

# HOME PAGES

POCANTICO HILLS SCHOOL - COMMUNITY INFORMATION BULLETIN

MAY 2008

## Pocantico Hills Budget Overview

### The Facts and Figures:

- Proposed budget: **\$22,699,313**
- Proposition calling for purchase of 2 school buses: **\$37,500**
- Current budget: **\$21,604,610**
- Percent Increase: **5.07%**

### Our proposed 2008-2009 School Budget Plan continues the following student and community services:

- Implementation of the Technology Plan
- Small class sizes
- Foreign Language study beginning in grade 2
- Instrumental music lessons beginning in grade 4
- Academic Enrichment Programs
- School library funding
- After-School Program
- Summer Recreation Program

### Did You Know That . . .

- The proposed 2008-09 budget is the result of numerous public forums that sought input from the community before the Board's adoption of the budget on April 7. The budget meetings included one forum held with the PTA and five Board of Education meetings.
- The proposed budget provides for the debt service payment to purchase two new school buses replacing two older school buses. The purchase of the new school buses is contingent upon passage of a separate May 20th proposition.

REMEMBER TO VOTE!

**Tuesday, May 20th, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.**  
**School Library**

For questions on the 2008-2009 Budget please  
 e-mail us at [budgetinfo@pocanticohills.org](mailto:budgetinfo@pocanticohills.org)

## Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As you know, Dr. Thomas C. Elliott, will retire as the Superintendent of Schools for Pocantico Hills as of June 30, 2008. The new Superintendent chosen by the Board of Education to lead our School District on or about July 1 will spend the summer months preparing for his/her first academic year and will bring new and exciting educational experiences for our students and staff.

The 2008-2009 Pocantico Hills spending plan has been carefully developed by the School Board and the administration to provide for the needs of our students and staff, while balancing those needs with the needs of our residents. The proposed budget maintains all educational programs, class sizes, and continues the technology implementation program, and will support the smooth transition of leadership for our school. The Board of Education has reviewed the budget publicly over the last several months, and has unanimously approved a 5.07% increase over last year's spending plan.

Despite the Board's efforts in preparing a school budget there are circumstances beyond the Board's control that impact the tax rate paid by the District's residents. Last year we informed the public that tax certiorari judgments or settlements were placing a burden on our residents, but that the District was aggressively defending its residents against these claims. Our need to continue to address these claims has impacted the 2008-2009 budget.

A tax certiorari judgment or settlement is the result of a commercial property owner suing the school district, and subsequently proving that he or she has been over-assessed. This judgment or settlement can be divided into two parts. The first part involves paying the property owner a refund for any overpayments made in the past. The second part reduces the property owner's assessments.

In 2007-2008 the Board of Education informed the community that a large part of the tax rate increase was due to reductions in the District's assessment resulting from tax certiorari judgments. Unfortunately some of these court ordered reductions in assessment were not processed by the Greenburgh Tax Assessor in

**The District has made significant strides in the past few years . . . In fact, Pocantico Hills has been nominated by the State Education Department as a National Blue Ribbon School.**

a timely manner. Since these judgments were processed later than expected by the Greenburgh's assessor, they did not impact the 2007-2008 school year as expected; rather they caused an increase in the 2008-2009 projected tax rate by 3.35% before any budgetary impact is applied.

Another factor influencing the projected tax rates beyond the control of the Board of Education is the cost associated with tax certiorari claims. The 2008-2009 budget provides for \$339,441 for debt service costs to pay tax certiorari refunds, and additional legal costs to defend claims made against the district. This equates to approximately 1.5% of the projected Budget increase. The remaining 3.5% is what we can control and compares favorably to increases in other school districts.

The projected 2008-2009 tax rate increases for Mount Pleasant and Greenburgh are affected by the equalization rates for both Townships. The assessed valuation and equalization rates are part of the formula that is used to calculate the tax rate and divide the property tax levy among all residents and commercial properties in Mount Pleasant and Greenburgh. The equalization rate is set by the Office of Real Property Services, and the assessed valuation is set by the Town Assessors. The equalization rate is supposed to balance the tax levy, and tax rate increases between Mount Pleasant and Greenburgh. Although the Greenburgh equalization rate decreased, the rate for Mount Pleasant remained the same as result of a successful challenge brought by the Mount Pleasant assessor, therefore the projected tax rates are not more evenly distributed between the two townships.

The projected tax rate increase for Greenburgh is 12.71%, and 6.43% for Mount Pleasant.

On behalf of the Board I encourage the community to reflect on the fact that this budget maintains all of the educational programs we have achieved so far. The District has made significant strides in the past few years to enhance our ability to provide an exceptional educational program by addressing technology, curriculum review and implementation, staff development, and in the needs of the library. Because of these changes, our children will be taught in new and exciting ways, which will further enhance their overall academic achievements. In fact, Pocantico Hills has been nominated by the State Education Department as a National Blue Ribbon School.

The Board of Education has worked very hard to develop a budget that will meet the needs of the community, and provide the resources necessary for our new Superintendent to meet the needs of our students. The proposed budget will allow us to continue to provide an exceptional educational experience for our children. I urge all residents to review the school budget so that an informed decision can be made on May 20, 2008. Should you have any questions please refer to our website at [www.pocanticohills.org](http://www.pocanticohills.org) and review the information on the budget, or send an e-mail to Mr. Jay Scotto-Friedman at [budgetinfo@pocanticohills.org](mailto:budgetinfo@pocanticohills.org) to receive an answer to any question that you may have about the proposed 2008-2009 school Budget.

**ROBERT W. BALOG,**  
SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT

**Proposed 2008-2009 Budget Summary Estimated Budget and Tax Rate Increase**

		<b>% Budget Increase</b>	<b>Estimated Greenburgh Tax Rate Increase</b>	<b>Estimated Mt. Pleasant Tax Rate Increase</b>
<b>Budget</b>	\$22,661,813	4.89%	12.48%	6.20%
<b>Proposition: Purchase of two school buses</b>	\$37,500	0.18%	0.23%	0.23%
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$22,699,313	5.07%	12.71%	6.43%

**Note:** Budgeted amount for purchase of school buses reflects interest and principal costs to be paid over a five-year period.

# 2008-2009 PROPOSED SCHOOL BUDGET

Categories	Budget 2007-2008	Proposed Budget 2008-2009	Increase or Decrease from 2006-2007
<b>BOARD OF EDUCATION</b>			
BOARD OF EDUCATION	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$0
DISTRICT CLERK	\$13,000	\$13,150	\$150
DISTRICT MEETING	\$9,500	\$9,500	\$0
<b>Total Board of Education</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>\$28,150</b>	<b>\$150</b>
<b>CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION</b>			
CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	\$153,812	\$245,324	\$91,512
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION	\$302,179	\$315,891	\$13,712
AUDITING SERVICE	\$62,000	\$55,500	(\$6,500)
TREASURER	\$37,402	\$40,244	\$2,842
LEGAL SERVICES	\$217,513	\$267,642	\$50,129
PUBLIC INFORMATION	\$23,050	\$27,000	\$3,950
<b>Total Central Administration</b>	<b>\$795,956</b>	<b>\$951,601</b>	<b>\$155,645</b>
<b>CENTRAL SERVICES</b>			
OPERATIONS and MAINTENANCE	\$1,238,716	\$1,397,655	\$158,939
CENTRAL PRINTING and MAILING	\$43,262	\$46,262	\$3,000
<b>Total Central Services</b>	<b>\$1,281,978</b>	<b>\$1,443,917</b>	<b>\$161,939</b>
<b>SPECIAL ITEMS</b>			
INSURANCE	\$56,066	\$56,066	\$0
CONTRACTUAL EXPENSES	\$80,201	\$90,195	\$9,994
BOCES ADMIN. CHARGE	\$44,242	\$45,077	\$835
<b>Total Special Items</b>	<b>\$180,539</b>	<b>\$191,338</b>	<b>\$10,799</b>
<b>INSTRUCTION</b>			
SUPERVISION	\$258,969	\$127,859	(\$131,110)
INSERVICE TRAINING	\$58,598	\$46,825	(\$11,773)
TEACHING-REGULAR SCHOOL	\$9,345,337	\$9,666,225	\$320,888
SPECIAL EDUCATION	\$3,428,047	\$3,532,740	\$104,693
ACADEMIC INTERVENTION	\$167,966	\$155,084	(\$12,882)
SCHOOL LIBRARY and AV	\$171,966	\$135,566	(\$36,400)
COMPUTER ASSISTED INSTRUCTION	\$595,195	\$618,574	\$23,379
PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES	\$347,080	\$363,316	\$16,236
ATTENDANCE	\$3,080	\$0	(\$3,080)
INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS	\$45,398	\$45,398	\$0
<b>Total Instruction</b>	<b>\$14,421,636</b>	<b>\$14,691,587</b>	<b>\$269,951</b>
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>			
DISTRICT	\$639,464	\$712,825	\$73,361
CONTRACT	\$512,320	\$519,142	\$6,822
<b>Total Transportation</b>	<b>\$1,151,784</b>	<b>\$1,231,967</b>	<b>\$80,183</b>
<b>COMMUNITY SERVICE</b>			
COMMUNITY RECREATION	\$161,754	\$169,423	\$7,669
SUMMER DAY CAMP	\$260,688	\$281,194	\$20,506
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM	\$52,948	\$53,856	\$908
<b>Total Community Service</b>	<b>\$475,390</b>	<b>\$504,473</b>	<b>\$29,083</b>
<b>EMPLOYEE BENEFITS</b>			
EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT	\$127,692	\$134,000	\$6,308
TEACHER RETIREMENT	\$442,885	\$407,040	(\$35,845)
SOCIAL SECURITY	\$509,664	\$537,330	\$27,666
WORKERS COMP	\$60,800	\$57,937	(\$2,863)
EMPLOYEE BENEFIT FUND	\$113,270	\$115,270	\$2,000
MEDICAL INSURANCE	\$1,357,128	\$1,451,460	\$94,332
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$0
DISABILITY INSURANCE	\$2,855	\$3,080	\$225
LIFE INSURANCE and ANNUITY	\$31,758	\$15,000	(\$16,758)
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$0
<b>Total Employee Benefits</b>	<b>\$2,656,152</b>	<b>\$2,731,217</b>	<b>\$75,065</b>
<b>DEBT SERVICE</b>			
BOND PRINCIPAL	\$407,220	\$547,808	\$140,588
BOND INTEREST	\$130,955	\$282,255	\$151,300
<b>Total Debt Service</b>	<b>\$538,175</b>	<b>\$830,063</b>	<b>\$291,888</b>
<b>TRANSFERS</b>			
INTERFUND TRANSFERS	\$75,000	\$95,000	\$20,000
<b>TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS</b>	<b>\$21,604,610</b>	<b>\$22,699,313</b>	<b>\$1,094,703</b>

Members of the Board serve without compensation. This code covers expenses incurred by the Board in the performance of its duties inclusive of the annual district election and District Clerk's office.

These categories cover day-to-day management of the school district that is the responsibility of the Superintendent and Central Administration. Included are costs for District-wide administration, contract matters and legal services, district publications and general business functions.

Expenses in this category reflect custodial, maintenance and operational costs for district buildings. Also included are expenses for district wide postage.

Expenses in this category reflect various types of insurance such as liability and student accident insurance; school dues, and our share of BOCES administrative costs.

This category reflects the majority of the school district's costs for operation of our regular and special education programs, athletics, co-curricular, health services, library, computer instruction program, psychological services and attendance.

District Policy states that no student shall walk more than one-quarter mile to a bus stop or school of attendance, and extra consideration is given to children in grades PreK-2. The district provides monitors on large buses for grades PreK-8 and to special education schools as determined by a student's Individual Education Plan.

These expenses are associated with the community pool program, summer day camp, after-school program, and census.

Expenses in this category reflect mandated or contractually required costs for employee benefits.

Expenses in this category reflect the repayment of funds borrowed for tax certiorari claims, and for the purchase of new school buses.

Expenses in this category reflect the District's subsidy for the school lunch program, capital projects, and the District's costs for extended special education programs.

## Summary of Proposed Tax Rates

	<b>Tax Rate Per \$1,000 Assessed Valuation 2007-2008</b>	<b>Proposed Tax Rate Per \$1,000 Assessed Valuation 2008-2009</b>	<b>Tax Rate Increase Per \$1,000 2008-2009</b>	<b>Total % Increase 2008-2009</b>	
<b>Greenburgh</b>	\$241.04	\$271.68	\$30.64	12.71%	
<b>Mount Pleasant</b>	\$525.12	\$558.87	\$33.76	6.43%	

### Tax Rate Impact 2008-2009 Proposed Budget: GREENBURGH

<b>Fair Market Value</b>	<b>Assessed Value</b>	<b>2007-2008 Taxes</b>	<b>2008-2009 Projected Taxes</b>	<b>Annual Increase</b>	<b>Monthly Increase</b>
\$100,000	\$2,880	\$694	\$782	\$88	\$7
\$250,000	\$7,200	\$1,735	\$1,956	\$221	\$8
\$500,000	\$14,400	\$3,471	\$3,912	\$441	\$18
\$750,000	\$21,600	\$5,206	\$5,868	\$662	\$37
\$1,000,000	\$28,800	\$6,942	\$7,824	\$882	\$55

### Tax Rate Impact 2008-2009 Proposed Budget: MT. PLEASANT

<b>Fair Market Value</b>	<b>Assessed Value</b>	<b>2007-2008 Taxes</b>	<b>2008-2009 Projected Taxes</b>	<b>Annual Increase</b>	<b>Monthly Increase</b>
\$100,000	\$1,400	\$735	\$782	\$47	\$4
\$250,000	\$3,500	\$1,838	\$1,956	\$118	\$10
\$500,000	\$7,000	\$3,676	\$3,912	\$236	\$20
\$750,000	\$10,500	\$5,514	\$5,868	\$354	\$30
\$1,000,000	\$14,000	\$7,352	\$7,824	\$473	\$39

## Projected 2008-2009 Revenues

	2007-2008 Budgeted Revenue	2008-2009 Budgeted Revenue	\$ Change
<b>State Aid</b>	\$858,045	\$868,358	\$10,313
<b>Incarcerated Youth</b>	\$2,577,104	\$2,583,489	\$6,385
<b>Other Revenue</b>	\$775,259	\$859,480	\$84,221
<b>Fund Balance Transfer</b>	\$440,000	\$440,000	0
<b>Total Tax Levy</b>	\$16,954,202	\$17,947,987	\$993,785
<b>Total Revenue</b>	\$21,604,610	\$22,699,313	\$1,094,703

### IMPORTANT BUDGET, VOTER REGISTRATION AND OTHER DATES

#### **May 12, 2008**

Budget Hearing, 8:00 p.m., School Library

#### **May 13, 2008**

Deadline for filing applications for absentee ballots with the District Clerk, if the ballot must be mailed to the voter.

#### **May 15, 2008**

Last day to register to vote. Voters may register to vote at any time up to May 15th at the District Office, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

#### **May 19, 2008**

Deadline for filing application for absentee ballots with the District Clerk, if ballot will be delivered personally to the voter.

#### **May 20, 2008**

Budget Vote 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. School Library  
Absentee ballots must be received no later than 5:00 p.m.

#### **Before May 30, 2008**

Deadline for filing STAR (New York State School Tax Relief Program) applications with your town assessor's office. STAR includes a school property tax rebate program and a partial property tax exemption from school taxes. All New Yorkers who own and live in one-, two-, or three-family homes, condominiums, cooperative apartments, manufactured homes, or farm dwellings are eligible for STAR on their primary residence. For more information about the STAR rebate program, please visit the website of the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, [www.nystax.gov](http://www.nystax.gov), or call 1-877-6-STAR-NY (1-877-678-2769). To contact your local tax assessor: Greenburgh 914-993-1520; Mt. Pleasant 914-742-2345

# Some Notes on the Vote

This year there are three decisions for voters to make:

1. The vote on the 2008-2009 budget
2. The proposition to purchase two buses
3. The election of two Board of Education members

This is what you will see in the voting booth:

## PROPOSITION NUMBER ONE:

Shall the Board of Education of this school district be authorized to expend the sums set forth in the proposed 2008-2009 Annual Budget in the amount of \$22,699,313 and to levy the necessary tax therefor?

## PROPOSITION NUMBER TWO:

Shall the proposition set forth in the notice of this meeting authorizing the purchase of one 60 passenger school bus, at a maximum estimated cost not to exceed \$100,000, and one Suburban-type school bus at a maximum cost not to exceed \$50,000 totaling \$150,000; and providing that such sum shall be raised by a tax levy to be collected in annual installments, with District obligations to be issued in anticipation thereof, be approved?

## VOTERS WILL BE ASKED TO DECIDE ON:

The election of two (2) Board of Education members which will take place at the same time as the vote on the school budget. The Board of Education members are to be elected for a term of three years commencing July 1, 2008 and terminating on June 30, 2011.

## Who Can Vote?

Members of the community may participate in the school election if they are:

- United States citizens, 18 years or over as of May 20th, 2008;
- Residents of the School District at least 30 days prior to May 20th, 2008;
- Voters registered with District or County Board of Elections.

## Voter Registration.

• Residents may register to vote daily during regular school hours in the Main Office of the school located at 599 Bedford Road, Sleepy Hollow, NY.

• Please note that the last day to register to vote on this budget is May 15, 2008.

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If you would like more information about this year's budget or the upcoming vote, please email us at [budgetinfo@pocanticohills.org](mailto:budgetinfo@pocanticohills.org).



POCANTICO HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL  
599 Bedford Road  
Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591

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