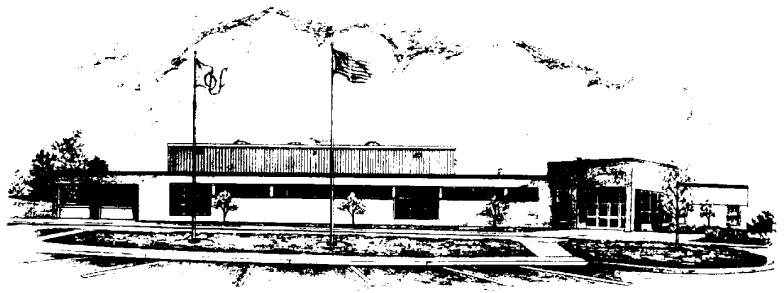


Little Falls CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Spring 2019 • www.lfcsd.org



BUDGET NEWSLETTER

A Message from the Superintendent of Schools

The annual budget newsletter is always a welcome opportunity for me to highlight some of the District's accomplishments and goals over the past school year, in addition to our proposed budget for the coming year. The budget we are presenting adds some needed instructional positions, such as reading and special education, while maintaining smaller class sizes. The District continues to strongly support school safety through a maintained presence of School Resource Officers at both buildings throughout the school day. We consistently update our security system, such as cameras and alarm infrastructures, and staff participation in ongoing safety trainings.

We also continue to support our technology initiatives, with a strong commitment to providing students and faculty with access to the hardware, software and platforms they need to access 21st Century learning and teaching. Through a combination of private donations and state grants, we have been able to make progress toward our technology goals that is beyond that of comparable school districts, all while keeping the burden on our taxpayers to a minimum.

The past year has seen continued success for our Engineering by Design program, and the District is committed to the continued support of the program through curriculum, materials and staffing. The program has even garnered national notice, with articles written about our successful implementation. We are immensely proud that we now have a model program that other districts and communities want to duplicate. The Engineering by Design program, along with our classes and interest

groups dedicated to coding and robotics, support our goal of building a curriculum that prepares our students to succeed in the present as well as the future.

Our music program has, once again, been recognized as one of the Best Communities for Music Education. This achievement is a testament to the hard work of our music department, and yet another area of excellence that we are able to offer our students. Along with our amazing art department, our students can explore their creative and academic options with the guidance of some amazing teachers.

Due to the increase in state aid, and a healthy fund balance, we are able to offset increases in other areas such as transportation and benefits with only a modest increase of 1.72% as compared to last year. Careful planning and conservative use of district funds have allowed us to cushion our community against any sharp increases. We have had two successive years with no increase to the tax levy.

We thank you for taking the time to review this newsletter, and for your continued support of our district. Do not hesitate to contact Mr. Allam, Director of Business Operations, or me should you have any questions. Please take the time to vote, and thank you for your continued interest in the education of our youth.

Dr. Keith T. Levatino
Superintendent of Schools



PLEASE VOTE ON TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2019

Little Falls High School Gymnasium • 12 p.m. - 9 p.m.

ANNUAL BUDGET VOTE

WHAT AM I VOTING ON?

Along with electing **three** Commissioners of the Board of Education, all for a three-year term, voters will be asked to decide on **three 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, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020, as presented by the Board of Education, is hereby approved and adopted; and the required funds therefore are hereby appropriated 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

School Bus Purchase

SHALL the Little Falls City School District purchase a new 65 passenger school bus for use by the District for the sum not to exceed \$114,065 to be paid for by the District through the issuance of a five (5) year Statutory Installment Bond, pursuant to the provisions of the Education Law of the State of New York?

PROPOSITION THREE

Increase in Public Library Levy

SHALL the Little Falls Public Library be authorized to increase its Real Property Tax Levy from \$87,533.00 to \$89,283.00? (Please refer to "A Message from the Little Falls Public Library").

***A simple majority is required for passage of all propositions.**

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

All voters must have all of the following qualifications:

1. Be a citizen of the United States.
2. Be at least 18 years of age.
3. Be a resident of the school district for at least 30 days preceding the budget vote.
(Owning a home in the district does not make the owner a resident; home must be permanent residence.)
4. Not otherwise prohibited from voting (ex., mentally incompetent or convicted felon).

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

The Board of Education has authorized the use of absentee ballots for the budget vote, school election and capital project vote. An absentee ballot vote application can be obtained by calling the District Administrative Office at 315.82.1470. Applications must be returned to the District Administrative Office **no later** than Tuesday, May 15, 2019. Once the application is approved, an absentee ballot will be mailed to the voter. Absentee Ballots must be returned no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day of the vote (May 21, 2019).



BUDGET

INTRODUCTION

Beginning in January, the School Administration began developing the 2019-20 budget with the objective of maintaining, and expanding upon the solid educational program our community has come to expect. As always, the members of the Board of Education remain keenly aware of the burden they place on the local property taxpayer. Balancing the desire to provide the “best” for our students, with the financial reality we face makes the budget process a challenging task and one not taken lightly by the Commissioners.

The 2019-20 budget being presented for public consideration, while being fiscally responsible, also serves to meet the growing needs of our students and the demands of a 21st century education.

- All of our existing educational opportunities for students will continue, including all six Advanced Placement (AP) and 22 College NOW courses available at the high school. Currently, 182 students participate in the College NOW program and 74 are enrolled in Advanced Placement courses.
- Elementary class sizes will remain at desirable levels, especially at the lower grades.
- Due to enrollment and program demands, the budget provides for an additional reading specialist and special education teacher.
- We continue to enhance and expand our mission of providing all secondary students with 1:1 technology devices, and to implement a replacement and repair policy for existing devices.
- Our highly successful Engineering by Design program will continue to be enhanced and extended to the higher grade levels to support the district’s STEAM initiative.

Student and staff safety/security remains a top priority. The following is a partial listing of actions the District has taken to improve upon the safety/security of our students and staff:

- Through the continued cooperation with the City of Little Falls, we will have the daily presence of two School Resource Officers in our buildings. The 2019-20 budget continues to support the School Resource Officers for full eight hours a day coverage.
- In addition, safety issues and concerns are addressed regularly through the District’s Safety Committee, which includes members from the City of Little Falls Police and Fire Departments, along with other safety experts.
- The district continues to enhance its already extensive video surveillance system by updating end-of-life cameras at all building entrances, and adding cameras to areas with poor coverage.

On April 25 the Board of Education formally adopted the proposed 2019-20 spending plan in the amount of \$22,799,520, representing an increase of \$313,863, or +1.4%. Factors impacting the budget are primarily personnel related; additional staffing, contractual salary obligations and related employee benefits. Schools, by their very nature, are personnel heavy organizations and, as a result, personnel costs consume the vast majority of our financial resources. In our case, **73% of the 2019-20 budget is directly related to personnel costs.** The district also saw a sharp increase in transportation costs as a result of prevailing market prices.

With appropriations totaling \$22,799,520 and estimated revenues other than taxes equaling \$13,763,348, along with \$250,000 coming from the District’s fund balance, **the resulting necessary tax levy is \$8,786,172, for an increase of 1.72% from the previous year. This is below the statutory property tax cap of 2%.**

Keeping the tax increase to a minimum was accomplished primarily because of two factors; first, the District fortunately received a sizeable increase in state aid, amounting to \$425,456 and, second, as mentioned above, the sound financial position of the District allowed for an appropriation of \$250,000 from our fund balance. Of this, \$200,000 is for general purposes, and \$50,000 to cover the principal and interest payments on the statutory installment bond issued to finance the repairs and resurfacing of the High / Middle School track.

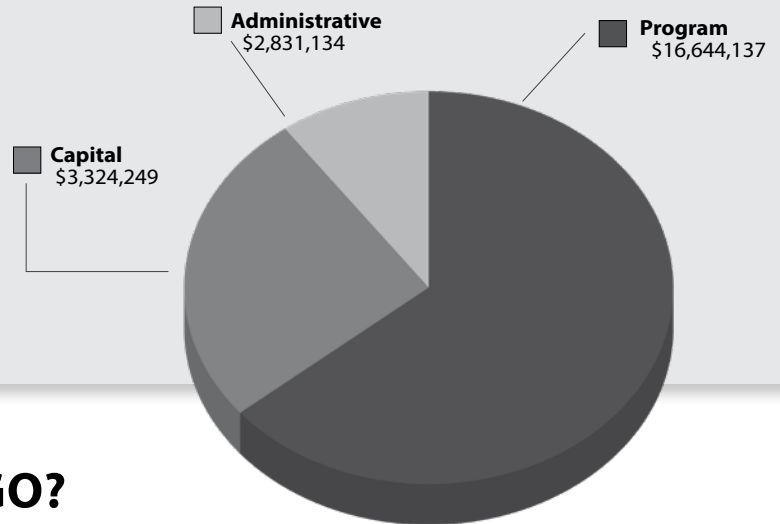
As required by the State Education Department, the budget is broken down into three main components as represented in the following pie chart and table:

	2018-2019	2019-2020	\$ CHANGE	% CHANGE	% OF TOTAL
<i>Administrative</i>	\$2,768,716	\$2,831,134	\$62,418	2.25%	12.42%
<i>Capital</i>	\$3,350,802	\$3,324,249	-\$26,553	-0.79%	14.58%
<i>Program</i>	\$16,366,139	\$16,644,137	\$277,998	1.70%	73.00%
TOTAL	\$22,485,657	\$22,799,520	\$313,863	1.40%	100.00%

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 operating and maintaining 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.

Proposed Expenditures

The table below presents the 2019-2020 proposed budget by operating function in comparison with its predecessor. It shows how much is being appropriated in each area of the budget and what percent that appropriation represents as part of the whole. For example, \$284,500 has been appropriated for Interscholastic Athletics and this represents 1.25% of the total budget. In addition, the table communicates the increase (or decrease) from the previous fiscal year.



WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

2019-2020 PROPOSED BUDGET

Function	2018-19 Appropriation	2019-20 Appropriation	Dollar Change	% Change	% of Total
Board of Education	\$22,778.00	\$22,778.00	\$0 .00	0.00%	0.10%
Central administration	\$208,024.00	\$216,673.00	\$8,649 .00	4.16%	0.95%
Finance	\$340,734.00	\$340,140.00	(\$594.00)	-0.17%	1.49%
Operation & maintenance	\$1,807,300.00	\$1,795,045.00	(\$12,255.00)	-0.68%	7.87%
Special items	\$640,282.00	\$644,175.00	\$3,893.00	0.61%	2.83%
Supervision	\$668,817.00	\$684,101.00	\$15,284.00	2.29%	3.00%
Teaching regular school	\$5,414,858.00	\$5,427,971.00	\$13,113.00	0.24%	23.81%
Programs for students with disabilities	\$2,062,964.00	\$2,033,796.00	(\$29,168.00)	-1.41%	8.92%
Occupational education	\$504,930.00	\$500,000.00	(\$4,930.00)	-0.98%	2.19%
Teaching special schools	\$88,908.00	\$91,776.00	\$2,868.00	3.23%	0.40%
School library	\$289,505.00	\$296,683.00	\$7,178 .00	2.48%	1.30%
Computer assisted instruction	\$471,040.00	\$452,790.00	(\$18,250.00)	-3.87%	1.99%
Guidance	\$217,818.00	\$225,852.00	\$8,034.00	3.69%	0.99%
Social Work Services	\$42,993.00	\$44,390.00	\$1,397.00	3.25%	0.19%
Health services	\$172,675.00	\$175,486.00	\$2,811.00	1.63	0.77%
Cocurricular activities	\$24,625.00	\$25,425.00	\$800.00	3.25%	0.11%
Interscholastic athletics	\$279,300.00	\$284,500.00	\$5,200.00	1.86%	1.25%
Transportation	\$1,064,970.00	\$1,399,057.00	\$334,087.00	31.37%	6.14%
Employee benefits	\$7,208,974.00	\$7,238,322.00	\$29,348.00	0.41%	31.75%
Debt service	\$696,081.00	\$668,698.00	(\$27,383.00)	-3.93%	2.93%
Other	\$258,081.00	\$231,862.00	(\$26,219.00)	-10.16%	1.02%
Totals	\$22,485,657.00	\$22,799,520.00	\$313,863.00	1.40%	100.00%

The previous table presents the 2019-2020 proposed budget by operating function in comparison with its predecessor. It shows how much is being appropriated in each area of the budget and what percent that appropriation represents as part of the whole. For example, \$284,500.00 has been appropriated for Interscholastic Athletics and this represents 1.25% of the total budget. In addition, the table communicates the increase (or decrease) from the previous fiscal year.

Of the twenty-one budget functions listed, only a small number show noticeable changes from the previous year and deserve further explanation:

- **TEACHING REGULAR SCHOOL** is the ordinary teaching function. In addition to contractual salary increases, these appropriations include the addition of an elementary reading teacher to address our students' academic needs.
- **TRANSPORTATION.** The significant increase in this area of the budget is due to an increase in contract cost due to prevailing market conditions, with a marked increase over the previous year.

HOW DO WE COMPARE TO OUR NEIGHBORS?

2016-17 FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY SUMMARY AS PROVIDED BY SED								
	ENROLLMENT		COST PER PUPIL					
	REG. ED.	SP. ED.	R	GEN. ED.	R	SP. ED.	R	TOTAL
LITTLE FALLS	1,075	152	6	\$ 10,147	5	\$ 23,123	7	\$ 19,688
DOLGEVILLE	893	132	3	\$ 11,066	10	\$ 19,022	9	\$ 18,738
FRANKFORT	954	131	9	\$ 9,026	3	\$ 26,548	8	\$ 18,981
HERKIMER	1,156	206	10	\$ 8,383	8	\$ 20,852	10	\$ 18,661
CENT. VALLEY	2,232	347	8	\$ 9,947	9	\$ 20,785	6	\$ 20,317
MT. MARKHAM	1,074	169	4	\$ 10,213	7	\$ 22,187	3	\$ 21,770
POLAND	566	75	2	\$ 11,099	2	\$ 27,708	4	\$ 21,660
WEST CANADA	677	86	7	\$ 10,145	1	\$ 30,566	5	\$ 21,146
ODY	200	25	5	\$ 10,158	4	\$ 24,010	2	\$ 24,669
RICHFIELD	449	87	1	\$ 12,509	6	\$ 22,506	1	\$ 24,717

A common method used to assess and compare the spending history between school districts is to look at the expenditure per pupil. This approach can be even further revealing by breaking the expenditure per pupil calculation out for GENERAL EDUCATION, SPECIAL EDUCATION, and TOTAL EXPENDITURES.

The table above compares the 10 districts in Herkimer County using financial data provided by the State Education Department for the 2016-17 fiscal year (the most recent year available). As you can see, of the 10 districts, Little Falls ranks 6th in GENERAL EDUCATION per pupil, 5th in SPECIAL EDUCATION per pupil, and 7th in TOTAL EXPENDITURES per pupil.

In a state-wide comparison, Little Falls TOTAL EXPENDITURES per pupil of \$19,688 compares favorably to school districts of similar size and composition (\$22,611) and even better when compared to all New York state schools (\$23,361).



WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

Estimated Revenues other than Taxes	Revenue Code	2017-2018 Budget	2018-2019 Budget	2019-2020 Budget	\$ Change
Other payments in lieu of taxes	A-1081	\$90,000.00	\$90,000.00	\$90,000.00	\$0.00
Wind power pilot	A-1083	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$0.00
Penalties on real property taxes	A-1090	\$17,000.00	\$17,000.00	\$17,000.00	\$0.00
Other day school tuition	A-1311	\$131,500.00	\$131,500.00	\$131,500.00	\$0.00
Other charges for services	A-1489	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00
Interest earned on investments	A-2401	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Rental of real property, BOCES	A-2413	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	(\$25,000.00)
Rental, other (universal pre-k)	A-2440	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$0.00
Refund of prior year's expenditures	A-2701	\$25,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$50,000.00
Gifts and Donations	A-2705	\$0.00	\$142,440.00	\$50,000.00	(\$92,440.00)
Other unclassified revenues	A-2770	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
State aid - basic formula	A-3101	\$10,837,322.00	\$11,296,834.00	\$11,760,577.00	\$463,743.00
State aid - BOCES	A-3103	\$1,352,431.00	\$1,323,265.00	\$1,344,203.00	\$20,938.00
State aid - textbooks	A-3260	\$64,396.00	\$64,396.00	\$64,396.00	\$0.00
State aid - computer software/hardware	A-3262	\$37,070.00	\$38,491.00	\$36,706.00	(\$1,785.00)
State aid - library materials	A-3263	\$6,466.00	\$6,466.00	\$6,466.00	\$0.00
Federal aid - medicaid assistance - support	A-4601	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$10,000.00
Total est. Revenues other than taxes		\$12,688,685.00	\$13,337,892.00	\$13,763,348.00	\$425,456.00
Appropriated fund balance		\$51,756.00	\$510,368.00	\$250,000.00	(\$260,368.00)
Real property tax levy	A-1001	\$8,637,397.00	\$8,637,397.00	\$8,786,172.00	\$148,775.00

Tax Levy Percentage Increase 1.72%

The table above lists the Estimated Revenues expected in the 2019-2020 fiscal year. These revenue estimates were developed using historical trends while incorporating any known pending changes. State aid estimates were based on information provided following the adoption of the State budget. To balance revenues with appropriations \$250,000 has been appropriated from the District's fund balance. Of this, \$200,000 is for general purposes, and \$50,000 is to cover the cost of the track resurfacing and repairs, as previously decided by voters.

Based on information provided following the passage of the state budget on March 31, the District is expecting a sizeable jump in state aid, primarily in the form of Foundation Aid, which saw a 4.3% increase. This increase has allowed the District to keep taxpayer impact to a minimum.

Several of the revenue sources listed above show significant change and warrant clarification:

- **REFUND OF PRIOR YEARS EXPENDITURES** Based on recent history, this revenue estimate was increased to more accurately reflect actual receipts.
- **GIFTS AND DONATIONS** The District is extremely fortunate to have a benefactor providing a significant financial commitment intended to advance our technology initiative. This donation will fund the addition of a new BOCES service allowing for much needed teacher training and technical support in the use of computers as an instructional tool.
- **STATE AID – BASIC FORMULA** Based on information provided following passage of the state budget on March 31, the District is expecting a sizeable jump in state aid, primarily in the form of Foundation Aid, which saw a 4.3% increase.
- **STATE AID - BOCES** BOCES aid is an expense driven aid, meaning the amount of aid paid is based on actual expenditures from the previous year. In the case for next year, based on expenditures in the current year, a slight decrease in BOCES aid is anticipated.

HOW MUCH MORE WILL I HAVE TO PAY?

As expressed previously, the tax levy under the proposed 2019-2020 budget will increase by 1.72% from the previous year. After allowances for fluctuation in assessment and valuation, a home with a \$75,000 assessed value and basic STAR should see an approximate increase of \$30 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 2019.

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.

One, it can simply implement a contingent budget which caps the tax levy at the prior year's amount (0% increase). In other words, the District would need to make \$148,775 in cuts to the budget through program reductions.

OR

Two, it can conduct a second budget vote with or without changes in the original budget.

HOWEVER, if the budget is defeated a second time, the Board of Education **MUST** then adopt a contingent budget.

If you have questions concerning anything to do with the proposed 2019-20 school budget, you are welcome and encouraged to contact the Administrative Office at 315.823.1470 to speak with Dr. Keith T. Levitano, Superintendent, or Mr. Ashraf Allam, Director of Business Operations



A MESSAGE FROM THE LITTLE FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY



I have, like many others, a particular fondness for libraries, and still remember the moment I received my library card. I spent hours in the library reading, playing games with friends, tracing my fingers over book spines wondering what each title contained. The notion that I could expand my horizons with each book, with each turn of the page, all for free, made me feel overwhelmed with gratitude.

We are truly lucky to have our wonderful public library. Our library offers more than physical and digital books. Over the past year our repertoire of programs has grown and diversified. Piano lessons, yoga, tech time, coffee and coloring, and the ever popular Flash Fiction are just a few of the many programs offered. There are GED classes and tutoring, concerts and art gallery receptions, free computer access and space for community groups. Our library doors are open longer than other comparable libraries in the area, always with two outstanding staff members on duty. Our talented staff catalog, serve the public, write grants, create programs, offer tech services, and more. With so many unique offerings, clearly our library has been responsive to our community's needs, and serves the public well.

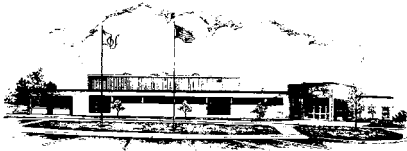
Because the minimum wage rose 6.7% in December 2018, and a commensurate increase is coming in December of this year, this may not be the case anymore. While we are planning additional fundraising activities to offset this addition to our expenses, fundraising is never certain. To ensure that we can offer this much deserved increase for our employees without cutting their hours, we are requesting a modest increase in the library's share of the school tax.

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 community-centric features make our library a shining example of 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



Little Falls CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

15 Petrie Street • Little Falls, NY 13365

LITTLE FALLS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 2019-20 BUDGET NOTICE

Annual Budget Vote

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2019-20 by the qualified voters of the Little Falls City School District, Herkimer County, New York, will be held on Tuesday, May 21, 2019, between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m., at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting machine.

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO VOTE ON:

TUESDAY, MAY 21

Little Falls High School Gymnasium

12:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

OVERALL BUDGET PROPOSAL

	2018-2019 Adopted Budget	2019-2020 Proposed Budget	2019-2020 Contingent Budget
Total appropriations	\$ 22,485,657.00	\$ 22,799,520.00	\$ 22,485,657.00
Increase for 2019-2020 school year		\$ 313,863.00	0
Percentage increase in budget		1.40%	0
Percentage change in the Consumer Price Index		2.44%	
School Tax Levy Limit		\$ 8,966,944.00	
Proposed Tax Levy (without exclusions)		\$ 8,765,926.00	\$ 8,637,397.00
Total Permissible Exclusions		\$ 20,246.00	
Proposed Tax Levy	\$ 8,637,397.00	\$ 8,786,172.00	\$ 8,637,397.00
Percentage change in Estimated Tax Levy		1.72%	0.00%
Administrative component	\$ 2,768,716.00	\$ 2,831,134.00	\$ 2,768,716.00
Program component	\$ 3,350,802.00	\$ 3,324,249.00	\$ 3,350,802.00
Capital component	\$ 16,366,139.00	\$ 16,644,137.00	\$ 16,366,139.00
Total	\$ 22,485,657.00	\$ 22,799,520.00	\$ 22,485,657.00

Basic STAR Exemption Impact

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹	Budget Proposed for the 2019-2020 School Year
	\$840.00

¹ The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.