

Little Falls

CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Spring 2020 . www.lfcsd.org



BUDGET NEWSLETTER

A Message from the Superintendent of Schools

We are approaching the end of one of the most challenging years faced by the community and School District in recent memory. We are concluding the year with no students in our buildings, and all instruction being delivered remotely. While we look forward to a time when we can all return safely to school, we can't help but feel proud of how well students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators have risen to this unexpected challenge. Little Falls is truly an amazing community, one that has come together in an amazing way.

One of the many challenges presented by the current crisis is the loss of anticipated aid from the State of New York for school districts. The budget you are being asked to vote on required some sacrifice in making strategic decisions about not replacing retiring staff so as to reduce costs. We were able to accomplish those reductions while preserving programs, class sizes and not removing enrichment activities. We maintain our focus on building our Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) program and providing our students with the skills they need to compete in the twenty-first century. Our music program continues to win awards, and our art department provides a variety of enriching experiences to students.

All of our success is rooted in your support of your schools, which we never take for granted. We are able to cushion the impact of reduced state aid by applying some of the District's fund balance to keep next year's budget increase to 1.97% over this year, which is below the tax cap and will allow residents to receive any property tax rebates they are entitled to.

Yet another challenge we face this year is conducting the vote entirely by absentee ballot. All voters should be receiving ballots in the mail between May 26th and June 2nd. If you have not received a ballot by June 2nd, please contact the Board Clerk at (315) 823-1470 and we will make sure you receive one. All ballots need to be returned to the district no later than **June 9th at 5:00 PM**.

Thank you for taking the time to review this newsletter, and for your continued involvement in the education of our students.

Dr. Keith T. Levatino
Superintendent of Schools

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

1. Be a citizen of the United States.
2. Be at least 18 years of age.
3. Be a resident of the district for at least 30 days preceding the budget vote (Home ownership is not sufficient. Must be a permanent resident)
4. Not otherwise prohibited from voting (ex., mentally incompetent or convicted felon.)

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

All ballots will be cast by mail in compliance with the Governor's Executive Order. All ballots will be sent with self-addressed and stamped envelopes and will need to be returned to the District by **June 9th at 5:00 PM** at the latest. Please note that this is **NOT a postmark date**. Ballots must be at the District office by the required time to be counted.

WHAT AM I VOTING ON?

Along with **two** Commissioners of the Board of Education for a three-year term, voters will be asked to decide on **two** propositions:

PROPOSITION ONE

School Budget Vote

RESOLVED that the budget for the Little Falls City School District in the County of Herkimer in the State of New York, for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021, as presented by the Board of Education, is hereby approved and adopted; and the required funds therefore are hereby apportioned and the necessary real property taxes required shall be raised by a tax on the taxable property in said District to be levied and collected by law.

PROPOSITION TWO

Increase in Public Library Levy

SHALL the Little Falls Public Library be authorized to increase its Real Property Tax Levy from \$89,283.00 to \$90,890.00?

A Message from the Little Falls Public Library

When the “social distancing” restrictions have been relaxed, and the Library reopens for the community once again, there will be exciting things happening. As you know, due to a generous donation, and use of our endowment, the Library has renovated the Children’s area and the front portion of the library. New paint, carpet, lights, furniture, and layout will brighten the space and hopefully inspire young (and adult) minds. Upgraded technology, a table with interactive STEM toys, and LEGO robotics will also be available.

New programs for all ages are being created to utilize this space, but to also be responsive to community needs. Meditation, sign language, genealogy classes, Spanish for homeschoolers, Minecraft club, and others are currently being considered and developed to bring fresh options to our community. With the help of our incredible staff, programs, new and old, will continue to enrich our Library.

Unfortunately, our endowment does not permit us to use those funds to pay our excellent staff. While we are planning fundraising activities to offset our expenses, fundraising is never certain. To ensure that we can continue to pay our employees without cutting their hours, we are requesting a modest 1.8% increase in the library’s share of the school tax, which is less than last year.

The small requested increase will allow us to pay our staff what they deserve, maintain necessary hours of operation, offer a variety of low to no cost programs and services, and provide a much needed meeting space for community members and organizations. These features make our library a shining example compared to similarly sized libraries throughout Central New York, but, more importantly, they foster a local resource for individuals of all ages and income levels.

The Little Falls Library embodies the spirit of our community and we hope to have your support.

Matthew Powers

President, Board of the Little Falls Public Library



BUDGET GOALS

While this budget has been developed during a time of financial stress, the District prioritized the following goals:

- Maintain all educational opportunities for our students, including Advanced Placement, College NOW.
- Continue to enhance programming in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics areas.
- Keep elementary class sizes at desirable levels, particularly at the lower elementary grades.
- Maintain specialist and support positions required to provide academic intervention for students.
- Continue to enhance safety and security by having a School Resource Officer at each campus during school hours.

On May 20th, 2020 the Board of Education formally adopted the proposed spending plan in the amount of \$22,499,245.00 representing a **decrease** of \$300,274.00, or -1.32% from the previous year.

Revenues **declined** by \$513,590 from the previous year due to cuts in State Aid. Total aid is estimated at \$13,249,758.00 for next year, with a further \$290,000.00 coming from the District's fund balance.

The necessary tax levy for 2020-21 will be \$8,959.487.00, or an increase of 1.97% over the previous year.

The proposed tax levy is below the state statutory tax cap.



BUDGET COMPONENTS

	2019-2020	2020-2021	% Change	% of Total
Administrative	\$2,831,134	\$2,914,409	2.95%	13%
Capital	\$3,324,249	\$3,247,690	-2.30%	14%
Program	\$16,644,137	\$16,337,146	-1.84%	73%
TOTAL	\$22,799,520	\$22,499,245	-1.32%	100%

The **Administrative Budget** provides for the general management and supervision of the school district. The **Capital Budget** is primarily made up of the costs associated with the daily operations and maintenance of our school facilities and the debt service to pay off the bonds issued to build and improve them. **The Program Budget** contains the resources necessary to perform the instructional function and to make available related student support services. As should be expected, the Program Budget is the largest component of the total budget, representing 73% of total appropriations.

2020-2021 Proposed Expenditures

<u>BUDGET SUMMARY</u>	2019-20	2020-21	DOLLAR CHANGE	PER- CENT CHANGE	% OF BUDGET
BOARD OF EDUCATION	\$22,778.00	\$30,650.00	7,872.00	34.56%	0.14%
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION	\$216,673.00	\$223,512.00	6,839.00	3.16%	0.99%
FINANCE	\$340,140.00	\$510,680.00	170,540.00	50.14%	2.27%
OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE	\$1,795,045.00	\$1,738,905.00	(56,140.00)	-3.13%	7.73%
SPECIAL ITEMS	\$644,175.00	\$630,939.00	(13,236.00)	-2.05%	2.80%
SUPERVISION	\$684,101.00	\$704,286.00	20,185.00	2.95%	3.13%
TEACHING REGULAR SCHOOL	\$5,427,971.00	\$5,531,845.00	103,874.00	1.91%	24.59%
PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	\$2,033,796.00	\$2,033,635.00	(161.00)	-0.01%	9.04%
OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION	\$500,000.00	\$550,940.00	50,940.00	10.19%	2.45%
TEACHING SPECIAL SCHOOLS	\$91,776.00	\$58,000.00	(33,776.00)	-36.80%	0.26%
SCHOOL LIBRARY	\$296,683.00	\$220,640.00	(76,043.00)	-25.63%	0.98%
COMPUTER ASSISTED INSTRUCTION	\$452,790.00	\$213,694.00	(239,096.00)	-52.81%	0.95%
GUIDANCE	\$225,852.00	\$229,216.00	3,364.00	1.49%	1.02%
HEALTH SERVICES	\$175,486.00	\$180,570.00	5,084.00	2.90%	0.80%
SOCIAL WORK SERVICES	\$44,390.00	\$45,833.00	1,443.00	3.25%	0.20%
COCURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	\$25,425.00	\$26,251.00	826.00	3.25%	0.12%
INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS	\$284,500.00	\$285,868.00	1,368.00	0.48%	1.27%
TRANSPORTATION	\$1,399,057.00	\$1,218,964.00	(180,093.00)	-12.87%	5.42%
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	\$7,238,322.00	\$7,224,189.00	(14,133.00)	-0.20%	32.11%
DEBT SERVICE	\$668,698.00	\$631,462.00	(37,236.00)	-5.57%	2.81%
OTHER	\$231,862.00	\$209,166.00	(22,696.00)	-9.79%	0.93%
TOTALS	\$22,799,520.00	\$22,499,245.00	(300,275.00)	-1.32%	100.00%

Changes in the area of **FINANCE** are due to Workers' Compensation premiums being reported under a different code. Reductions in **SCHOOL LIBRARY** are due to certain staff moving to different positions. Reductions in **COMPUTER ASSISTED INSTRUCTION** are due to the District completing payments on leased equipment. Decreases in **TRANSPORTATION** are due to a re-negotiated contract to reduce overall cost. No increases or decreases are due to layoffs, new hires, or any reduction on the level of service.



2020-2021 Projected Revenues

ESTIMATED REVENUES OTHER THAN TAXES	2019-2020 BUDGET	2020-2021 BUDGET	\$ CHANGE
OTHER PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES	\$90,000.00	\$154,702.00	\$64,702.00
WIND POWER PILOT	\$15,000.00	\$20,870.00	\$5,870.00
PENALTIES ON REAL PROPERTY TAXES	\$17,000.00	\$17,000.00	\$0.00
OTHER DAY SCHOOL TUITION	\$131,500.00	\$105,000.00	(\$26,500.00)
OTHER CHARGES FOR SERVICES	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00
INTEREST EARNED ON INVESTMENTS	\$1,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$3,500.00
RENTAL OF REAL PROPERTY, BOCES	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
RENTAL, OTHER (UPK)	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$0.00
REFUND OF PRIOR YEARS EXPENDITURES	\$150,000.00	\$220,000.00	\$70,000.00
GIFTS AND DONATIONS	\$50,000.00	\$204,000.00	\$154,000.00
OTHER UNCLASSIFIED REVENUES	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
STATE AID - BASIC FORMULA	\$11,760,577.00	\$10,973,393.00	(\$787,184.00)
STATE AID - BOCES	\$1,344,203.00	\$1,350,083.00	\$5,880.00
STATE AID - TEXTBOOKS	\$64,396.00	\$64,396.00	\$0.00
STATE AID - COMPUTER SOFTWARE/HARDWARE	\$36,706.00	\$32,848.00	(\$3,858.00)
STATE AID - LIB. MAT.	\$6,466.00	\$6,466.00	\$0.00
FEDERAL AID - MEDICAID ASSISTANCE - SUPPORT	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$0.00
TOTAL EST. REVENUES OTHER THAN TAXES	\$13,763,348.00	\$13,249,758.00	(\$513,590.00)
APPROPRIATED FUND BALANCE	\$250,000.00	\$290,000.00	\$40,000.00
REAL PROPERTY TAX LEVY	\$8,786,172.00	\$8,959,487.00	\$173,315.00

Tax Percentage Increase 1.97%

The table above lists the estimated revenues expected in the 2020-2021 fiscal year. These revenues are developed based on historical trends and information from the state. State Aid, which represents almost 60% of District revenues, has been difficult to accurately estimate. The best case scenario is that aid will be held at 2019-2020 levels, but the Governor has retained the right to make further cuts of up to 20%. The District has taken a conservative approach in assuming at least some cuts would be made due to the difficult financial situation at the state level.

HOW MUCH MORE WILL I HAVE TO PAY?

The tax levy under the proposed budget will increase by 1.97% from the previous year. After allowances for fluctuation in assessment and valuation, a house with a \$75,000 assessed value and basic STAR should see an approximate increase of \$35 for the year. Since the District has complied with the tax cap limitation, taxpayers will be eligible for the Property Tax Relief Credit from the state for 2020-2021.

WHAT IF THE BUDGET DOESN'T PASS?

In the event of a budget defeat, two options are available for the Board of Education to consider:

1. It can simply implement a contingent budget which caps the levy at the prior year's amount (0% increase). The District would need to make \$173,315 in program and staffing cuts.
2. Conduct a second budget vote with or without changes.

If the budget is defeated a second time, the Board of Education MUST adopt a contingent budget.

If you have any questions regarding the proposed 2020-2021 budget, please contact Dr. Keith Levatino or Mr. Ashraf Allam at (315) 823-1470.



LITTLE FALLS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 2020-2021 BUDGET NOTICE

OVERALL BUDGET PROPOSAL	2019-2020 Adopted Budget	2020-2021 Proposed Budget	2019-2020 Contingent Budget
Total Appropriations	\$22,799,520.00	\$22,499,245.00	\$22,325,930.00
Increase for 2019-2020 School Year		-\$300,275.00	-\$473,590.00
Percentage increase in budget		-1.32%	-2.08%
Percentage Change in Consumer Price Index		1.81%	
School Tax Levy Limit		\$9,088,299.00	
Proposed Tax Levy (Without Exclusions)		\$8,954,287.00	\$8,786,172.00
Total Permissible Exclusions		\$5,200.00	
Proposed Tax Levy	\$8,786,172.00	\$8,959,487.00	\$8,786,172.00
Percentage Change in Estimated Tax Levy		1.97%	0.00%

ANNUAL BUDGET VOTE

The annual budget vote for fiscal year 2020-2021 by the qualified voters of the Little Falls City School District Herkimer County, New York will be held on June 9th, 2020 by absentee ballot vote. All ballots **MUST BE RECEIVED AT THE DISTRICT BY 5 PM ON JUNE 9th TO BE COUNTED**. Ballots received after June 9th, even if postmarked before that date cannot be counted.

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO RETURN
YOUR BALLOT NO LATER THAN:

TUESDAY JUNE 9

AT 5:00 PM



LITTLE FALLS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



The Little Falls City School District strives to inspire and empower our students to reach their full academic, physical, and emotional potential in a safe and supportive environment.

Lost your ballot? Need an additional ballot for a voter in your household?

- An electronic copy can be downloaded and printed from the “Budget Vote Update” section at the bottom-right of the school homepage.
- Additional copies can be obtained by emailing the board clerk at sbeau-lieu@lfcSD.org, or calling (315) 832-1470.

Your vote is important. Contact us and we’ll find a way to get a ballot to you.