



# Budget Newsletter



*Rush-Henrietta*  
Rush-Henrietta Central School District

May 2021

## 2021-2022 District Budget Proposal

Proposed Budget: \$141,093,300  
Budget-to-Budget Change: 4.3%  
Tax Rate Change: 0%

Developing a budget is a complex task during a typical year, let alone during a global pandemic. As we developed the proposed 2021-2022 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 4.3 percent. Under this proposal, the true value tax rate would increase by no more than 0 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
- Reflects another reduction in Payment in Lieu of Taxes agreement for The Marketplace Mall
- Achieves staffing reductions through attrition, minimizing layoffs

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

- District homeowners should not see an increase in taxes as long as their property assessments remain stable.
- Rush-Henrietta's objective is to maintain programs and services while minimizing the impact to the taxpayer.

### 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 2021-2022 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.**

VOTE MAY 18

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 1, 2021

Dear Community Resident:

On Tuesday, May 18, eligible voters in the Rush-Henrietta Central School District will have the opportunity to vote on the proposed 2021-2022 budget adopted by the Board of Education. We believe the proposal is educationally sound, fiscally responsible, equitable, and responsive to the unusual challenges of our time. **This year's vote takes place at Rush-Henrietta Senior High School, 1799 Lehigh Station Road. More details on this change are near the end of this letter.**

We know it is imperative to find the proper balance between what is right for our students, employees, and community at large. This year's budget development process was challenging in ways we did not expect. Despite the chaos COVID-19 has brought to communities throughout the state, this was shaping up to be a straightforward budget season that called for a tax rate increase of less than 1.7 percent, which is under the tax cap.

However, like all New York school districts, Rush-Henrietta recently received some unexpected funding from both the federal and state governments. Given the availability of these monies, and our full awareness that many in our community have struggled during the past 12 months, **the Board of Education adopted a budget that will not increase the tax rate.**

Given expense and revenue assumptions, we project a true-value tax rate increase of ZERO 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, projected tax rate change is among the lowest in Monroe County. **District homeowners should not see an increase in taxes as long as their property assessments remain stable.**

Rush-Henrietta remains in a better position than many districts because of the wise and prudent financial decisions made during the past few decades. That allows us to preserve instructional programs and student services next year; maintain the successful small-class initiative at our K-3 schools; and compensate for another reduction in the Payment in Lieu of Taxes agreement for The Marketplace Mall.

Much of the additional money received from the state and federal government is intended for one-time use. The district plans to provide additional support to students who have fallen behind in their learning during the pandemic. In addition, we propose to expand summer school support for special needs students. We have other ideas, as well, but are waiting for the federal government to issue clear guidelines regarding how the funds can be used. In the meantime, we are reducing the burden on the taxpayer.

All eligible voters are urged to vote between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. Tuesday, May 18, 2021, in the gymnasium at Rush-Henrietta Senior High School, 1799 Lehigh Station Road. Please note this is a new location for this year's vote. We are doing this in an effort to provide maximum space to help keep residents comfortable and safe.

One does not need to own property in the district to vote, but must reside here. A valid form of identification – such as a driver's license or other government-issued photo ID, along with proof of residency – is suggested. If you have questions, please contact any board trustee listed below.

The past year has been challenging in ways we could not imagine. With support from students, parents, employees, and residents, we persevered. 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,

*Diane E. McBride*

Diane E. McBride  
President, Board of Education

Diane E. McBride, President	dmcbride@rhnet.org	334-0272
Anmarie Strzyzynski, Vice President	astrzyzynski@rhnet.org	359-2426
Jennifer M. Laird	jlaird@rhnet.org	738-7198
Mai Abdullah	mabdullah@rhnet.org	734-3063
Nichole M. LaPlaca	nlaplaca@rhnet.org	444-6180
James C. O'Brien	jobrien@rhnet.org	321-0453



\*Some photos taken before the pandemic.



## RUSH-HENRIETTA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

 **BEST HIGH SCHOOLS**  
U.S. News & World Report  
NATIONAL 2020  
**TOP 10% OF HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE NATION**

   
**NEW YORK STATE RECOGNITION SCHOOL**

   
**AMONG NATION'S BEST FOR 12 CONSECUTIVE YEARS**

## 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 four consecutive years? 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. Within the past year, Crane Elementary School also was honored in this way!

Rush-Henrietta Senior High School also earns high marks 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 12th 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 Central School District

## Rush-Henrietta Central School District - Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2020-21 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2021-22 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2021-22 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$135,305,000	\$141,093,300	\$138,778,880
Increase/(Decrease) for the 2021-22 School Year		\$5,788,300	\$3,473,880
Percentage Increase/(Decrease) in Proposed Budget		4.28%	2.57%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.23%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$82,899,357	\$84,575,050	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	-	-	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	-	-	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	-	-	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A+B+C-D)	\$82,899,357	\$84,575,050	\$82,899,357
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	-	-	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$82,899,357	\$84,575,050	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E-B-F+D)	\$82,899,357	\$84,575,050	
I. Difference: (G-H); (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions)**	-	-	
Administrative Component	\$14,331,188	\$14,796,890	\$14,578,574
Program Component	\$103,329,252	\$106,971,828	\$106,123,934
Capital Component	\$17,644,560	\$19,324,582	\$18,076,372

\* 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 2021-22 School Year

\$582

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2021-22 by the qualified voters of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District, Monroe County, New York, will be held at the Senior High School gymnasium in said district on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, between the hours of 6:00 am and 9:00 pm, prevailing time in the Senior High School, 1799 Lehigh Station Road, Henrietta, N.Y. 14467, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

If you are a United States citizen, will be at least 18 years old by May 18, 2021, 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: 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 will have one of the lowest tax rate in the county.

\* Data from "2021 Facts and Figures" published by the Monroe County School Boards Association



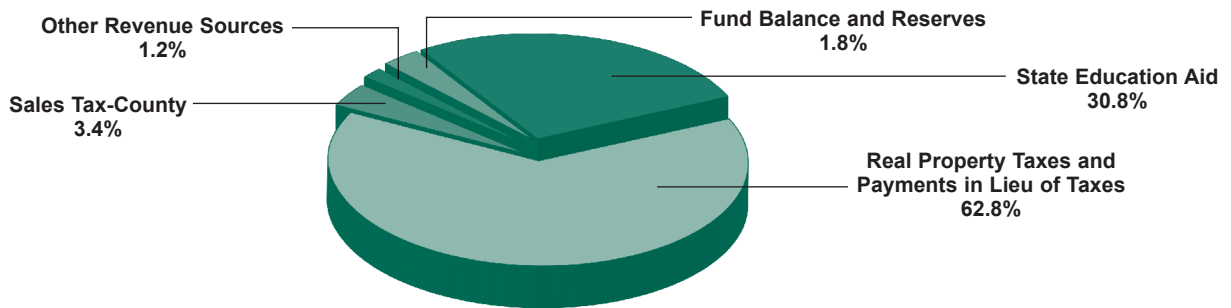


# Rush-Henrietta Central School District Budget Proposal

## 2021-2022 Projected Revenue Statement

Revenue Source	2020-2021	2021-2022	% Change
State Education Aid	\$37,186,079	\$43,389,988	16.7%
Real Property Taxes and Payments in Lieu of Taxes	87,299,357	88,575,050	1.5%
Sales Tax-County	4,300,000	4,800,000	11.6%
Other Revenue Sources	2,119,564	1,728,262	-18.5%
Fund Balance and Reserves	4,400,000	2,600,000	-40.9%
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>\$135,305,000</b>	<b>\$141,093,300</b>	<b>4.3%</b>

### REVENUES AS A PERCENTAGE OF BUDGET



## 2021-2022 Proposed Expenditures

There are five expenditure categories in the 2021-2022 budget proposal, as outlined below, that support educational programs and school district operations.

**Instruction: 51.8%** — 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.

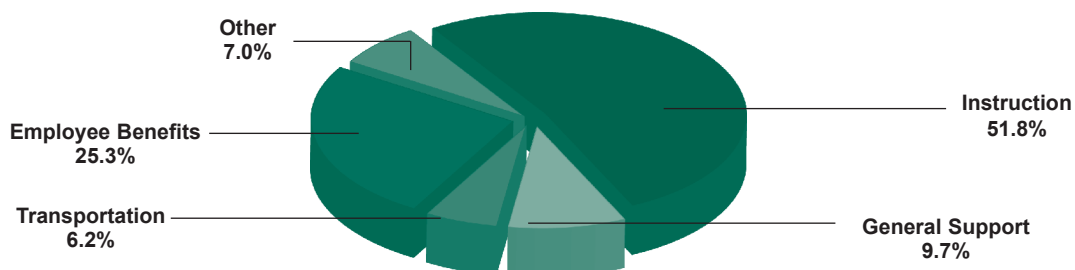
**General Support: 9.7%** — This part of the budget covers the areas that support the educational program through central administration, business operations, human resources, community relations, maintenance and repair of all district grounds and facilities, printing, mailing, district meetings, Board of Education and legal services.

**Transportation: 6.2%** — 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: 25.3%** — 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

## 2021-2022 Component Budget

### Administrative Component: 10.5% 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	2020-2021	2021-2022	Increase/(Decrease)
Board of Education	138,387	140,560	2,173
Central Administration	296,959	306,381	9,422
Finance	728,664	731,845	3,181
Legal Services	96,171	136,905	40,734
Personnel	634,812	640,718	5,906
Public Information	260,822	271,189	10,367
Other Central Services	1,474,314	1,477,987	3,673
Other Special Items	1,232,014	1,241,669	9,655
Curriculum Development & Sup.	2,124,045	1,853,124	(270,921)
Supervision-Regular School	2,789,119	3,250,383	461,264
Supervision-Special School	144,283	179,507	35,224
Research, Evaluation & Planning	446,871	426,303	(20,568)
Employee Benefits	3,964,727	4,140,319	175,592
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$14,331,188</b>	<b>\$14,796,890</b>	<b>\$465,702</b>

### Program Component: 75.8% 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	2020-2021	2021-2022	Increase/(Decrease)
Instruction	64,922,339	66,714,076	1,791,737
In-Service Training	312,615	339,062	26,447
District Transportation	7,089,734	7,320,129	230,395
Garage Building	193,367	196,474	3,107
BOCES Transportation	1,196,279	1,224,412	28,133
Community Services	311,984	278,150	(33,834)
Employee Benefits	28,042,934	29,464,525	1,421,591
Other Transfers	1,260,000	1,435,000	175,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$103,329,252</b>	<b>\$106,971,828</b>	<b>\$3,642,576</b>

### Capital Component: 13.7% 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	2020-2021	2021-2022	Increase/(Decrease)
Operation of Plant	4,890,051	5,660,893	770,842
Maintenance of Plant	2,438,555	2,810,959	372,404
Refund of Taxes	225,000	210,120	(14,880)
Other Special Items	281,041	281,606	565
Employee Benefits	1,896,315	2,141,378	245,063
Transfer to Capital	6,202,004	6,608,870	406,866
Debt Service	1,711,594	1,610,756	(100,838)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$17,644,560</b>	<b>\$19,324,582</b>	<b>\$1,680,022</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$135,305,000</b>	<b>\$141,093,300</b>	<b>\$5,788,300</b>



# School District Budget Proposal

## 2021-2022 Proposed Expenditures

### Instruction: 51.8% of Budget

	2020-2021	2021-2022	% Change
Salaries	51,000,127	52,487,910	2.9%
Equipment	257,435	260,524	1.2%
Supplies & Materials	996,749	1,017,476	2.1%
Textbooks & Software	591,741	597,878	1.0%
Contractual Expenses	1,557,120	1,655,059	6.3%
BOCES	13,717,981	14,245,343	3.8%
Tuition	2,581,072	2,798,715	8.4%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>70,702,225</b>	<b>73,062,905</b>	<b>3.3%</b>

### General Support: 9.7% of Budget

	2020-2021	2021-2022	% Change
Salaries	5,067,635	5,271,048	4.0%
Equipment	344,081	398,210	15.7%
Supplies & Materials	684,828	1,076,151	57.1%
Contractual Expenses	4,208,725	4,358,206	3.6%
BOCES	2,411,768	2,548,412	5.7%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12,717,037</b>	<b>13,652,027</b>	<b>7.4%</b>

### Transportation: 6.2% of Budget

	2020-2021	2021-2022	% Change
Salaries	5,006,207	5,211,247	4.1%
Equipment, Supplies & Materials, Contracts	2,276,894	2,192,602	-3.7%
BOCES, Public, Contract Transportation	1,196,279	1,337,166	11.8%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8,479,380</b>	<b>8,741,015</b>	<b>3.1%</b>

### Employee Benefits: 25.3% of Budget

	2020-2021	2021-2022	% Change
Social Security	4,774,470	4,730,000	-0.9%
Retirement	6,652,937	7,247,899	8.9%
Insurance	22,476,569	23,726,678	5.6%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>33,903,976</b>	<b>35,704,577</b>	<b>5.3%</b>

### Other: 7.0% of Budget

	2020-2021	2021-2022	% Change
Bus Purchase & Capital Transfers	6,202,004	6,608,870	6.6%
Community Service	311,984	278,150	-10.8%
Transfer to Special Education Extended School Year	475,000	600,000	26.3%
Transfer to State Schools (Blind & Deaf)	475,000	525,000	10.5%
Transfer to School Food Services	310,000	310,000	0.0%
Debt Service	1,728,394	1,610,756	-6.8%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9,502,382</b>	<b>9,932,776</b>	<b>4.5%</b>

<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<b>135,305,000</b>	<b>141,093,300</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
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## On May 18, 2021, Eligible Voters Will Vote On...

Proposition 2 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 2021-2022 in the total amount of \$141,093,300 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.

## Celebrating Student Achievement

### Advanced Placement Results

Advanced Placement courses are offered in many academic areas. In Rush-Henrietta, 808 exams were taken last spring; 560 scored at a "3" or higher. That means 69 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.

Note: Regents exams were not offered during the pandemic in June 2020.



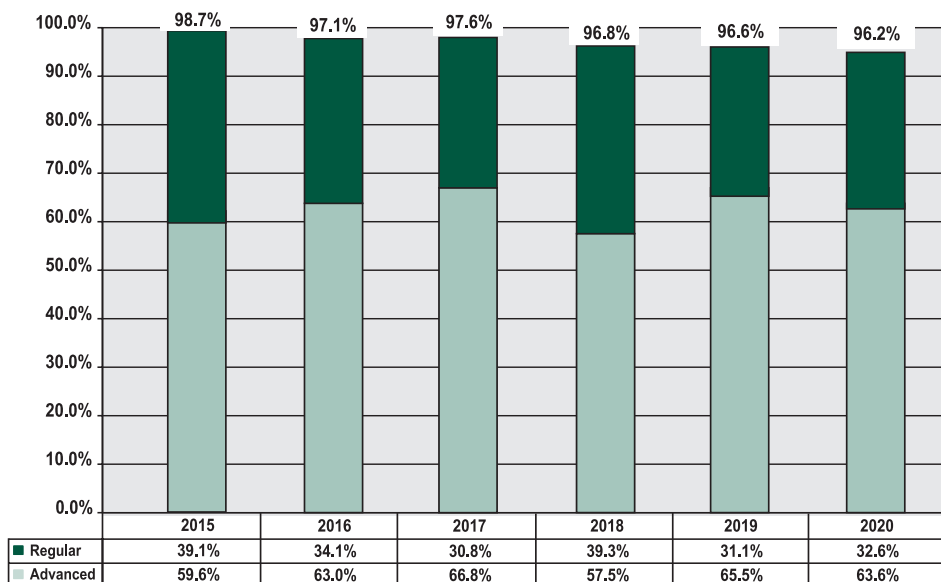
Rush-Henrietta continues to challenge its students to take more rigorous courses in an effort to increase their college readiness. For example, Rush-Henrietta requires all eighth graders to take Earth Science, a class typically taught elsewhere in ninth grade. This gives students the opportunity to take 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 2019-2020 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.

### Percent of Graduates Receiving Regents Diplomas 2015-2020





## 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. In a typical year, a recent requirement would require us 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 \$141.1 million budget proposal calls for a ZERO percent increase in the true-value tax rate. A homeowner with a stable property assessment will see no increase in taxes.

### **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 was challenging in ways we did not expect. Despite the chaos COVID-19 brought to communities throughout the state, this was shaping up to be a straightforward budget season that called for a modest tax rate increase. However, like all New York school districts, Rush-Henrietta recently received unexpected funding from both the federal and state governments. Given the availability of these monies, and our full awareness that many in our community have struggled during the past 12 months, the Board of Education adopted a budget that will not increase the tax rate. Included are funds to support the Remote Learning Academy, if that is needed again. In addition, monies have been set aside for ongoing personal protective equipment and supplies, as needed. The district also is budgeting additional funds to assist students with their mental health and social-emotional needs as Rush-Henrietta looks to bring all of its students back to campus next year. Finally, funding will help students who have experienced a learning loss during the pandemic. We know there will be much work to do in these important areas.

# Candidates Vie for Four 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 four candidates to the Board of Education. The following information is provided by each candidate. Candidates are listed in alphabetical order.



**HOLLIE M. FISCUS-CONNORS**

**RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT:** 38 years

**FAMILY:** Spouse, Christopher; Children, Imagin, 10, and Christopher, 17

**EDUCATION:** St. John Fisher College, M.S., Mental Health Counseling  
St. John Fisher College, B.S., Psychology

**EMPLOYMENT:** Monument, Head of Clinical Practice; Private practice therapist

**HONORS/ACTIVITIES:** Girl Scout Troop Leader; Co-President, Vollmer Elementary School PTO; Second Vice Chair, District Parent Advisory Council

**STATEMENT:** I am a lifelong resident of Henrietta and a 2001 graduate of R-H. Co-chair of DPAC for the past two years and co-president of Vollmer PTO; previously was PTO secretary and also co-president of Fyle PTA. I have been a Girl Scout Troop Leader for the last four years. I have two children enrolled in the district at Vollmer and the Senior High School. As an advocate for our district, my desire to run for a seat on the school board evolved during the pandemic, witnessing the hard work and dedication shown by the staff to our children and the impact on everyone's mental health. Being a Licensed Mental Counselor for the last 14 years, I believe in advocating for the mental health of our district community, along with transparency and open communication among all stakeholders and helping to provide access to needed support and resources for staff and students.



**NICHOLE M. LAPLACA**

**RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT:** 12 years

**FAMILY:** Spouse, David; Children, Daniel, 10, and Meredith, 8

**EDUCATION:** SUNY Brockport, B.S., Business Administration

**EMPLOYMENT:** Gillespie Associates, Director of Finance

**HONORS/ACTIVITIES:** Trustee, Board of Education, Rush-Henrietta Central School District since 2018; member of New York State School Boards Association and Monroe County School Boards Association; member of the R-H Finance & Audit Committee, Budget Advisory Council, Space Committee, and District Parent Advisory Council; Board liaison to Fyle Elementary School and Transportation & Operations Center; Golisano Children's Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Parent-to-Parent member

**STATEMENT:** As a current board member, it is a privilege to serve alongside such a dedicated team of individuals. I truly believe we are a district that puts students first in all decisions. The pandemic has been challenging for our students, staff, and their families. It has been inspiring to witness how everyone has risen to the occasion. This has provided R-H a unique opportunity to re-evaluate how we educate our students. It is important for us to use this experience to progress and improve the educational opportunities for all. During the budget process, I believe my background and experience in finance will be helpful in continuing to provide educationally sound programs while maintaining equity and fiscal responsibility. My years of service and my commitment to this community have prepared me well for this work. I would be honored to continue serving our community as a member of the Board.



**DIANE E. MCBRIDE**

**RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT:** 63 years

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

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

**EMPLOYMENT:** Retired from Pieters Family Life Center/Heritage Christian Services, 2007-2020

**HONORS/ACTIVITIES:** Rush-Henrietta Central School District Board of Education (2004-present) – Trustee (elected to the first and only four-year board term), current president, past president, and vice president; member of district's 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; member of New York State School Boards Association and Monroe County School Boards Association; received New York State School Boards Association's Master of Boardsmanship Award, Board Mastery Award, and Board Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016; Pinnacle Lutheran Church Director of Christian Education (1993-2007), preschool teacher (1993-2007), music leader, and choir member; Monroe Community College Adjunct Instructor (1984-1992); and Genesee Valley Orchestra and Chorus.

**STATEMENT:** I am a lifelong resident and graduate of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District, and proud of our school community. As a board member, I have the opportunity to work with a dedicated team of individuals. I am able to give back to the R-H school community and help to ensure that our history of excellence continues. The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us many things and created pathways for new opportunities in education. Together we can learn what did and did not work and use it as a springboard to move forward. In these academically, emotionally, and fiscally 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 be honored to continue working with the board, superintendent, and school community to provide educationally sound, fiscally responsible, and equitable programs.



**DR. JESSE REDLO**

**RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT:** 25 years

**FAMILY:** Single

**EDUCATION:** American College of Education, Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)  
Rochester Institute of Technology, Master of Science (M.S.)  
Rochester Institute of Technology, Bachelor of Science (B.S.)  
Monroe Community College, Associate of Science (A.S.)  
Rush-Henrietta Central School District, High School Diploma

**EMPLOYMENT:** Adjunct Professor at Rochester Institute of Technology and St. John Fisher College

**HONORS/ACTIVITIES:** Vice Chairperson, Youth Development Advisory Committee, Town of Henrietta; Board Member, Zoning Board of Appeals, Town of Henrietta; Member, Rush-Henrietta Rotary Club; Founder & Primary Donor, Professor Mitchell H. Redlo Commitment to Excellence Scholarship, Monroe Community College

**STATEMENT:** As a lifelong Henrietta resident, Rush-Henrietta Alumnus (Class of 2013), and a doctorally prepared educator, I will bring firsthand experience in the district combined with practical, relevant knowledge to the board. Our district is thriving as the number one district in Monroe County, but in order to keep it there, we cannot become complacent - we must keep pushing forward! Through my experiences in public service and as a professional educator, I have learned the importance of transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and innovation. These values, combined with my knowledge of educational best practices, will allow me to meaningfully contribute to the board, which is especially important as we work to create healthy school environments during the pandemic. Despite the challenges, we must focus on our number one priority - our students. As a proven student-centered innovator, I will make evidence-based decisions to promote positive student experiences.



**RACHEL SHERMAN**

**RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT:** 19 years

**FAMILY:** Spouse, Matt; Children, Noah, 13, Susie, 11, Ellie, 9

**EDUCATION:** Harvard Law School, J.D.  
Cornell University, B.S.  
Rush-Henrietta Central School District, Regents Diploma

**EMPLOYMENT:** The Wilson Foundation, Vice President of Operations; Welcoming Law, Solo Practitioner

**HONORS/ACTIVITIES:** Member, R-H Budget Advisory Council (2020-21); Member, Sherman PTO (2018 - present), Winslow PTO (2018-19), and Roth PTO (2018-20); Volunteer, Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County (2019-present); Member, Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative Housing Sub-Committee (2020-present); Volunteer, Mary's Place Refugee Outreach (2019-20); Chapter Leader, Start School Later-Rush-Henrietta (2019-present); Member, Rochester Mennonite Fellowship (RMF); Member, RMF Anti-Racism Committee (2020-present); Member, American Immigration Lawyers Association (2019-present); Notary Public (2014- present); Board Member, Community Foundation of Corning, Elmira & the Finger Lakes (2017-20); Board Member, Triangle Fund (2014-18); Volunteer, Salvation Army (2014-18); Coach, Corning Falcons Soccer Club (2016-18)

**STATEMENT:** I loved my experience as an R-H student where I had many opportunities to achieve academically and explore extracurricular interests. After my mom died of cancer when I was in 9th grade, caring teachers and a strong sense of belonging kept me from falling through the cracks. Now it's my turn to give back to the district I've loved. With three children in R-H schools, I have invested significantly in the district as a volunteer and as an active citizen, regularly attending board meetings where I raise questions about the budget and system-wide challenges affecting students, teachers, and community. If elected I will bring the analytical, advocacy, and organizational skills I've honed as a lawyer and executive to support financial accountability, transparency, equity, and effective communication with all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and students. You can learn more about me at [www.electrachelsherman.com](http://www.electrachelsherman.com). I respectfully ask for your vote.

## *A Note About Board Petitions*

As the result of a sixth candidate withdrawing a petition to run for Board of Education shortly after filing, the district was required to extend the petition deadline to 5 p.m. Wednesday, May 5. This petition withdrawal occurred hours before this newsletter was headed to the press. Since that time, the district has publicized in multiple venues that anyone interested in a nominating petition to run for a seat on the Rush-Henrietta Board of Education could contact the school district clerk by Wednesday, May 5. A rescheduled drawing for ballot placement was held Thursday, May 6.



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

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

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## 2020-2021 Board of Education

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

## Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Lawrence Bo Wright

Published by the Office of Community Relations

**VOTE MAY 18**

### Voter Eligibility

- You must be a United States citizen.
- You must be at least 18 years old by May 18, 2021.
- 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.

### Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots are available to eligible residents of the district who are unable to vote in person on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, for reasons specified by law. Voters must complete an application for an absentee ballot in order to receive one. Applications are available by phone or in person at the District Clerk's Office, Parker Administration Building, 2034 Lehigh Station Road. If you have questions regarding voter eligibility or absentee ballots, please call Karen Flanigan, district clerk, at 359-5010.

### 2021-2022 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
- Developed with equity in mind

### All Voting Will Be At Senior High School Gymnasium 1799 Lehigh Station Road, Henrietta

To provide room for physical distancing and in an effort to help keep residents safe, the 2021-2022 budget vote and Board of Education election will take place in the gymnasium at Rush-Henrietta Senior High School, 1799 Lehigh Station Road.



## RUSH-HENRIETTA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

**TUESDAY, May 18, 2021**

**NEW LOCATION**  
Rush-Henrietta Senior High School  
1799 Lehigh Station Road  
6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

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

**PROPOSITION NO. 1**  
**BUDGET PROPOSITION**  
**\$141,093,300**

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

**Proposition 2 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))