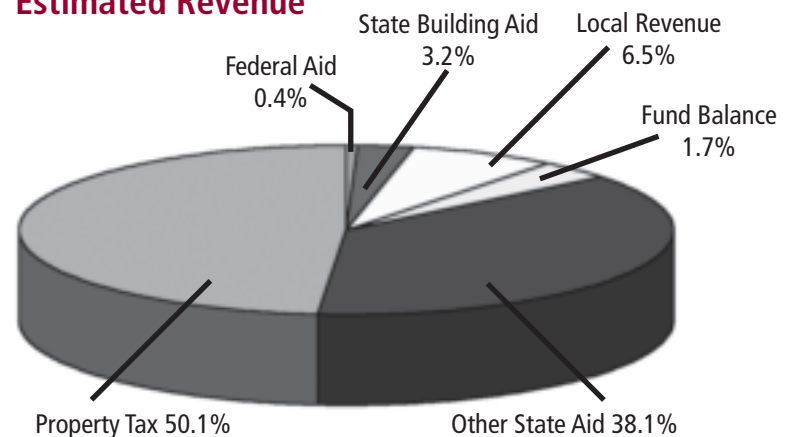
ESTIMATED REVENUE

	2008-09	2009-10	Dollar Change
Federal Aid	\$950,000	\$750,000	-\$200,000
Fund Balance	5,675,000	3,375,000	-2,300,000
Local Revenue	15,093,091	13,346,600	-1,746,491
State Building Aid	7,707,647	6,582,463	-1,125,184
Other State Aid	76,754,359	77,661,039	906,680
Property Tax Levy	100,561,391	103,125,848	2,564,457
Allowance for Deferred Taxes	-	(1,000,000)	-1,000,000
Total Revenue	\$206,741,488	\$203,840,950	-\$2,900,538

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.

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

Estimated tax bill

A property assessed at \$100,000

	2008-09	2009-10	Estimated change
Without STAR exemption	\$1,630	\$1,671	\$41
With Basic STAR for other homeowners	\$1,040	\$1,134	\$94
With Enhanced Star for senior citizens	\$514	\$652	\$138

* These estimates are preliminary and ultimately will be adjusted by final assessment data subject to approval by the state at a later date.

Propositions on the May 19 ballot

Albany voters will be asked to consider the proposed \$203.8 million school budget for 2009-10. Here is what will appear on the ballot.



Proposition #1

Shall the resolution adopted by the Board of Education on April 7, 2009, authorizing the City School District of Albany to expend the sum in the amount of \$203,840,950 during the 2009-2010 school year and a levy tax therefore be approved?

YES NO

Voters also will be asked to consider a \$4.8 million tax levy proposed by the Albany Public Library. *This proposition is unrelated to the school district budget, and, therefore, has no impact on school taxes.* Here is what will appear on the ballot.



Proposition #2

Shall the sum of \$4,847,657 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 three (3) 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, please call Interim Library Director Tim Burke at 427-4379.

Federal stimulus aid

How the federal stimulus package helped Albany's public schools in developing the 2009-10 budget:

Stabilization Aid – \$3.7 million

- Restored governor's "deficit reduction" of state aid

IDEA (Special Education) – \$1.74 million

- Maintaining programs:
 - Staffing
 - Professional development – National Urban Alliance and Columbia University Teachers College
- New programs:
 - Programming for students with autism
 - Two added staff positions
 - Professional development related to autism, behavior and academics
 - Web-based software

Title I – \$1.32 million

- Maintaining programs:
 - Professional development – National Urban Alliance and Columbia University Teachers College
- New programs:
 - Expand Reading Recovery
 - Instructional coaches and Academic Intervention Services (AIS) support
- Elementary summer school:
 - Longer school day, transportation, centralized location
 - University partnership, enrichment opportunities
- Middle level summer school
 - Service-learning projects with business and community
 - Additional AIS services and supports

Maintaining strong programs...

(continued from page 1)

The budget proposes to maintain the **enhanced alternative education** program put in place this year with the expansion of the Tutorial Opportunity Program for Suspended Students (TOPS).

Summer school programs will be maintained and expanded with the support of federal stimulus aid.

The district also will continue the programming that makes Albany High School **one of the Capital Region's most comprehensive high schools** for students at all levels.

This includes the International Baccalaureate program, 17 Advanced Placement courses and the Career Explorations program that provides seniors real-world experience in many career areas.

Investing in the future

Beginning this fall, Albany High School will be one of just 33 American high schools offering an **Academy of Engineering**.

The academy will enroll up to 75 freshmen in its first year and builds on Albany High's existing programs in science, technology, engineering and math.

The budget also supports the next steps in **implementing the comprehensive strategic plan**.

Among the priorities in 2009-10 will be planning for a redesign of both the academic programs and facilities at Albany High, and the work of a think tank to plan for enhanced alternative education programs.

The district also will continue work on the **final phases of its current facilities project**, with the planned completion of Giffen Memorial Elementary School in August, Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST) in January and Arbor Hill Elementary School in August 2010.

Program changes

The proposed budget calls for eliminating **foreign language** at the elementary level while at the same time doubling the amount of foreign language instruction in all grade 6 classrooms. This will save about \$243,000.

Students in grades 7 and 8 will continue to receive foreign language every day for the full school year.

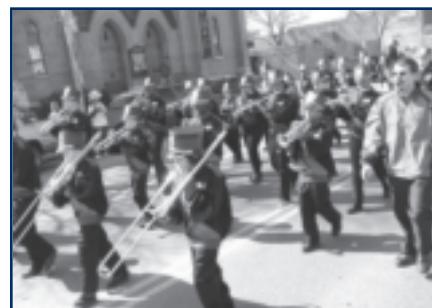
In special education, the district is **restructuring services for students integrated in regular education classrooms** to provide more direct instruction and more use of resource rooms. Staffing and services for students in self-contained classrooms will remain the same.

Savings through consolidation

The district will realize savings in 2009-10 through a number of consolidations.

Eliminating Philip Livingston Magnet Academy as a middle school due to declining enrollment will save about \$1.8 million. Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School and William S. Hackett Middle School will be the primary facilities for grades 6-8, and North Albany Academy will continue as the district's only pre-K-8 school.

Albany School of Humanities (ASH)



Albany's Marching Falcons will represent New York in the Memorial Day parade in Washington, D.C.

and Giffen will continue with grade 6, and Arbor Hill, Pine Hills Elementary School and Eagle Point Elementary School also will retain grade 6 next year.

The district will **relocate the Adult Learning Center** program from 27 Western Ave. to Livingston, saving \$175,000.

The **113.6 positions** scheduled for elimination, many from consolidations, will allow the district to reduce the budget proposal by about \$5.8 million.

Of the **60.8 teaching positions** scheduled to be eliminated (6.8 percent of the district's 895 total teachers), more than three-quarters would come from the discontinuation of the middle school program at Livingston, as well as changes in course scheduling at Albany High and the delivery of some special education services.

Declining enrollment district-wide due to the increase in charter school enrollment also required the elimination of teaching and other positions.

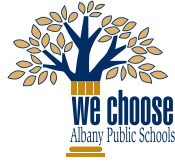
Six administrators (11 percent of 54 total administrators) and **46.8 support staff** (7.2 percent of 652 total support staff) also are scheduled to be eliminated.

Albany's public schools by the numbers

- **Zero** – Capital Region high schools offering an Academy of Engineering besides Albany High
- **1** – New York bands in the Memorial Day parade in Washington, D.C. – Albany's Marching Falcons
- **2** – Capital Region high schools with more students taking AP exams than Albany High in 2008
- **2.55** – Percent of the proposed tax levy increase for 2009-10
- **3** – Themed magnet elementary schools in the district
- **4** – Foreign languages available at Albany High
- **6** – Bands at Albany High
- **7** – Action teams that developed the new Strategic Plan
- **8** – Grade level students can complete their high school-level Regents requirements in Spanish
- **12** – Number of elementary schools offering full-day pre-K (*all of them!*)
- **13** – Number of Albany High varsity sports teams earning state scholar/athlete recognition in the 2008-09 fall and winter seasons (*spring TBD!*)
- **17** – Advanced Placement courses at Albany High
- **18** – Budget voting locations (*check out the chart on pg. 4 to find yours!*)
- **19** – The date in May of this year's school budget vote (*don't forget!*)
- **28** – Courses available for college credit at Albany High through the College in the High School program
- **33** – U.S. high schools offering an Academy of Engineering when Albany High launches its program this fall
- **66** (*and counting!*) – Clubs and extracurricular activities at Albany High
- **90** – Percent of students in the Class of 2008 accepted to college
- **100** – Percent whole grain hamburger and hot dog rolls served in school lunches
- **145** – Cumulative years of K-12 experience among the five member's of the Superintendent's Cabinet
- **214** – Games won by the Albany High girls' basketball team under coach Leslie Bogucki, who retired from coaching this spring
- **313** – Albany High students taking AP exams in 2008 (*among the most in the state!*)
- **500** – Slices of pizza served daily at Albany High
- **516** – Members of the Albany High Class of 2008 (*the largest ever!*)
- **586** – Pre-K spots district-wide
- **2010** – Year the district completes its elementary and middle school facilities project with the scheduled re-opening of Arbor Hill Elementary School
- **5,400** – Number of student lunches served daily
- **475-6010** – Phone number to schedule a presentation for your organization to learn more about the 2009-10 budget proposal

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Polling locations

7 a.m. - 9 p.m.

The City School District of Albany has approved new voting locations in five of the city's 15 wards. Find your location below, or use the searchable street directory on our Web site, www.albanyschools.org.

1st Ward, Election Districts 1-3 William S. Hackett Middle School 45 Delaware Avenue	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 Avenue	8th Ward, Election Districts 4-8 & 10 St. Catherine of Siena School 35 Hurst Avenue
2nd Ward, Election Districts 1-3, 5-13 & 15-17 Giffen Memorial Elementary School 274 South Pearl Street	9th Ward, Election Districts 1-9 New Scotland Elementary School 369 New Scotland Avenue
2nd Ward, Election Districts 4 & 14 City Parks & Recreation Building 7 Hoffman Avenue	10th Ward, Election Districts 1-8 Albany High School 700 Washington Avenue
3rd Ward, Election Districts 1-15 Sheridan Preparatory Academy 400 Sheridan Avenue	11th Ward, Election Districts 1-8 First Lutheran Church 646 State Street
4th Ward, Election Districts 1-5 & 12 North Albany Academy 570 N. Pearl Street	12th Ward, Election Districts 1-3, 5 & 11 Harriet Gibbons High School 75 Watervliet Avenue
4th Ward, Election Districts 6-11 Capital Woods Apartments 200 Lark Drive	12th Ward, District 4 & 9 North Albany Academy 570 N. Pearl Street
5th Ward, Election Districts 1-12 Philip Livingston Magnet Academy 315 Northern Blvd.	12th Ward, Election Districts 6-8 & 10 Montessori Magnet School 65 Tremont Street
6th Ward, Election Districts 1-7 & 9 William S. Hackett Middle School 45 Delaware Avenue	13th Ward, Election Districts 1-6 & 8-9 Pine Hills Elementary School 41 North Allen Street
6th Ward, Election District 8 First Lutheran Church Technology 646 State Street	13th Ward, District 7 Eagle Point Elementary School 1044 Western Avenue
7th Ward, Election Districts 1, 4-6, 8 & 9 Delaware Community School 43 Bertha Street	14th Ward, Election Districts 1-10 Eagle Point Elementary School 1044 Western Avenue
7th WARD Election Districts 2 & 3 New Scotland Elementary School 369 New Scotland Avenue	15th Ward, Election Districts 1-3 & 8 Eagle Point Elementary School 1044 Western Avenue
7th Ward, Election District 7 Albany School of Humanities 108 Whitehall Road	15th Ward, Election Districts 4 - 7 Teresian House, 200 Washington Avenue

Colored boxes indicate where changes have been made

Voting requirements

To vote on the City School District of Albany's proposed 2009-10 budget, you must be:

- Registered to vote with either the Albany County Board of Elections or the City School District of Albany **by Tuesday, May 5**;
- 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 prior to the vote.

You must provide identification at the time of registration and voting. For more information, please contact Catherine Cutting, clerk of the board, at 475-6010.

Absentee ballots

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

Others who require an absentee ballot because of illness, hospitalization, vacation, studies, business or incarceration should contact the district at 475-6010. You also can download the absentee ballot application from the 2009-10 Budget News section of our Web site, www.albanyschools.org.

Applications must be mailed to the district clerk seven days prior to the vote, by May 12, for an absentee ballot to be mailed to a resident's home. If an absentee ballot is to be picked up personally, the application must be delivered to the district clerk one day in advance of the budget vote, by Monday, May 18.

A completed absentee ballot must be returned to the district clerk, located in the District Administration Building in Academy Park, by 5 p.m. the day of the school budget vote, May 19.

What happens if the budget is not approved?

If voters do not approve the proposed budget May 19, under state law the Board of Education has three alternatives:

- Put the same budget up for a re-vote
- Present a revised budget for voter consideration
- Adopt a contingency budget (The board opted for this plan for 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. State law mandates that a contingency budget cannot exceed the adopted budget when the adopted budget is below the contingency cap. The district's contingency cap in 2009-10 is \$211.7 million, \$7.9 million above the district's adopted budget of \$203.8 million.

Given that the district's adopted budget is below the contingency cap for next year, the maximum budget the board could adopt under a contingency status would be \$203.5 million. This would represent \$363,341 in additional budget reductions and would carry a tax levy increase of 2.19 percent.

State law closely regulates district expenditures under a contingency budget. For example, the district cannot spend money on:

- Student supplies
- Equipment
- Certain raises

And, additionally:

- Community groups would have to pay to use school buildings.