



Highlights

A publication of the Harrison Central School District

SPECIAL BUDGET ISSUE

Superintendent's Message

Dear Community Members,

This year more than ever, taxpayers can see the dramatic improvements that have occurred since the Board of Education adopted a strategic plan in 2003, which focused on high academic performance across the district, stringent systems of accountability throughout the organization, and improved financial management and planning.

This proposed budget continues to build on our recent successes and maintains the district's commitment to provide the best educational program in the region. This year's targeted initiatives are consistent with the long-term strategy established by the superintendent and board to achieve the highest possible standards for student performance, provide the programs necessary for our students to be competitive in a global economy, and sustain an intense focus on accountability and prudent financial management.

We would like to highlight some of our recent successes with you. This past year our high school distinguished itself by improving in both state and national standings. Our Regents diploma rate rose to 91%, and we expect to exceed this performance in this year's graduating class. Our high school has been ranked among the country's top 200 high schools for the second consecutive year in the annual Newsweek ranking of the top 1,000 high schools in the nation. This reinforces our belief that if you believe in a student's capacity to achieve, and provide the appropriate resources; students will not only meet, but exceed those expectations.

Our middle school continues to be a leader in setting high expectations. In April 2006, the middle school's creative writing magazine was selected as superior, the highest ranking awarded by the National Council of Teachers of English. Next year more students than ever will be studying advanced mathematics. Last year, with your support, the district successfully implemented an elementary foreign language program for every student in kindergarten through 5th grade. After only seven months it has been recognized as an exemplary program by leading experts in the field. As we have come to expect, our elementary schools remain among the highest performing in the region. Many of our teachers have been recognized for their teaching practices, and they have been selected by three national organizations in their training videos.

Each of these accomplishments has occurred in a climate of careful long and short term financial planning. Our commitment to taxpayers to operate our organization efficiently and responsibly remains steadfast, and we continue to realize efficiencies at every level. More effective investment strategies have contributed to a 57% increase in revenues over the past three years. By funding our reserve for tax certiorari, we eliminated the need for short term borrowing to pay for tax challenges. Increasing the amount of work done by our buildings and grounds department has reduced the need for outside contractors. Our commitment to highly competitive bidding and tighter controls on personnel and hiring also has served to insure a more effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

Despite growing enrollment, unfunded federal and state mandates, we remain committed to providing one of the best educational programs in the region. We are confident that the proposed 2006-07 budget provides the highest academic standards and maximizes both fiscal and operational efficiencies.

Sincerely,

Louis N. Wool, Superintendent of Schools

Board of Education

David Singer, President; Philp Silano, Vice President; Joseph Acocella, Jr.; David Brunner; Debbie Imperia; Georgia Riedel; Joan Tiburzi



Academic Excellence, Expanded Opportunity and Increased Efficiency Remain Focus of 2006-07 Proposed Budget

Opening doors and providing a high quality education for every student that attends the Harrison Central School District, while responsibly managing costs, continue to be the driving forces behind the proposed 2006-07 budget. The Board of Education and administration remain mindful of their responsibility to offer the most value to taxpayers. This budget includes many efficiencies and increased revenues as a result of timely billings to other districts, increased sales tax and improved cash management strategies.

The Superintendent, the Board of Education, along with community members as part of the Citizens Budget Advisory Committee, have worked diligently to prepare and present a budget that continues to support academic excellence throughout our six schools.

Included in the proposed budget are **eight new teaching positions** driven by enrollment increases throughout the district, **expanded special education services, additional ESL staff, and a new guidance counselor** at Harrison High School. Our commitment to supporting excellence for all students continues with the implementation of a **summer school for 9th and 10th graders who are struggling**, as well as a **summer program for AP and honors students**. The budget also provides

funding for the first year of a three year transportation contract. The full range of initiatives in the proposed budget include:

NEW INITIATIVES

- Guidance Counselor at HHS
- Summer School for 9th and 10th graders
- AP and Honors Summer Institute
- Summer Writing Workshop
- Classroom Teleconferencing
- New Band Uniforms

CONTINUED INITIATIVES

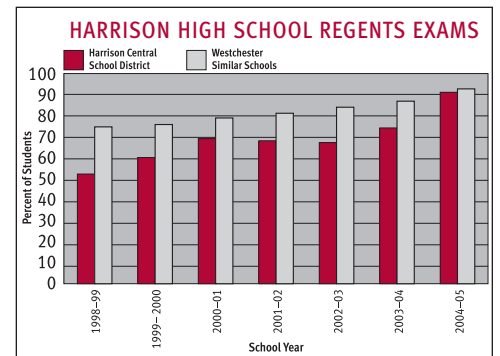
- Elementary Foreign Language
- Strings Instruction K-12
- Literacy Initiatives K-12
- HHS Writing Center
- Textbook Replacement Program
- Classroom Computer Replacement Program (210)
- Smartboards in Classrooms (25)

FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS

- Additional Educational Space at HHS, LMK and HAS
- Self-contained Maintenance Facility
- Upgrades at Athletic Fields

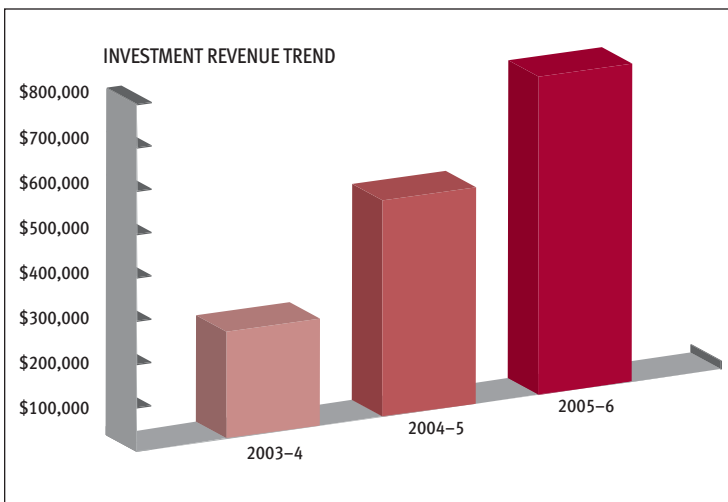


HHS Achieves Higher Academic Standards

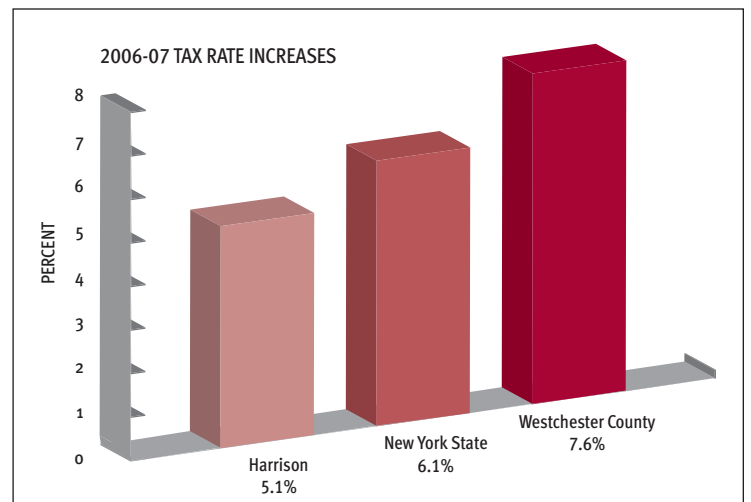


The Harrison High School Regents diploma rate reached 91% for the Class of 2005, up from 74% the previous year.

Revenue and Tax Rate Information



Over the past three years, investment revenues have grown by 197% as a result of sound fiscal planning, responsible business management and favorable market conditions.



At 5.1%, the 2006-07 tax rate increase for Harrison is 1% lower than the statewide average and 2.5% lower than the county average.

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED 2006/2007 BUDGET

PROGRAM	BUDGET 05-06	BUDGET 06-07
Regular Instruction	\$26,804,487	\$27,421,581
Special Education Instruction	\$10,507,548	\$11,990,138
In Service Training	\$590,000	\$565,000
Library/Audio-Visual	\$1,179,490	\$1,095,366
Computer Assisted Instruction	\$942,397	\$845,929
Guidance	\$1,032,862	\$1,146,131
Health Services	\$811,031	\$871,013
Psychological & Social Work Services	\$867,988	\$993,544
Co-Curricular Activities	\$360,533	\$378,871
Interscholastic Athletics	\$780,917	\$853,752
Pupil Transportation	\$4,656,939	\$5,204,109
Benefits	\$13,169,814	\$14,347,356
Legal	\$218,850	\$234,016
Interfund Transfer to Special Aid	\$40,000	\$65,000
PROGRAM COMPONENT	\$61,962,856	\$66,011,806
ADMINISTRATION		
Board of Education	\$120,100	\$112,900
Central Administration	\$432,474	\$433,767
Business Administration	\$807,602	\$826,443
Legal	\$218,850	\$234,016
Personnel & Public Information	\$594,748	\$621,375
Central Printing & Mailing	\$77,150	\$121,650
Central Data Processing	\$707,001	\$690,352
Special Items	\$553,087	\$612,833
Curriculum Development & Supervision	\$4,577,312	\$4,514,742
Benefits	\$2,227,106	\$2,376,023
ADMINISTRATIVE COMPONENT	\$10,315,430	\$10,544,101
CAPITAL		
Buildings Operation and Maintenance	\$6,082,134	\$7,017,397
Judgements and Claims	\$812,000	\$810,000
Debt Service and Interfund Transfers	\$3,423,571	\$3,366,846
Benefits	\$1,285,725	\$1,352,346
CAPITAL COMPONENT	\$11,603,430	\$12,546,589
TOTAL BUDGET	\$83,881,716	\$89,102,496

REVENUES AND THE TAX RATE

	BUDGET 05-06	BUDGET 06-07	% CHANGE
GENERAL FUND BUDGET	\$83,881,716	\$89,102,496	6.22%
County Sales Tax	\$870,000	\$1,030,000	18.39%
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$233,100	\$331,500	42.21%
Health Services for Other Districts	\$210,000	\$225,000	7.14%
Interest & Earnings	\$270,000	\$635,000	135.19%
State Aid	\$3,425,928	\$3,625,398	5.82%
Federal Aid	\$25,000	\$25,000	0.00%
Interfund Transfer - Capital	\$0	\$125,881	
TOTAL NON-PROPERTY TAX REVENUES	\$5,034,028	\$5,997,779	19.14%
APPROPRIATED FUND BALANCE	\$600,000	\$700,000	16.67%
REAL PROPERTY TAXES	\$78,247,688	\$82,404,717	5.31%
ESTIMATED TAX RATES (PER \$1,000 OF ASSESSED VALUATION)			
Harrison	\$519.39	\$545.83	5.09%
Rye Town	\$9.30	\$9.77	5.06%
North Castle	\$402.53	\$422.96	5.07%

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 \$66,050. 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, 2006. 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.

HCS D is on the Move! Did you know about these accomplishments?

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- 🐾 Last year Harrison High School achieved its **highest ever** Regents Diploma rate - 91% .
- 🐾 Harrison High School has been **ranked among the country's top 200 high schools in *Newsweek* magazine** for the past two years.
- 🐾 The National Council of Teachers of English annual literary magazine competition ranked **Harrison High School's magazine, *Imagine*, as excellent and LMK's magazine, *Literature Molded by Kids*, as superior.**
- 🐾 The Harrison High School **Math Team placed 1st** in Westchester County and 9th in New York State.
- 🐾 **Eight Harrison High School students** were recognized in the **2006 National Merit Scholarship Program.**
- 🐾 Two **HHS students** were selected as part of the **honor band** by the New York State Band Directors Association.
- 🐾 **Nine Harrison High School students** were selected by the **Westchester County School Music Association** as Area **All State** Members.
- 🐾 The **Westchester County Music Association All County Jazz Ensemble** included six **Harrison High School** students.
- 🐾 The **HHS band** competed with high school bands throughout the country at the **Williamsburg Heritage Festival** in April and was awarded a **gold and three silver medals.** The Percussion Ensemble received the **Judges Choice Award for Best Performance**, and the **Festival Best Combined Scores Award** was presented to the **Marching Band and Percussion Ensemble.**
- 🐾 Ten HHS fall and winter athletic teams were recognized as **Scholar Athlete Teams.**
- 🐾 Harrison's four **elementary schools** continue to rank among the **top in the county on the New York State Assessments.**

TEACHER RECOGNITION

- 🐾 Scholastic, the largest publisher of educational resources in the world, selected Harrison teachers to appear in a **professional training video** about 6+1 Traits of Writing, the district's K-12 writing curriculum.



- 🐾 **Louise Cleveland**, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, has been **nominated for the Distinguished Administrators Award** for her work in implementing our elementary foreign language program.
- 🐾 **Cindy Strickland**, a University of Virginia Professor and expert in Differentiated Instruction, **selected Harrison teachers** to model differentiated teaching strategies for the nationally recognized ***Video Journal.***
- 🐾 **Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development** (ASCD), the most widely respected educational professional development organization in the world **selected Harrison teachers** to model the integration of ESL literacy strategies into content based classrooms.

FINANCIAL IMPROVEMENTS

- 🐾 Through careful long range planning, **HCS D has settled approximately \$3 million tax certiorari** without relying on long term financing through issuing bonds.
- 🐾 **HCS D is presenting a budget with one of the lowest tax rate increases in the county.**
- 🐾 The 2006-07 budget includes a **\$700,000 reduction to the tax levy** to offset the tax rate.
- 🐾 Last year the district replaced copiers through a competitive bidding process, which resulted in greater speed, more advanced technology and a **savings of \$90,000 per year.**
- 🐾 Improved investment strategies have **increased the district's investment income by 197%** over the past three years. In total, local revenues have increased by 58% over the past three years. **Increased revenues translate into a reduced impact on taxpayers.**

TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS

- 🐾 The district has **replaced over 800 student computers** over the past 3 years in order to provide students with the latest technology equipment and instruction
- 🐾 The district has installed **87 smart boards** for classroom instruction.
- 🐾 **The Harrison High School Guidance Department has installed Naviance**, a powerful relational database that allows students, parents and counselors to more efficiently and effectively track and plan the college selection and application process.
- 🐾 The **Technology Education Program** at HHS introduced a "cutting edge" two-course sequence in Information Technology that culminates in an **industry recognized A+ Computer Certification** for students who pass an exam.

VOTER INFORMATION

Budget Vote and Trustee Election

Tuesday, May 16, 2006, 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 Avenue, Harrison, or may be downloaded from the District website, www.harrisoncsd.org. Completed applications may be received by mail by 3:00 p.m. If the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, the completed application must be received by the district clerk no later than 3:45 P.M. on May 9, 2006. If the ballot is to be delivered personally to the voter, the completed application must be received by the district clerk no later than 3:45 P.M. on May 15, 2006. All absentee ballots must be received by the district clerk, at his office, no later than 5:00 P.M. on May 16, 2006.

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 16!

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

Harrison Central School District
Harrison, NY 10528

BOARD OF EDUCATION

David Singer, President
Philip Silano, Vice President
Joseph Acocella, Jr.
David Brunner
Debbie Imperia
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