



Budget Newsletter



Rush-Henrietta
Rush-Henrietta Central School District

May 2022

2022-2023 District Budget Proposal

Proposed Budget: \$151,625,968
Budget-to-Budget Change: 7.5%
Tax Rate Change: 1.98% or less

Developing a budget is a complex task during a typical year, let alone during a global pandemic. Fortunately, this year's planning was made easier thanks to additional funding received from the state and federal governments. Although the Rush-Henrietta Central School District continues to deal with rising mandatory expenses, such as health insurance and special education, Board of Education members are able to present 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 7.5 percent. This is higher than normal and results from federal stimulus funds provided for incremental support. An explanation can be found on page 2. Under this proposal, the true value tax rate would increase 1.98 percent or less, 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.
- Makes use of federal funding to provide learning-loss recovery resources and social-emotional learning support for students.

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 \$57 annually.
- 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 2022-2023 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 17

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, 2022

Dear Community Resident:

On Tuesday, May 17, eligible voters in the Rush-Henrietta Central School District will have the opportunity to vote on the proposed 2022-2023 budget adopted by the Board of Education. We believe the proposal is educationally sound, fiscally responsible, equitable, and responsive to the unique conditions arising from the pandemic and the availability of federal stimulus funds.

The needs of our students, and students throughout the country, are significant as a result of the pandemic. Here and everywhere, students are experiencing both learning loss and heightened social-emotional needs. Federal stimulus funds have been provided for supplemental services to meet these demands, thus resulting in a significant budget increase. Even though the proposed budget increase of 7.5% is much larger than normal, the district is remaining under the tax cap because much of the increase is a result of the federal stimulus funds and additional state aid the district is receiving. The tax rate increase will still be less than 2% as state and federal funds will support most of the budget increase that provides these required additional services and support for our students.

Fortunately, Rush-Henrietta remains in a better position than many other districts because of many prudent financial decisions made during the past few decades. This allows us to preserve existing instructional programs and student services for next year while expanding support for learning recovery and to address social-emotional needs. We also will be able to maintain the successful small-class-size initiative at our K-3 schools. The federal funds we have received will be used to provide incremental support to our students for learning loss recovery, as well as better meet the social-emotional learning needs as a result of the pandemic. In addition, our UPK program applied for - and was granted - a \$1 million per year grant increase to fund full-day UPK slots. In addition, the final state budget provided another \$450,000 of increased UPK funding. This level of funding means that many more district students will be able to participate in our UPK program if they desire.

Understanding that many community members have struggled during the past 12 months, and with those funds in hand, the Board of Education has adopted a budget that calls for a tax rate increase of 1.98 percent or less. For the past decade, the final true value tax rate was lower than the proposed rate. The actual tax rate is established after town assessments are finalized. As in prior years, Rush-Henrietta's projected tax rate increase is among the lowest in Monroe County.

All eligible voters are urged to vote between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. Tuesday, May 17, 2022, at the Transportation and Operations Center, 1133 Lehigh Station Road. One does not need to own property in the district to vote, but must reside here and be a U.S. citizen. 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 a board trustee listed below.

With support from our students, parents, employees, and residents, the Rush-Henrietta Central School District has persevered during the past two years. We sincerely appreciate the strong support that our community continues to show for our school district and its students.

Sincerely,

Diane E. McBride
President, Board of Education

2021-2022 Board of Education

Diane E. McBride, President	dmcbride@rhnet.org	334-0272
Scott M. Adair, Vice President	sadair@rhnet.org	329-9182
Mai Abdullah	mabdullah@rhnet.org	734-3063
Jennifer M. Laird	jlaird@rhnet.org	738-1584
Douglas J. Rivers	drivers@rhnet.org	721-0732
Rachel Sherman	rsherman@rhnet.org	444-9740
Annmarie Strzyzynski	astrzyzynski@rhnet.org	359-2426



On May 17, 2022, Eligible Voters Will Vote On...

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 2022-2023 in the total amount of \$151,625,968 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 \$2,500,000 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

2022 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 2022 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 \$20,000,000, 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.

Propositions 2 and 3 will NOT affect the tax rate.

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. When this recognition was most recently given, Crane Elementary School also was honored this way! The State Education Department has put this award on hold during the pandemic.

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 10 percent of schools in the country! In addition, the National Association of Music Merchants has named Rush-Henrietta one of the Best Communities for Music Education for 13 consecutive years.

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!



Rush-Henrietta Central School District - Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2021-22 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2022-23 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2022-23 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$141,093,300	\$151,625,968	\$149,077,638
Increase/(Decrease) for the 2022-23 School Year		\$10,532,668	\$7,984,338
Percentage Increase/(Decrease) in Proposed Budget		7.5%	5.7%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.7%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount			
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$84,575,050	\$87,123,380	
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)	\$84,575,050	\$87,123,380	\$84,575,050
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	-	-	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$86,613,777	\$88,494,334	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E-B-F+D)	\$84,575,050	\$87,123,380	
I. Difference: (G-H); (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions)**	\$2,038,727	\$1,370,954	
Administrative Component			
Program Component	\$14,796,890	\$15,849,357	\$15,535,063
Capital Component	\$106,971,828	\$115,738,320	\$114,765,812
	\$19,324,582	\$20,038,291	\$18,776,763

* 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	\$2,500,000

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 2022-23 School Year

\$569

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2022-23 by the qualified voters of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District, Monroe County, New York, will be held at the Transportation and Operations Center in said district on Tuesday, May 17, 2022, between the hours of 6:00 am and 9:00 pm, prevailing time in the Transportation and Operations Center, 1133 Lehigh Station Road, Henrietta, N.Y. 14467, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

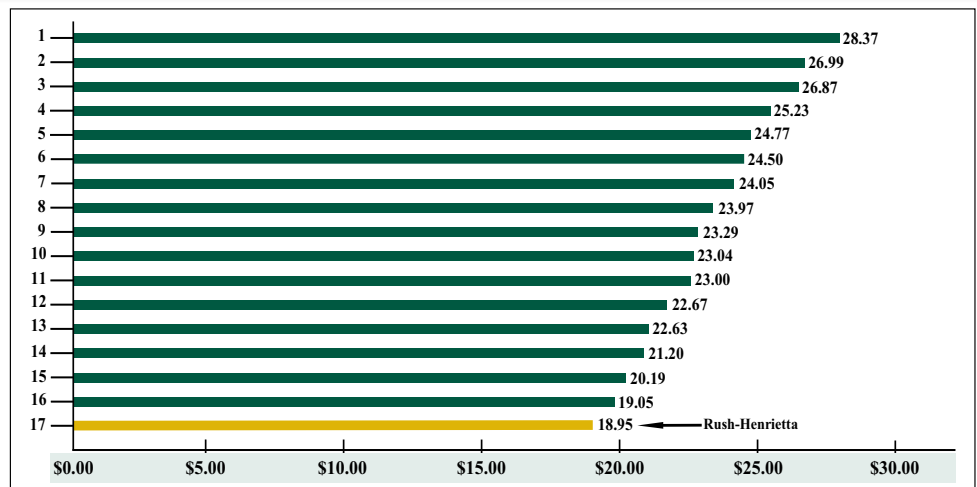
If you are a United States citizen, will be at least 18 years old by May 17, 2022, and have been a resident of the school district at least 30 days prior to the vote, you may vote.

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 again will have one of the lowest tax rates in the county.

* Data from "2022 Facts and Figures" published by the Monroe County School Boards Association



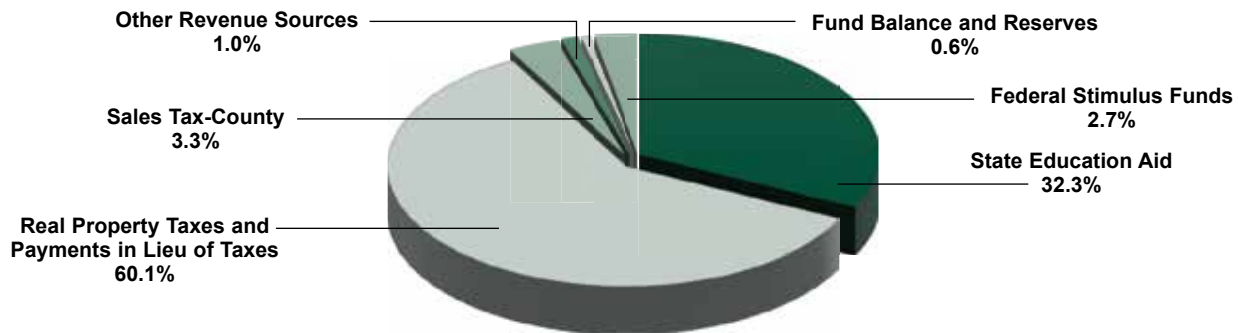


Rush-Henrietta Central School District Budget Proposal

2022-2023 Projected Revenue Statement

Revenue Source	2021-2022	2022-2023	+/- Change	Inc. (Dec) %	% of Budget
State Education Aid	\$43,389,988	\$48,937,771	5,547,783	12.8%	32.3%
Real Property Taxes and Payments in Lieu of Taxes	88,575,050	91,123,380	2,548,330	2.9%	60.1%
Sales Tax - County	4,800,000	5,000,000	200,000	4.2%	3.3%
Other Revenue Sources	1,728,262	1,564,817	-163,445	-9.5%	1.0%
Fund Balance and Reserves	2,600,000	900,000	-1,700,000	-65.4%	0.6%
Federal Stimulus Funds	0	4,100,000	4,100,000	N/A	2.7%
Revenue - Grand Total	\$141,093,300	\$151,625,968	\$10,532,668	7.5%	100.0%

REVENUES AS A PERCENTAGE OF BUDGET



2022-2023 Proposed Expenditures

There are five expenditure categories in the 2022-2023 budget proposal, as outlined below, that support educational programs and school district operations.

Instruction: 52.1% — 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.

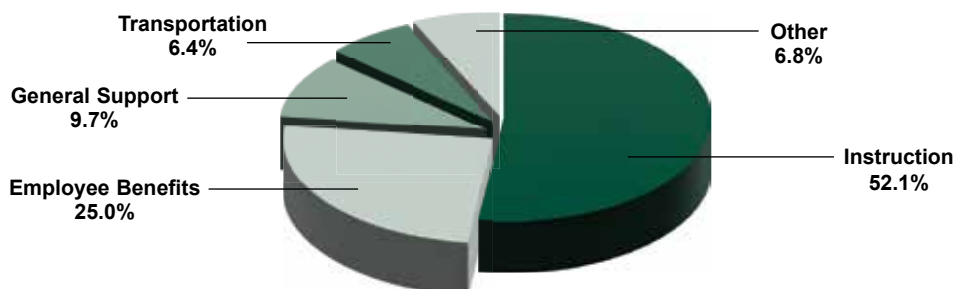
General Support: 9.7% — This part of the budget covers the areas that support the educational program through central administration, business operations, human resources, community relations, maintenance and repair of all district grounds and facilities, printing, mailing, district meetings, Board of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

Transportation: 6.4% — 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: 6.8% — A small portion of the budget is for other expenditures that include capital funding (buildings and grounds reconstruction, repairs, and improvements to all district buildings and grounds), and community services.

EXPENDITURES AS A PERCENTAGE OF BUDGET





Rush-Henrietta Central Sch

2022-2023 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	2021-2022	2022-2023	Increase/(Decrease)
Board of Education	140,560	149,189	8,629
Central Administration	306,381	315,999	9,618
Finance	731,845	797,267	65,422
Legal Services	136,905	239,753	102,848
Personnel	640,718	715,780	75,062
Public Information	271,189	279,428	8,239
Other Central Services	1,477,987	1,495,230	17,243
Other Special Items	1,241,669	1,291,961	50,292
Curriculum Development & Sup.	1,853,124	2,293,768	440,644
Supervision-Regular School	3,250,383	3,268,335	17,952
Supervision-Special School	179,507	190,493	10,986
Research, Evaluation & Planning	426,303	496,220	69,917
Employee Benefits	4,140,319	4,315,934	175,615
TOTALS	\$14,796,890	\$15,849,357	\$1,052,467

Program Component: 76.3% 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	2021-2022	2022-2023	Increase/(Decrease)
Instruction	66,714,076	72,393,080	5,679,004
In-Service Training	339,062	344,240	5,178
District Transportation	7,320,129	7,617,511	297,382
Garage Building	196,474	203,099	6,625
BOCES/Contract Transportation	1,224,412	1,929,281	704,869
Community Services	278,150	282,162	4,012
Employee Benefits	29,464,525	31,403,947	1,939,422
Other Transfers	1,435,000	1,565,000	130,000
TOTALS	\$106,971,828	\$115,738,320	\$8,766,492

Capital Component: 13.2% 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	2021-2022	2022-2023	Increase/(Decrease)
Operation of Plant	5,660,893	5,762,900	102,007
Maintenance of Plant	2,810,959	3,086,790	275,831
Refund of Taxes	210,120	220,586	10,466
Other Special Items	281,606	290,631	9,025
Employee Benefits	2,141,378	2,259,968	118,590
Transfer to Capital	6,608,870	6,802,010	193,140
Debt Service	1,610,756	1,615,406	4,650
TOTALS	\$19,324,582	\$20,038,291	\$713,709
GRAND TOTAL	\$141,093,300	\$151,625,968	\$10,532,668



ool District Budget Proposal

2022-2023 Proposed Expenditures

Instruction: 52.1% of Budget

	2021-2022	2022-2023	% Change
Salaries	52,487,910	56,205,131	7.1%
Equipment	260,524	272,508	4.6%
Supplies & Materials	1,017,476	1,455,900	43.1%
Textbooks & Software	597,878	606,437	1.4%
Contractual Expenses	1,655,059	1,873,243	13.2%
BOCES	14,245,343	15,524,518	9.0%
Tuition	2,798,715	3,048,399	8.9%
Totals	73,062,905	78,986,136	8.1%

General Support: 9.7% of Budget

	2021-2022	2022-2023	% Change
Salaries	5,271,048	5,825,140	10.5%
Equipment	398,210	461,528	15.9%
Supplies & Materials	1,076,151	1,064,046	-1.1%
Contractual Expenses	4,358,206	4,735,326	8.7%
BOCES	2,548,412	2,559,474	0.4%
Totals	13,652,027	14,645,514	7.3%

Transportation: 6.4% of Budget

	2021-2022	2022-2023	% Change
Salaries	5,211,247	5,583,539	7.1%
Equipment, Supplies & Materials, Contracts	2,192,602	2,237,071	2.0%
BOCES, Public, Contract Transportation	1,337,166	1,929,281	44.3%
Totals	8,741,015	9,749,891	11.5%

Employee Benefits: 25.0% of Budget

	2021-2022	2022-2023	% Change
Social Security	4,730,000	5,107,562	8.0%
Retirement	7,247,899	7,835,238	8.1%
Insurance	23,726,678	25,037,049	5.5%
Totals	35,704,577	37,979,849	6.4%

Other: 6.8% of Budget

	2021-2022	2022-2023	% Change
Bus Purchase & Capital Transfers	6,608,870	6,802,010	2.9%
<i>Capital repairs at all district grounds and facilities such as roofs, boilers, lighting, flooring, HVAC, etc. and bus purchases</i>			
Community Service	278,150	282,162	1.4%
Transfer to Special Education Extended School Year	600,000	600,000	0.0%
Transfer to State Schools (Blind & Deaf)	525,000	525,000	0.0%
Transfer to School Food Services	310,000	440,000	41.9%
Debt Service	1,610,756	1,615,406	0.3%
Totals	9,932,776	10,264,578	3.3%
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	141,093,300	151,625,968	7.5%



The mission of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District is to prepare every student for responsible citizenship, life-long learning, and college or career success.

Celebrating Student Achievement

Advanced Placement Results

Advanced Placement courses are offered in many academic areas. In Rush-Henrietta, 391 students took 760 AP exams last spring; 430 scored at a “3” or higher. That means 58 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 required during the pandemic in June 2021.



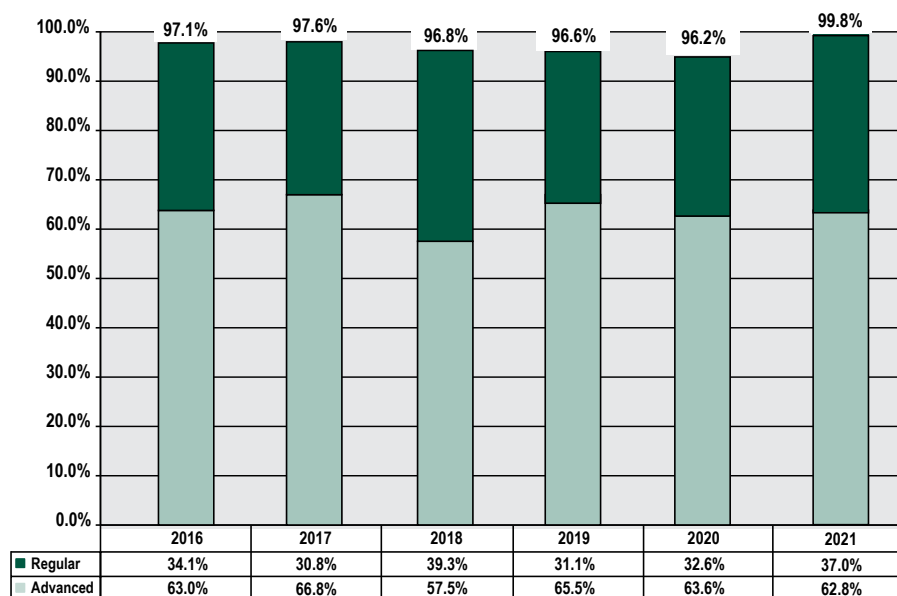
Rush-Henrietta continues to challenge its students to take more rigorous courses in an effort to increase their college readiness. For example, Rush-Henrietta requires all eighth graders to take Earth Science, a class typically taught elsewhere in ninth grade. This gives students the opportunity to take 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 2020-2021 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.

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 2016-2021





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. 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 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 mandates is reflected in transportation. The state will be mandating a transition to electric buses, which cost twice as much as our propane buses. 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 convert all single-stall restrooms to unisex signage. 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 \$151.6 million budget proposal calls for a tax-rate increase of less than 1.98 percent. 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 rise by \$57 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 will 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. Fortunately, this year's budget development process was not as challenging as it has been in recent years. Despite the chaos that COVID-19 continues to bring to communities throughout the state, the significant amount of financial aid made available by both the state and federal governments has given the district some breathing room. These additional funds will be used to provide additional academic and social-emotional support to our students. Given the availability of these monies, and our full awareness that many people in our community are still facing big challenges, the Board of Education has adopted a budget that will increase the tax rate by 1.98 percent or less. This increase will be among the lowest in Monroe County.

Candidates Vie for Two 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 two candidates to the Board of Education. The following information is provided by each candidate. A random drawing determined the ballot order of the candidates.



Suzanne Bennett

RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT: 18 years

FAMILY: Spouse, Russell Bennett; Children: Erin, 20, and Shannon 17

EDUCATION: B.A. Biology, Alfred University

EMPLOYMENT: Town of Rush, Recreation Leader for After-school Program; YMCA of Greater Rochester, Preschool Assistant

HONORS/ACTIVITIES: Girl Scout leader, 13 years; taught first grade Sunday school at St. Marianne Cope Parish, seven years; adult leader for St. Marianne Cope Parish's RHYM youth group, seven years; past volunteer at Leary Elementary; past volunteer at Roth Middle School; parent chaperone for Senior High School Music Department trips; R-H Sports Booster Club parent liaison for girls swim team.

STATEMENT: For 20 years, my main focus has been children. Actively volunteering in their schools and extracurriculars has rooted me in the R-H community. I know many families and have witnessed firsthand some of the needs of our kids. Every child has their strengths and every child will have challenges. I want to ensure that all students in the RHCS D have the opportunity to thrive and succeed. During the past year, I have become familiar with BOE meetings, as I attempted to bring to light challenges with the pool and R-H swim program, which could be a greater resource to our R-H community. As we begin the search for a new superintendent, we have the responsibility to seek out the best choice. I want to be a stronger voice to promote and represent the needs and concerns of the RHCS D community, the teachers, the employees, and, importantly, the students.



Mai Abdullah

RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT: 24 years

FAMILY: Spouse, Mohamed Mekkielamin; Children, Danya, 21; Zeena, 16; and Amin, 14

EDUCATION: M.S., Environmental Health and Safety Management, Rochester Institute of Technology

EMPLOYMENT: Empire Justice Center, Program Support Specialist

HONORS/ACTIVITIES: Graduate of the Parent Leadership Training Institute, 2018; Refugees Helping Refugees, Member of Board of Directors; Parent Advocacy Policy Lab, 2021 to present.

STATEMENT: Ms. Abdullah has served on the Rush-Henrietta Board of Education for the past four years, helping to lead the district through the challenges of the pandemic. She has participated as a member of the district's Equity Steering Committee and Multicultural Advisory Board, and been the board liaison to Roth and Burger JHS. Ms. Abdullah is employed at the Empire Justice Center as a Program Support Specialist. She holds a bachelor's degree in environmental studies and a master's degree in Environmental Health and Safety Management from Rochester Institute of Technology. She is a court-certified Arabic interpreter and has extensive experience interpreting for the refugee population in a wide variety of professional environments. In addition, Ms. Abdullah is a graduate of the Greater Rochester Parent Leadership Training Institute, where she received comprehensive training in civic engagement and advocacy. She has lived in Henrietta since 1998. Her three children have attended Rush-Henrietta schools.



Bakar Ali

RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT: 7 years

FAMILY: Not provided

EDUCATION: M.B.A, Rochester Institute of Technology; M.P.A., New York University; B.S., Rochester Institute of Technology

EMPLOYMENT: Rochester Institute of Technology, Visiting Lecturer

HONORS/ACTIVITIES: Not provided

STATEMENT: I am running for the Rush-Henrietta Board of Education because I want to contribute to school district growth in the area of inclusive education. I want to help in shaping the district's approach in creating policies and programs that will have a positive impact on all students at our schools. As an educator, I strongly believe that every child deserves a chance to receive an education and that means that our schools need to be able to accommodate every child. The Board of Education needs to have board members who not only bring experiences and training in educational development but also personal experiences. As a Deaf member of the board, I would be able to add voices to the board in the area of inclusive education and support our district's priorities in equity and inclusion.



Carrie Silva Martin

RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT: 15 years

FAMILY: Spouse, Felix Silva; Children: Anthony, 15; Fenix, 10; and Eliana, 9

EDUCATION: Avon Central School, Regents Diploma; Continental School of Beauty, Cosmetologist

EMPLOYMENT: Blush Beauty Bar, Salon Manager and Stylist

HONORS/ACTIVITIES: Fyle Parent Group, President (past three years); Vollmer, Co-President (current year); District Parent Advisory Council, Vice President (past two years).

STATEMENT: I have been a part of the Rush-Henrietta community for the past 15 years. I have three children in the Rush-Henrietta Central School District at Fyle, Vollmer, and Burger. I am the President of the Fyle Parent Group, the Co-President of the Vollmer PTO, and the Vice President of the District Parent Advisory Council. I have a deep commitment to our school district and I believe in the district priorities. Stimulus funds from the federal and state government have allowed the 2022-2023 budget to remain under the tax cap and include additional resources for mental wellness and special education. My concerns are for what will happen to those services when the stimulus money runs out. I want to be a part of protecting those important services and priorities. It would be an honor to serve the R-H school community. Contact me at carriesilva1236@gmail.com.



Regan Howlett

RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT: 2.5 years

FAMILY: Spouse, Mark Howlett; Children: Lily, 7th grade, Burger; Willow, 6th grade, Vollmer

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree, Communication Arts/Media Studies, Judson University; Accelerated bachelor's degree, Nursing Science, University at Buffalo

EMPLOYMENT: Pathway Pediatrics, a division of Trillium Health; registered nurse and certified lactation counselor

HONORS/ACTIVITIES: I am on the board of Focus on the Children, a small, non-profit organization that supports families in Livingston County with needs like money for sports, camps, and other extracurricular activities. We also provide school supplies and holiday gifts at the request of school counselors working with the families. I have attended MPAC meetings and attend school board meetings regularly whether in person or virtually.

STATEMENT: We came to R-H excited to join a district that has a history of being diverse and welcoming to marginalized families. Working as a nurse, often with families who face many barriers, I appreciate how integral school is to a family's success and happiness. I value social justice, equity for all, as well as science and evidence-based decision making. I love R-H, and I think we can do more for our kids and teachers. As an R-H school board member I will bring a heart for equity and transparency, and I am motivated to improve our community involvement in district decision-making. You can follow me on social media @ReganHowlett4RH or email me at ReganHowlett4RH@gmail.com.



Nicole Stubinger

RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT: 5 years

FAMILY: Spouse, Chris Little; Children: Giana, 13; Leo, 7; Teagan, 3; Lucas, 1

EDUCATION: Not provided

EMPLOYMENT: Not provided

HONORS/ACTIVITIES: Not provided

STATEMENT: I have lived in R-H for five years. We have four children with a wide range of ages. The fact that we homeschool our two oldest children is a hot topic on social media. My oldest attended R-H schools from 3rd to 5th grade. At that time I volunteered in classrooms, PTO, and attended field trips. To clear concerns, I don't distrust the district; I truly believe R-H is full of diversity and some fantastic staff. I bring a unique perspective and am dedicated to improving our youth's mental health. My goal is to be the bridge and voice for what the community truly needs and pursue how the board can effectively and efficiently meet those needs. I will strive for transparency with not only spending but curricula as well. I believe parents should know what is being taught, how it is being taught, and have the right to opt out.

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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2021-2022 Board of Education

Mrs. Diane E. McBride, President
Mr. Scott M. Adair, Vice President
Mrs. Mai Adbullah
Mrs. Jennifer M. Laird
Mr. Douglas J. Rivers
Mrs. Rachel Sherman
Mrs. Annmarie Strzyzynski

Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Lawrence Bo Wright

Published by the Office of Community Relations

VOTE MAY 17

Voter Eligibility

- You must be a United States citizen.
- You must be at least 18 years old by May 17, 2022.
- 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 and ASL Interpreter

Absentee ballots are available to eligible residents of the district who are unable to vote in person on Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 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, call Karen Flanigan, district clerk, at 359-5010. You also may call Mrs. Flanigan by May 13 to request an ASL interpreter at the polling site.

2022-2023 Proposed Budget:

Striving for a Fiscally Responsible, Equitable, Educationally Sound 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.
- Uses federal funding to provide learning-loss resources and social-emotional support to students.

**All Voting Will Be At The
Transportation and Operations Center
1133 Lehigh Station Road**



RUSH-HENRIETTA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022

**TRADITIONAL LOCATION
Transportation Center
1133 Lehigh Station Road
6 a.m. to 9 p.m.**

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

**PROPOSITION NO. 1
BUDGET PROPOSITION
\$151,625,968**

**PROPOSITION NO. 2
BUS EXPENDITURES**

**PROPOSITION NO. 3
2022 CAPITAL RESERVE FUND**

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

Visit our district website (www.rhnet.org) or Facebook page (facebook.com/rhschools)