



Highlights

A publication of the Harrison Central School District

SPECIAL BUDGET ISSUE

Dear Community Members,

Each year our budget preparation is focused on how best to advance the very rigorous academic goals established in our district's strategic plan. The superintendent, the assistant superintendent for business, the board of education, and valued members of the citizen's budget advisory committee worked to insure that educational excellence and long range fiscal planning are the cornerstones of the 2005-06 budget.

In order to achieve these goals several complex issues needed to be considered and addressed: managing significant mandated cost increases, growing tax certiorari (tax challenges), and a growing enrollment.

Like all public school systems in New York State the district is faced with state mandated increases to the teachers' retirement system of 1.1 million dollars, and a 9.0% increase in health insurance. These mandates combined with other contractual obligations account for 6.5% of the 7.5% budget to budget increase.

During the past two years the district will have paid in excess of \$2.2 million in tax certiorari settlements. These tax challenges were managed by using a special reserve fund designated for this purpose. As part of this budget the board has committed \$720,000 in order to keep this reserve adequately funded, and to protect against the cost of short term borrowing. The budget also provides the funds required to prepare for an anticipated bond referendum.

In order to reduce the impact of the budget, the board has also elected to return \$600,000 to the taxpayer.

In this very challenging environment the district needed to find ways to reduce cost and reallocate existing resources in order to advance an agenda of academic excellence. These funds were realized through efficiencies and reductions in the existing budget thus providing the opportunity to continue to advance the district's educational agenda.

We believe this budget meets its most important challenge: to improve opportunities for all children in our district. The following initiatives are included as a part of this proposed budget.

- *Implementation of HHS Writing Center open to all students throughout the school day*
- *Increased Academic support at HHS*
- *Elementary Foreign Language Program*
- *Middle Level Math Book Adoption*
- *Smartboard technology at LMK and the elementary schools*
- *250 new computer stations for student use*
- *Expanded Special Education Services at HHS*
- *Full time strings instructor at the elementary level*
- *Elementary morning drop-off*
- *\$720,000 to protect against tax challenges*
- *\$600,000 returned to tax payer to reduce the tax rate*
- *Five year lease for new copier equipment at each school*
- *Data warehousing to enhance student performance analysis*
- *Implementation of digital curriculum mapping*

Despite enrollment increases, and mandated services costs, the district has been able to formulate a budget that is both fiscally prudent and yet advances our academic vision that each child shall have the best possible chance to flourish.

Sincerely,

Harrison Board of Education, David Singer President, David Brunner, Vice President, Debbie Imperia, Daniel Monteforte, Esq., Georgia Riedel, Philip Silano, Joan Tiburzi

*Louis N. Wool
Superintendent of Schools*



The 2005-2006 Proposed School Budget Seeks to Sustain Improvement and Increase Opportunities for All Children

Improved instruction at all levels and increasing opportunities for each of the projected 3,549 students in the Harrison Central School District continue to be the driving forces behind the 2005-06 school budget. The Board of Education and superintendent have developed a budget that continues to support the community's commitment to excellence and responsibility. This budget maximizes both opportunities for our children and value to our taxpayers.

Diligent management, reductions and reallocation of resources once again open the doors to improve opportunities for every child K through 12. Highlights of the programs and initiatives included in this year's budget are:

HARRISON HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS

- HHS Writing Center
- HHS Literacy Initiative
- Expanded Special Education Services
- Expanded Co-teaching
- Expanded Academic Intervention Service

INSTRUCTIONAL INITIATIVES

- Elementary Foreign Language Program
- Math and Science hands-on materials to support inquiry-based learning
- Middle Level Math Book Adoption
- Maintain Professional Development

THE ARTS

- Full time string instructor
- Sustain music and art funding level

TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS

- 250 new computers (LMK included)
- Smartboard installation at LMK and elementary schools
- Data Warehousing
- Curriculum Mapping



LONG RANGE FISCAL PLANNING

- Continue to Appropriate Funds to Reduce Tax Rate \$600,000
- Appropriate \$720,000 for Certiorari Payments in 05-06
- Budgeted Funds for up front bond costs



Transportation Referendum to Unify Elementary Busing Distance

A separate referendum will be placed on the ballot that proposes a single distance of one half mile for all students in grades K-5. The current policy, which requires voter approval to be modified, provides for busing of one half mile for students in grade K-3, and one mile for students in grade 4-5.

The cost of this modification is \$111, 236. This item is not permitted to be included as a part of the proposed school budget.

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED 2005/2006 BUDGET

PROGRAM	BUDGET 04-05	BUDGET 05-06
Regular Instruction	\$24,891,334	\$26,804,487
Special Education Instruction	\$9,097,477	\$10,507,548
In Service Training	\$565,323	\$590,000
Library/Audio-Visual	\$1,018,063	\$1,179,490
Computer Assisted Instruction	\$927,688	\$942,397
Guidance	\$1,057,048	\$1,032,862
Health Services	\$713,454	\$811,031
Psychological & Social Work Services	\$806,083	\$867,988
Co-Curricular Activities	\$327,389	\$360,533
Interscholastic Athletics	\$749,061	\$780,917
Pupil Transportation	\$4,325,284	\$4,545,703
Benefits	\$12,166,453	\$13,169,814
Legal	\$198,750	\$218,850
Interfund Transfer to Special Aid	\$35,000	\$40,000
PROGRAM COMPONENT	\$56,878,407	\$61,851,620
ADMINISTRATION		
Board of Education	\$118,632	\$120,100
Central Administration	\$410,648	\$432,474
Business Administration	\$768,411	\$807,602
Legal	\$198,750	\$218,850
Personnel & Public Information	\$544,738	\$594,748
Central Printing & Mailing	\$60,950	\$77,150
Central Data Processing	\$663,572	\$707,001
Special Items	\$511,637	\$553,087
Curriculum Development & Supervision	\$4,589,380	\$4,577,312
Benefits	\$2,068,014	\$2,227,106
ADMINISTRATIVE COMPONENT	\$9,934,732	\$10,315,430
CAPITAL		
Buildings Operation and Maintenance	\$5,816,613	\$6,082,134
Judgements and Claims	\$90,000	\$812,000
Debt Service and Interfund Transfers*	\$3,854,647	\$3,423,571
Benefits	\$1,320,467	\$1,285,725
CAPITAL COMPONENT	\$11,081,727	\$11,603,430
TOTAL BUDGET	\$77,894,866	\$83,770,480

* Included in this item are various district-wide projects and funding for preliminary bond costs

REVENUES AND THE TAX RATE

	BUDGET 04-05	BUDGET 05-06	%CHANGE
GENERAL FUND BUDGET	\$77,894,866	\$83,770,480	7.54%
County Sales Tax	\$785,000	\$870,000	10.83%
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$194,600	\$233,100	19.78%
Health Services for Other Districts	\$212,000	\$210,000	-0.94%
Interest & Earnings	\$150,000	\$270,000	80.00%
State Aid	\$3,144,704	\$3,425,928	8.94%
Federal Aid	\$20,000	\$25,000	25.00%
Interfund Transfer - Capital	\$582,597	\$0	
TOTAL NON-PROPERTY TAX REVENUES	\$5,088,901	\$5,034,028	-1.08%
APPROPRIATED FUND BALANCE	\$900,000	\$600,000	-33.33%
REAL PROPERTY TAXES	\$71,905,965	\$78,136,452	8.66%
TAX RATES (PER \$1,000 OF ASSESSED VALUATION)			
Harrison	\$476.25	\$518.97	8.97%
Rye	\$422.04	\$0.0093**	Full value
North Castle	\$355.95	\$401.90	12.91%

** Rye Town recently re-assessed all Rye Town properties. Assessment is now at full value.

Questions & Answers

Why is the majority of the school budget funded through property taxes?

Public education primarily is funded through a combination of property taxes and state aid. The state determines its funding to school districts based on a predetermined formula. Harrison is identified as a low-need district and does not receive a significant amount of state aid. Other sources of district revenue include interest earned on investments, county sales tax, and health services billed to other districts, but these are less significant compared to state aid.

How does the district fund tax certiorari?

The board of education has adopted a philosophy of responsible long-term financial planning. Therefore, the board is committed to maintaining a reserve dedicated to paying potential tax certiorari (tax challenges). Without this special reserve, future tax certiorari would require funding either through annual budget appropriations or issuing long-term debt (serial bonds).

What happens if the budget doesn't pass?

The board could choose to submit the same or a modified budget to voters. The board may choose to adopt and operate under an austerity budget, which could result in significant program cuts throughout the district.

What is an austerity budget?

By state law, a district adopting an austerity (contingency) budget must continue to honor all contracts, all state-mandated items, all items necessary for the educational program, health and safety of students and staff, and preservation of property. If it becomes necessary to have a contingency budget, it must be capped at the lesser of either 120% of the CPI or 4% over last year's budget.



Senior Citizen Tax Exemptions

Senior citizens, 65 years or older, can take advantage of two programs for partial exemptions from school taxes. The deadline is June 1 for this local program and the STAR program. Call the Town Assessor's office, 914-670-3060, for further information.

If you have owned a house for at least a year, use this chart. The scale includes income from social security.

INCOME	REDUCTION
\$0.00 — \$24,000.00	50%
\$24,000.01 — \$24,999.99	45%
\$25,000.00 — \$25,999.99	40%
\$26,000.00 — \$26,999.99	35%
\$27,000.00 — \$27,899.99	30%
\$27,900.00 — \$28,799.99	25%
\$28,800.00 — \$29,699.99	20%
\$29,700.00 — \$30,599.99	15%
\$30,600.00 — \$31,499.99	10%
\$31,500.00 — \$32,399.99	5%


STAR Tax Relief


The New York School Tax Relief Program (STAR) is available to help reduce the amount of school taxes paid by homeowners, including cooperative apartment and condominium owners. Two STAR programs are available:


- The Basic STAR program is available to all property owners, regardless of age or income. To apply for the Basic STAR exemption, applicants must submit an application form and proof of residency — driver's license, voter registration card, car registration or similar documents.
- The Enhanced STAR program is available to homeowners who are at least 65 years of age (if married, only one must meet the age requirement) with a combined federal adjusted gross income not exceeding \$64,650. Applicants must submit proof of age and income to qualify for the enhanced benefit.

Homeowners applying for STAR for the first time must do so by June 1, 2005. The town assessor's office automatically mailed a questionnaire to eligible homeowners in March. Applications and supporting documents can be mailed or filed in person at the assessor's office, 1 Heineman Place, Harrison, NY, 10528. For more information about the STAR program, call (914) 670-3060.


Did you know?


 Harrison had its **first ever Intel Science Award Semi-finalist**. HHS Senior, Rohan Kumthekar, who attended Parsons and LMK was one of 300 outstanding young scientists named as a semi-finalist in the most highly regarded pre-college science competitions.


 Harrison's elementary schools have **sustained their exemplar performance** on the New York State Assessments, with 93% and 92% of the students scoring at or above state standard on the math and English language arts exam respectively; 54% (ELA) and 57% (math) of our students scored at the mastery level on these exams.


 98% of Harrison's elementary school students **scored at or above the state standard** on the New York State science exam.


 Eleven Harrison High School students were recognized as **2005 National Merit Scholars**, two of whom were awarded a Certificate of Merit as finalists.


 The Harrison High School Math Team placed **2nd in Westchester County** and 12th in New York State.


 The LMK Math Team placed **4th in the state Math Counts competition**. Woo-Hyung Cho, an 8th grade student placed 4th individually and will continue on to the national competition.


 The Harrison High School Girls Swim and Boys Wrestling teams each won the **League Championship**.


 The Harrison High School Cheerleaders placed in the regional competition and were **invited to compete at the National High School Cheerleading Competition**.

 The New York State Band Directors Association held the Middle and High School Honor Band at Syracuse, New York and **featured two LMK students**, Daniel Zaltz on French Horn and Matt Crozier on Trombone.

 The HHS Band **boasted All State participants** Isabelle Archils, Melissa Pearlman, Sam Handler, and Ulysses Torres, Alexa Lutchen was selected a Berklee College Soloist Jazz Festival Award winner.

 The HHS Band was one of a **select national group** invited to march down Main Street Disney World as participants in Disney's MAGIC MUSIC DAYS.

 The results of the English and Math A January Regents show **significant improvement** in all areas.

 The New York City Chamber of Commerce **Humanitarian Award** was presented to the Harrison Central School District's

PT Council for its efforts to build a school for victims of the Tsunami.

 Harrison Avenue and Parsons Elementary Schools received Certificates of Recognition for **High Student Performance** by the NY State Department of Education on the NYSESLAT, which documents annual progress of English Language Learners.



VOTER INFORMATION

Budget and Transportation Referendum Vote and Trustee Election

Tuesday, May 17, 2005, 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

at your neighborhood elementary school

VOTER ELIGIBILITY

Any person residing within the Harrison School District for a minimum of 30 days prior to the day of the vote, who is a citizen of the United States, and who is 18 years of age or older, is eligible to vote.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Applications for an absentee ballot may be obtained at the Office of the District Clerk, 50 Union Ave., Harrison, or may be downloaded from the District web site, www.harrisoncsd.org. Completed applications may be received by mail by 3:00 p.m. May 10, 2005 or delivered in person no later than 3:00 p.m. May 16, 2005. All absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk, at his office, no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 17, 2005.

REGISTRATION

Persons eligible to vote, who are not currently registered, may register with the Westchester County Board of Elections. Registration materials are available at the following locations:

- Office of the District Clerk, Harrison Central School District, 50 Union Ave., Harrison, NY
(Business hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)
- Board of Elections, 25 Quarropas St., White Plains, NY (914) 995-5715.
(Business hours are 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)
- Online at www.westchestergov.com/boe.

REMEMBER TO VOTE ON MAY 17!

For more information, visit our web site at www.harrisoncsd.org or call 914-835-3300.

Harrison Central School District Harrison, NY 10528

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Debbie Imperia
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