



# Budget Newsletter



*Rush-Henrietta*  
Rush-Henrietta Central School District

June 2020

**VOTE BY JUNE 9**

## 2020-2021 District Budget Proposal

**Proposed Budget: \$135,305,000**  
**Budget-to-Budget Change: 2.45%**  
**Tax Rate Change: 1.5%**

Developing a budget is a complex task during a typical year, let alone during a global pandemic. As we developed the proposed 2020-2021 budget, we spoke with many community members to seek feedback. The Rush-Henrietta Central School District continues to deal with rising mandatory expenses, such as health insurance and special education. In addition, we need to take into consideration the economic impact of COVID-19. After a careful analysis, Board of Education members are presenting a proposed budget they believe is educationally sound, fiscally responsible, equitable, and responsive to recent events.

Rush-Henrietta is presenting a budget-to-budget increase of 2.45 percent. Under this proposal, the true value tax rate would increase by less than 1.5 percent, and the total tax levy would be within the limits established under the state's Tax Levy Cap. Rush-Henrietta's tax rate will remain among the lowest of the 17 local suburban school districts. The Board of Education is pleased that the proposal maintains all educational programs for children.

### Highlights of Proposed Budget

- Preserves instructional programs and student services for more than 5,400 students
- Maintains benefits of district's successful small-class-size initiative at K-3 schools
- Achieves staffing reductions through attrition, minimizing layoffs
- Reflects \$1.8 million in expense reductions when compared to budget recommended before COVID-19

### What Does This Mean in Dollars and Cents?

- Taking into account the STAR exemption – for which all homeowners are eligible – a district resident owning a house assessed at \$150,000 would see school taxes increase by \$45 annually. A senior citizen with the enhanced STAR exemption who owns a house assessed at \$150,000 would see school taxes increase by \$45 annually.

### Did You Know?

- Thanks to aggressive cost-cutting measures in recent years, if the proposed budget is approved, Rush-Henrietta's true value tax rate in 2020-2021 will be lower than it was during the 2005-2006 school year.
- Moody's Investors Service recently reaffirmed the district's Aa2 Bond Rating, citing the district's "sound financial position, stable tax base influenced by a degree of institutional presence, and a below average direct debt burden." The district's reserve funds were cited as a financial strength.
- Rush-Henrietta has had one of the lowest true value tax rates in Monroe County for many years. **Under the proposed budget, Rush-Henrietta will have one of the lowest rates again next year.**

The New York State Education Department has named Rush-Henrietta Senior High School and Crane Elementary School as Recognition Schools for outstanding academic achievement.



## *From the Board of Education*

May 15, 2020

Dear Community Resident:

On Tuesday, June 9, eligible voters in the Rush-Henrietta Central School District will have the opportunity to vote on the proposed 2020-2021 budget adopted by the Board of Education. We believe it is educationally sound, fiscally responsible, equitable, and responsive to today's new challenges. **Because of the pandemic, voting will take place this year ONLY by mail.**

This year's budget development process has been unlike any other. This was a straightforward budget season that called for a tax rate increase of less than 2 percent. However, COVID-19 has impacted the local and state economies in dramatic fashion. The uncertainty caused by this global pandemic forced the district to take a second look at its spending plan. More than ever, we need to find the right balance between what is right for our students and the community at large.

This unexpected fiscal crisis is reducing revenue sharply for school districts statewide. Instead of facing a \$400,000 budget deficit, paid for through the use of reserve funds, Rush-Henrietta suddenly faced a deficit of \$2 million. The new shortfall is the result of receiving \$1.1 million less in state aid and a projected \$500,000 reduction in sales-tax revenue next year. State leaders believe the federal government might provide COVID-19 relief that will reimburse the district for \$1.1 million in lost state aid, but there are no guarantees. For that reason, the district is proceeding conservatively, assuming the money will not be recouped.

Despite these challenges, Rush-Henrietta is in a better position than many districts. We face a difficult budget year, rather than a disastrous one. That is because of the wise and prudent financial decisions that have been made in Rush-Henrietta in recent years. Still, we know changes must be made to address the fiscal fallout of COVID-19.

The Board of Education revised its proposed budget with three main goals in mind: Minimizing the impact on student learning and achievement, preserving programs for students as much as possible, and reducing potential layoffs to the fullest extent. Being thoughtful planners is crucial because the governor has new authority to reduce state aid at three different points based on the economic condition of the state. Clearly, this puts school districts in a tough spot. Although further state aid cuts may occur, we are doing our best now not to be caught off guard and forced to make mid-year layoffs next year. With the new fiscal challenge in mind, the district sought to reduce costs to make up for lost revenue. While it isn't easy to identify obvious areas in which to make reductions, we identified several options.

First, the Board of Education put new initiatives for next year on hold. Unfortunately, the district will not be able to offer our new Algebra I in Manufacturing Processes, Entrepreneurship and Design (AMPED) course that many junior high students were excited about taking next year. The board also agreed to delay a proposal to develop learning classrooms of the future. This was an effort to configure Rush-Henrietta schools to better match the way students learn today. When combined with several smaller cost-saving measures - reducing equipment and supplies budgets, as well as professional development and travel expenses - these moves will reduce spending by more than \$1 million.

We know education is a people-driven business, and Rush-Henrietta will do its best not to resort to layoffs. We have a dedicated, talented staff, and they make a difference for our students each and every day. It is important to do our best to keep this intact. The district will continue using an attrition approach that has served us well in recent years. That means we will not fill certain positions when people retire or leave the district.

As part of this strategy, the Board of Education agreed to increase average class size in grades K-6 by one student per classroom. This move will maintain the benefits of our small-class-size initiative, while providing needed flexibility that will result in cost-savings by avoiding the need to replace six teachers who intend to retire. We can achieve a significant cost-savings of more than \$420,000 simply by adding one additional student to some existing K-6 classrooms.

Board members also agreed to reduce the proposed tax rate increase from less than 2 percent to less than 1.5 percent. It might seem counterintuitive to reduce the tax rate when we expect so much less in revenue, but the board knows many of our community members would benefit from some financial relief at this challenging time.



Given our expense and revenue assumptions, we project a true value tax rate increase of less than 1.5 percent. For the past 10 years, the final true value tax rate has been lower than the proposed rate. The actual tax rate is established after town assessments are finalized. As in previous years, this projected tax rate increase is among the lowest in Monroe County. A district homeowner with property assessed at \$150,000 with either the basic or enhanced STAR exemption would pay an additional \$45 next year.

**Typically, the district's annual vote would be held at the Transportation and Operations Center. Because of the pandemic, there is NO in-person voting. The state has changed this year's vote to mail-in only. Please see the enclosed ballot, or the back page of this newsletter, for information on how to vote this year. If you have any questions, please contact any board trustee listed below.**

These are not easy times, but we are prepared for the challenge. We truly appreciate the strong support that our community continues to demonstrate for the delivery of quality programs and services that make our district a great place to learn and live.

Sincerely,

Jennifer M. Laird  
President, Board of Education

Jennifer M. Laird, President  
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## Rush-Henrietta Recognized for Excellence

The Rush-Henrietta Central School District has received many impressive accolades during the past several years. We hope you are as excited as we are about this!

Did you know the New York State Education Department recognized Rush-Henrietta Senior High School as a Recognition School for a fourth consecutive year? This honor recognizes the strong performance of our students and the significant progress we have made in closing gaps in student achievement among subgroups. This recognition is given on a very limited basis. This spring, Crane Elementary School also was honored in this way!

Rush-Henrietta Senior High School also earned high marks for the third year in a row in the *U.S. News and World Report* Best High Schools in America poll. Our high school was rated in the top 8.5 percent of schools in the country! In addition, this spring, the National Association of Music Merchants named Rush-Henrietta one of the Best Communities for Music Education. This is the 11th consecutive time our district has been recognized.

Each of these recognitions is evidence that our efforts are making a significant difference in the lives of Rush-Henrietta children. Many thanks to our community for its continued support. We couldn't do this without you!



Guiding Student Success

Rush-Henrietta  
RUSH-HENRIETTA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Rush-Henrietta Central School District - Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2019-20 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2020-21 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2020-21 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$132,072,542	\$135,305,000	\$132,289,323
Increase/(Decrease) for the 2020-21 School Year		\$3,232,458	\$216,781
Percentage Increase/(Decrease) in Proposed Budget		2.45%	0.16%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.81%	
<b>A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount</b>			
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$79,883,680	\$82,899,357	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	-	-	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	-	-	
<b>E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A+B+C-D)</b>	<b>\$79,883,680</b>	<b>\$82,899,357</b>	<b>\$79,883,680</b>
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	-	-	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$79,883,680	\$82,899,357	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E-B-F+D)	\$79,883,680	\$82,899,357	
I. Difference: (G-H); (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions)**	-	-	
Administrative Component	\$14,029,554	\$14,331,188	\$13,615,511
Program Component	\$100,339,748	\$103,329,252	\$101,329,252
Capital Component	\$17,703,240	\$17,644,560	\$17,344,560

\* The Contingency Budget information displayed above has been calculated in total, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law. Budget items excluded from the calculation include equipment expenditures and other non-contingent expenses. The actual appropriations under a contingency budget, should this be necessary, would be determined by the Board of Education and may include additional contingent expenditures if funding sources other than additional tax levy amounts are identified.

\*\*Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount:

Description	Amount
Bus purchases	\$2,400,000

### Basic STAR Exemption Impact

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings based upon the standard \$30,000 exemption authorized by Section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2020-21 School Year

\$595

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2020-21 by the qualified voters of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District, Monroe County, New York, will be held via absentee ballot, which must be received at the district administration building, located at 2034 Lehigh Station Road, Henrietta, NY 14467, by 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 9, 2020, at which time the ballots will be opened to count. Two (2) absentee ballots will be mailed to each district residence. If a ballot isn't received, or to request additional ballots, please contact the school district clerk by email at [kflanigan@rhnet.org](mailto:kflanigan@rhnet.org) or phone (585) 359-5010.

If you are a United States citizen, will be at least 18 years old by June 9, 2020, and have been a resident of the school district at least 30 days prior to the vote, you may vote.

## R-H True Value Tax Rate: Among LOWEST in Monroe County

### Monroe County School District Comparison\*

Tax rates are a means of comparing taxes between districts. The true value tax rate in the Rush-Henrietta Central School District is consistently among the **lowest** in Monroe County. Next year, Rush-Henrietta again will have one of the lowest tax rates in the county.

\* Data from "2020 Facts and Figures" published by the Monroe County School Boards Association



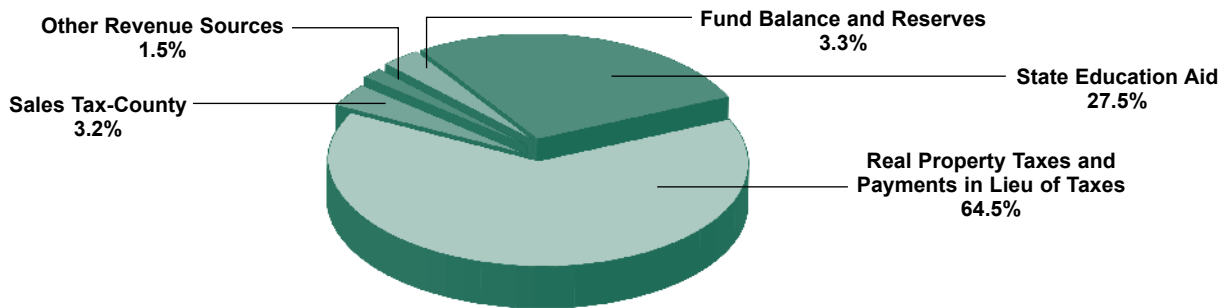


# Rush-Henrietta Central School District Budget Proposal

## 2020-2021 Projected Revenue Statement

Revenue Source	2019-2020	2020-2021	% Change
State Education Aid	\$37,648,798	\$37,186,079	-1.2
Real Property Taxes and Payments in Lieu of Taxes	84,133,680	87,299,357	3.8
Sales Tax-County	4,800,000	4,300,000	-10.4
Other Revenue Sources	2,055,064	2,119,564	3.1
Fund Balance and Reserves	3,435,000	4,400,000	28.1
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>\$132,072,542</b>	<b>\$135,305,000</b>	<b>2.4</b>

### REVENUES AS A PERCENTAGE OF BUDGET



## 2020-2021 Proposed Expenditures

There are five expenditure categories in the 2020-2021 budget proposal, as outlined below, that support educational programs and school district operations.

**Instruction: 52.3%** — The instructional program is the largest category in the budget and is the focal point of our educational system. All services that provide, or directly affect, instruction to students are budgeted in this area. The following are included in this category: regular school program, special education, summer school and support services [school libraries, health, psychological and social work services, curriculum coordination and supervision, curriculum development, research and evaluation], BOCES instructional programs, student activities [interscholastic sports, intramurals, co-curricular activities] and required tuition payments for Rush-Henrietta students attending approved private and public school programs.

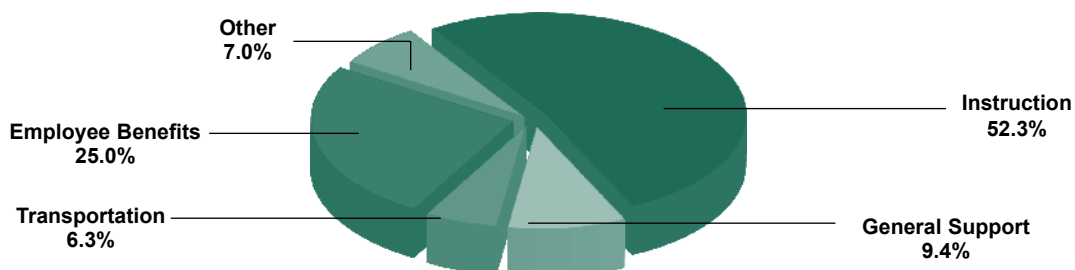
**General Support: 9.4%** — This part of the budget covers the areas that support the educational program through central administration, business operations, human resources, community relations, maintenance and repair of all district grounds and facilities, printing, mailing, district meetings, Board of Education and legal services.

**Transportation: 6.3%** — Includes bus transportation for more than 6,000 students to district, charter, parochial and private schools; BOCES centers for vocational and special education programs; field trips and athletic team trips.

**Employee Benefits: 25.0%** — Included in the employee benefits category are health insurance, retirement, social security, and the risk fund which includes unemployment insurance, worker's compensation insurance, disability and life insurance.

**Other: 7.0%** — A small portion of the budget is for other expenditures that include capital reserve fund (buildings and grounds reconstruction, repairs, and improvements), and community services.

### EXPENDITURES AS A PERCENTAGE OF BUDGET





# Rush-Henrietta Central Sch

## 2020-2021 Component Budget

### Administrative Component 10.6% of Budget

The Administrative Component provides for overall general support and management activities, including business office operations, payroll, purchasing, general administration, personnel, legal and auditing services. Cost for administration and supervision of each of the district's schools is also included in this component.

Function or Account	2019-2020	2020-2021	Increase/(Decrease)
Board of Education	136,180	138,387	2,207
Central Administration	284,660	296,959	12,299
Finance	711,983	728,664	16,681
Legal Services	84,563	96,171	11,608
Personnel	617,174	634,812	17,638
Public Information	231,151	260,822	29,671
Other Central Services	1,443,976	1,474,314	30,338
Other Special Items	1,203,145	1,232,014	28,869
Curriculum Development and Supervision	1,953,065	2,124,045	170,980
Supervision-Regular School	2,895,087	2,789,119	(105,968)
Supervision-Special School	289,214	144,283	(144,931)
Research, Evaluation and Planning	434,242	446,871	12,629
Employee Benefits	3,745,114	3,964,727	219,613
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$14,029,554</b>	<b>\$14,331,188</b>	<b>\$301,634</b>

### Program Component 76.4% of Budget

The Program Component provides funding for the instruction of and educational support services for the district's students. Programs are offered in four (4) primary buildings, two (2) intermediate buildings, two (2) junior high schools, and one (1) high school. Funds are also included in this component for transporting students.

Function or Account	2019-2020	2020-2021	Increase/(Decrease)
Instruction	63,788,549	64,922,339	1,133,790
In-Service Training	313,114	312,615	(499)
District Transportation	6,651,287	7,089,734	438,447
Garage Building	185,730	193,367	7,637
BOCES Transportation	1,164,829	1,196,279	31,450
Community Services	204,250	311,984	107,734
Employee Benefits	26,789,489	28,042,934	1,253,445
Other Transfers	1,242,500	1,260,000	17,500
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$100,339,748</b>	<b>\$103,329,252</b>	<b>\$2,989,504</b>

### Capital Component 13.0% of Budget

The Capital Component pays for maintenance, repairs, and upgrades, for upkeep of property, and for electricity, gas heat, oil, water & sewer and telephone services. Funds are also included for "debt service" payments on capital projects (principal and interest payments) and for refund of taxes for claims against property assessments.

Function or Account	2019-2020	2020-2021	Increase/(Decrease)
Operation of Plant	4,914,977	4,890,051	(24,926)
Maintenance of Plant	2,275,259	2,438,555	163,296
Refund of Taxes	215,000	225,000	10,000
Other Special Items	272,033	281,041	9,008
Employee Benefits	1,846,158	1,896,315	50,157
Transfer to Capital	6,451,419	6,202,004	(249,415)
Debt Service	1,728,394	1,711,594	(16,800)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$17,703,240</b>	<b>\$17,644,560</b>	<b>(\$58,680)</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$132,072,542</b>	<b>\$135,305,000</b>	<b>\$3,232,458</b>



# School District Budget Proposal

## 2020-2021 Proposed Expenditures

### Instruction: 52.3% of Budget

	2019-2020	2020-2021	% Change
Salaries	50,292,115	51,000,127	1.4%
Equipment	307,435	257,435	-16.3%
Supplies and Materials	984,238	996,749	1.3%
Textbooks and Software	578,824	591,741	2.2%
Contractual Expenses	1,562,331	1,557,120	-0.3%
BOCES	12,997,408	13,717,981	5.5%
Tuition	2,950,920	2,581,072	-12.5%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>69,673,271</b>	<b>70,702,225</b>	<b>1.5%</b>

### General Support: 9.4% of Budget

	2019-2020	2020-2021	% Change
Salaries	5,024,656	5,067,635	0.9%
Equipment	335,035	344,081	2.7%
Supplies and Materials	677,569	684,828	1.1%
Contractual Expenses	3,941,073	4,208,725	6.8%
BOCES	2,411,768	2,411,768	0.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12,390,101</b>	<b>12,717,037</b>	<b>2.6%</b>

### Transportation: 6.3% of Budget

	2019-2020	2020-2021	% Change
Salaries	4,733,892	5,006,207	5.8%
Equipment, Supplies and Materials, Contracts	2,008,125	2,276,894	13.4%
BOCES, Public, Contract Transportation	1,259,829	1,196,279	-5.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$8,001,846</b>	<b>\$8,479,380</b>	<b>6.0%</b>

### Employee Benefits: 25.0% of Budget

	2019-2020	2020-2021	% Change
Social Security	4,483,656	4,774,470	6.5%
Retirement	6,257,620	6,652,937	6.3%
Insurance	21,639,485	22,476,569	3.9%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>32,380,761</b>	<b>33,903,976</b>	<b>4.7%</b>

### Other: 7.0% of Budget

	2019-2020	2020-2021	% Change
Bus Purchase and Capital Transfers	6,451,419	6,202,004	-3.9%
Community Service	204,250	311,984	52.7%
Transfer to Special Education Extended School Year	462,500	475,000	2.7%
Transfer to State Schools (Blind and Deaf)	450,000	475,000	5.6%
Transfer to School Food Services	330,000	310,000	-6.1%
Debt Service	1,728,394	1,728,394	0.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9,626,563</b>	<b>9,502,382</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>

<b>GENERAL FUND TOTALS</b>	<b>132,072,542</b>	<b>135,305,000</b>	<b>2.45%</b>
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## On June 9, 2020, Eligible Voters Will Vote On...

Propositions 2 and 3 will NOT affect the tax rate.

### Proposition 1

#### BUDGET PROPOSITION

Shall the following proposition be adopted?

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District be authorized to expend the sum set forth in the estimate of amount of money required for school purposes during the fiscal year 2020-2021 in the total amount of \$135,305,000 and to levy the necessary tax therefore.

### Proposition 2

#### BUS EXPENDITURES

Shall the following proposition be adopted?

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District be authorized to expend the sum of up to \$2,400,000 to be funded from the 2016 Bus Purchase Reserve, the balance in existing Capital Fund bus purchase funds, and the General Fund Transfer for the purchase and replacement of vehicles for the transportation of district students.

### Proposition 3

#### 2020 CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

Shall the following proposition be adopted?

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District be authorized to establish a reserve fund for the purpose of construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, repair and equipping of school buildings, and facilities and site improvements in accordance with Education Law Section 3651, to be designated as the 2020 Capital Reserve Fund, over a probable term of 10 years, but to continue for its stated purpose until liquidated according to Education Law or until its funds are exhausted, the ultimate amount of

such fund to be \$18,000,000, the source of which shall be determined by the Board of Education including any and all state aid and any and all federal and state funds available by grant or otherwise generated by projects for construction, renovation, reconstruction, rehabilitation or repair of school facilities, any identified General Fund balance, any identified surplus funds in previously established capital reserve funds, other reserve funds, and interest earnings.







## Because You Asked..

Since January, the Board of Education and Superintendent Lawrence Bo Wright have been engaging the community in an open and frank dialogue about financial issues impacting our community and Rush-Henrietta Central School District. Board members and our superintendent, Mr. Wright, will be glad to answer questions on the district website at [www.rhnet.org/budgettalk](http://www.rhnet.org/budgettalk). If you have a question that isn't addressed below, or have questions about this year's voting process, ask by visiting the website at [www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org) and clicking the Contact Us button. We look forward to hearing from community members.

### **Q. What is the property tax cap?**

**A.** In 2011, New York state established a property tax cap that limits how much a local government or school district can increase its property tax levy each year. The cap was made permanent in 2019. Under this law, the growth in the property tax levy – the total money to be raised through property taxes charged on a district's taxable assessed value of property – will be capped at 2 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is less. Sometimes, a district is allowed to propose a tax levy increase in excess of 2 percent based on a complicated, eight-step formula created by the state. For example, in addition to the base 2 percent limit, school districts are able to add the value of new property development. They also can add to the cap for certain exemptions, including voter-approved local capital expenditures; increases in the state-mandated employer contribution rates for teacher and employee pensions that exceed 2 percent; and court orders and judgments resulting from tort actions of any amount that exceeds 5 percent of a district's current levy. Local communities have the ability to override the cap, by a super majority vote of the public, but Rush-Henrietta has not chosen to do that. Although this was publicized as a 2 percent tax cap, there are many factors outlined in the law that cause the final cap to be lower or higher than 2 percent, and this amount varies in each school district. Significantly, the cap constrains a school district's ability to raise new revenue to support programs and services.

### **Q. What are "unfunded mandates" and how do they drive costs?**

**A.** Unfunded mandates are legal requirements placed upon school districts without the specific funding source to offset their cost. Many of these mandates are well-founded, but they are expensive. Both the federal and state governments impose unfunded mandates upon school districts. A good example of unfunded mandates is for special education costs where the federal government mandates that appropriate, least-restrictive educational services be provided to special education students "regardless of cost." The state has imposed further special education requirements that add to this expense so it now costs more than three times as much to educate a special education student as it does a general education student. Another example of federal mandates is reflected in transportation. Bus prices have increased more than 45 percent during the past five years because of mandated pollution control and upgraded communications equipment. Employee wages and benefits also are affected by state mandates. In addition to these major unfunded mandates, there are hundreds of smaller ones requiring much administrative cost to implement and ensure compliance. Recent state budgets included more of these, including requirements to provide feminine hygiene products to all students in grades 6-12. There also is a new requirement to provide a full lunch to students even if they have no money to pay. Legislative mandates continue to add new state programs and millions of dollars of associated costs to our school district budget. In conjunction with the tax cap, these unfunded mandates could result

in reduced opportunities for our students. New mandates put significant pressure on school budgets, the growth of which is already capped.

### **Q. How will the proposed budget affect homeowners?**

**A.** The Board of Education's \$135 million budget proposal calls for an increase of less than 1.5 percent in the true-value tax rate. A homeowner with property assessed at \$150,000 and the basic STAR exemption would pay an additional \$45 annually. A senior citizen with property assessed at \$150,000 and the enhanced STAR exemption would pay an additional \$45 annually.

### **Q. How are school taxes determined?**

**A.** Your school taxes are determined by three factors—the school tax levy, property assessments, and equalization rates.

- The school tax levy is the total dollar amount the district must collect from property owners to support the annual operating budget.
- In terms of property assessments, Rush-Henrietta uses property values provided by the four towns in the school district – Brighton, Henrietta, Pittsford, and Rush – to levy taxes. Each property within a town is assigned a value by the town assessor.
- Each year, the New York State Office of Real Property Services evaluates each town's assessment practices and sets specific equalization rates to ensure a fair tax burden distribution across the district. For this reason, an 8 percent increase in property assessments in one town does not mean that all four towns within our school district would experience the same increase. If the school tax levy increase is greater than the increase in property assessments for the district as a whole, the district's true value tax rate increases.

### **Q. How has COVID-19 impacted this year's proposed budget?**

**A.** This year's budget development process has been unlike any other. This was a straightforward budget season that called for a tax rate increase of less than 2 percent. However, COVID-19 has impacted the local and state economies in dramatic fashion. The uncertainty caused by this global pandemic forced the district to take a second look at its spending plan. More than ever, we need to find the right balance between what is right for our students and the community at large. The Board of Education has revised its proposed budget with a goal of minimizing the impact on student learning and achievement, while eliminating all new initiatives scheduled for next year. By doing this, more than \$1 million in additional costs will be avoided. In addition, by increasing the average class size in grades K-6 by one student per classroom \$420,000 in expenses can be avoided. COVID-19 also forced the delay of the annual budget vote, which traditionally takes place in May, and all voting will be done by mail. See pages 2-3 for more information.

# Candidates Vie for Three Board of Education Seats

The school district is governed by a seven-member Board of Education elected by the eligible voters of the district. Members are volunteer public officials who serve without pay. As elected representatives of district residents, and as officers of the state of New York, board members must carry out duties required by the state Legislature, the Board of Regents, and the state Commissioner of Education. The board establishes policies for the operation of the district. This year, eligible voters in Rush-Henrietta will elect three candidates to the Board of Education. The following information is provided by each candidate. Candidates are listed in alphabetical order.



**JENNIFER M. LAIRD**

**RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT:** 50 years

**FAMILY:** Spouse, Jeff; Children, Hannah, 19, and Emily, 17

**EDUCATION:** Nazareth College, B.S., History  
Nazareth College, M.S., Elementary Education

**EMPLOYMENT:** Intermediate teacher, Grade 5, Rochester City School District

**HONORS/ACTIVITIES:** President of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District Board of Education; co-presenter at 2019 National School Boards Association Conference regarding planning and implementation of R-H technology and ISTE standards; member of district's Policy and Finance & Audit committees; liaison to Senior High School, Sherman Elementary School, and John R. Gaffney West Henrietta Education Building; and past liaison to Winslow Elementary School and Good Shepherd.

**STATEMENT:** I am honored to serve the community as a Rush-Henrietta school board member. It is important that we continue to focus on student success from elementary through high school, and to ensure their future success whether that means college or trade school. I will continue making responsible financial decisions to provide the best educational outcomes for all of our students. I am very passionate about continuing to look at how mental health impacts children, and providing students with the resources to assist them. I would be honored to continue working with the board, superintendent, and the community to ensure the continued success of all Rush-Henrietta students.



**DIANE E. MCBRIDE**

**RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT:** 62 Years

**FAMILY:** Spouse, Jim; Children, Elizabeth, David, and Amy

**EDUCATION:** Rush-Henrietta Central School District, Regents Diploma  
Monroe Community College, A.A.S.

**EMPLOYMENT:** Receptionist, Pieters Family Life Center/Heritage Christian Services

**HONORS/ACTIVITIES:** Trustee, Board of Education, Rush-Henrietta Central School District, since 2004; past president and vice president of the Board of Education; member of New York State School Boards Association and Monroe County School Boards Association, Equity and Inclusion Steering Committee, Policy Committee, Finance and Audit Committee, Budget Advisory Council, District Parent Advisory Council, Rush-Henrietta Music Parents Association, and Multicultural Parent Advisory Council; recipient of New York State School Boards Association Master of Boardmanship Award, New York State School Boards Association Board Mastery Award, and New York State School Boards Association Board Lifetime Achievement Award; Director of Christian Education, Pinnacle Lutheran Church, 1993-2007; Preschool Teacher, Pinnacle Lutheran School, 1993-2007; Adjunct Instructor, Monroe Community College, 1984-1992; music leader and choir member, Pinnacle Lutheran Church; active with Opera Rochester; Rochester Opera Factory; Genesee Valley Orchestra and Chorus.

**STATEMENT:** Rush-Henrietta has a long history of excellence. As a board member, I have the opportunity to work with a dedicated team of individuals and am able to give back to the R-H school community and help to ensure that this rich history continues. In an ever-changing world, I feel it is important to use my knowledge and skills to ensure that this history of excellence continues. In these fiscal, academic, and social-emotional challenging times, it is important that student success remains the focus. Providing the resources for teachers and staff to support our students will require creative and collaborative solutions. I would like the opportunity to continue to work together with the board, superintendent, and school community to provide educationally sound and equitable programs, while providing fiscal responsibility.



**DOUGLAS J. RIVERS**

**RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT:** 12 years

**FAMILY:** Spouse, Kimberly; Child, Lucas

**EDUCATION:** Monroe Community College, A.A.S.  
SUNY Oswego, B.A.; SUNY Brockport, M.P.A.

**EMPLOYMENT:** Monroe Community College, Associate Professor

**HONORS/ACTIVITIES:** Graduate with Distinction, Monroe Community College; Graduate with Honors, SUNY Oswego; Pi Alpha Alpha Honor Society, SUNY Brockport; Student Club of the Year Award, Monroe Community College; Co-Curricular Special Achievement Award, Monroe Community College.

**STATEMENT:** Douglas J. Rivers graduated high school in 1987. He has an Associate of Applied Science degree in Automotive Technology, Bachelor of Science in Vocational Education, and a Master's Degree of Public Administration. He worked as a technician in the automotive field; taught an automotive program and was a VICA Advisor in a high school; and now is teaching/coordinating an automotive program at Monroe Community College for General Motors. In addition, he is an ASE certified Master Technician, permanently certified New York State Vocational Education Teacher, and Associate Professor at Monroe Community College. Finally, Douglas is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, serving as an Aerospace Ground Equipment Mechanic. Over the years, vocational and STEM programs have declined. Mr. Rivers would like to advocate for - and see an increase in - vocational and STEM education, which will create pathways for students to become college and career ready.



# Celebrating Student Achievement

## 2019 New York State Regents Results

Regents Exam	# Tested	% Passing
ASL	70	100
CCLS English	427	91.1
French	44	97.7
German	42	100
Spanish	120	96.7
CCLS Algebra	408	88.0
CCLS Geometry	298	92.0
CCLS Algebra 2	274	93.4
Earth Science	452	76.1
Biology	423	88.7
Chemistry	319	85
Physics	148	87.2
Global History and Geography	422	94.6
US History and Government	412	90.8

## Advanced Placement Results

Advanced Placement courses are offered in many academic areas. In Rush-Henrietta, 827 exams were taken last spring; 607 scored at a “3” or higher. That means 73 percent of students earned a 3 or better on their exam. Exams are graded on scores of 1 to 5; scores of 3 and above generally are accepted for college credit. We continue to encourage our students to take advantage of these Advanced Placement offerings.



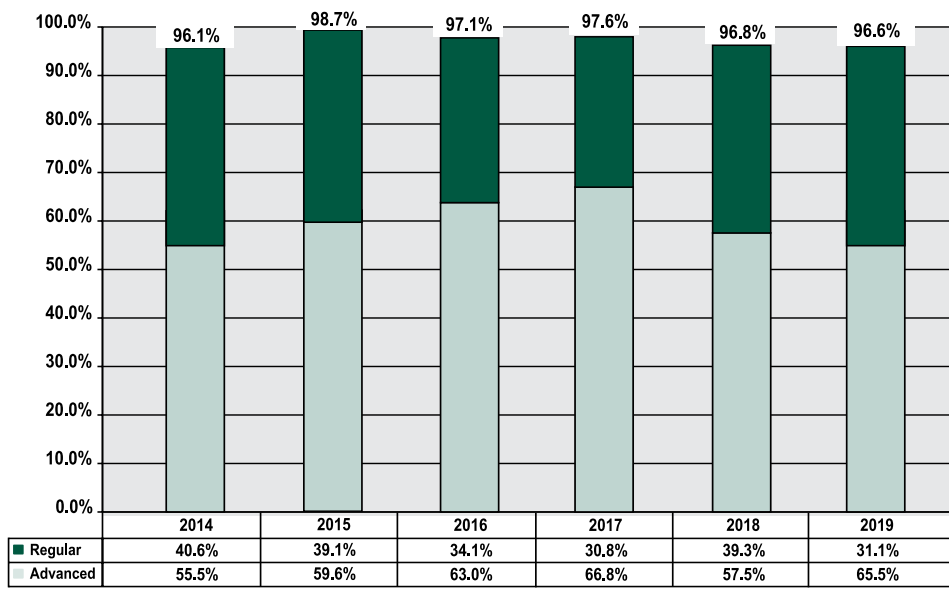
Rush-Henrietta continues to challenge its students to take more rigorous courses in an effort to increase their college readiness. For example, Rush-Henrietta requires all eighth graders to take Earth Science, a class typically taught elsewhere in ninth grade. This gives students the opportunity to take an extra year of science to prepare for college. Rush-Henrietta also offers more challenging math courses.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA

The New York State Department of Education requires the district to make documents related to student achievement available prior to annual district budget votes. Information regarding the 2018-2019 School Report Cards Part 1, which provides accountability status for all schools within the Rush-Henrietta Central School District, and the Fiscal Accountability Supplement for the district, is available at [www.rhnet.org/reportcards](http://www.rhnet.org/reportcards).

In addition, a hard copy of each report is available through the Office of Strategic Initiatives, located in the Parker Administration Building at 2034 Lehigh Station Road. To make an appointment to review these documents during regular business hours, please call 359-5042.

## Graduation Results Percent of Graduates Receiving Regents Diplomas 2014-2019



# *Rush-Henrietta* Rush-Henrietta Central School District

2034 Lehigh Station Road  
Henrietta, New York 14467  
(585) 359-5000  
www.rhnet.org

## 2019-2020 Board of Education

Mrs. Jennifer M. Laird, President  
Mrs. Mai Abdullah, Vice President  
Mrs. Nichole M. LaPlaca  
Mrs. Diane E. McBride  
Mr. James C. O'Brien  
Mr. Douglas J. Rivers  
Mrs. Annmarie Strzyzynski

## Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Lawrence Bo Wright

Published by the Office of Community Relations

## ALL VOTING WILL BE DONE BY MAIL

Place each completed ballot in its own absentee ballot envelope and seal. Be sure to complete both sides of the envelope – name, address, and signature. To be counted, the envelope must be signed. Place all completed absentee ballot envelopes in the postage-paid envelope addressed to the district and mail.

For an absentee ballot to count, it must be received in the office of the school district clerk by 5 p.m. Tuesday, June 9. During counting of the ballots, all ballots will be removed from their envelopes and cast separately so no one will know which ballot came from which envelope, allowing your vote to remain secret.

# VOTE BY JUNE 9

## Voter Eligibility

- You must be a United States citizen.
- You must be at least 18 years old by June 9, 2020.
- You must be a resident of the school district at least 30 days prior to the vote.
- You do not have to own property in the district.

## This is a Mail-Only Election

Because of the health concerns regarding COVID-19, the state has declared that no in-person voting will be held this year. Your mailing contains two ballots and two envelopes in which to seal them. Put one or both of the signed, sealed ballots into the pre-paid envelope and return it to the district via the post office. If only one ballot is needed, please discard the other.

*Should you have additional, eligible voters in your household and need more ballots, please contact Karen Flanigan, school district clerk, at 359-5010 or [kflanigan@rhnet.org](mailto:kflanigan@rhnet.org).*

## 2020-2021 Proposed Budget: Striving for a Fiscally Sound, Educationally Responsible Budget

- Preserves instructional programs and student services
- Maintains benefits of small-class-size initiative
- True value tax rate among lowest in the county



## RUSH-HENRIETTA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

**TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2020**

**NO IN-PERSON VOTING**  
All voting will take place  
by mail. See enclosed ballot  
and read instructions carefully.

Voters will elect three members to  
the Board of Education  
and vote on three propositions:

**PROPOSITION NO. 1**  
**BUDGET PROPOSITION**  
**\$135,305,000**

**PROPOSITION NO. 2**  
**BUS EXPENDITURES**

**PROPOSITION NO. 3**  
**CAPITAL RESERVE**

**Propositions 2 and 3 will NOT**  
**affect the tax rate.**

Visit our district website ([www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org)) or Facebook page ([facebook.com/rhschools](https://facebook.com/rhschools))