



CENTRAL SCHOOLS

■ School budget vote on May 17:

# School Tax Levy Flat, Expenditures Drop in 2011-12

Schalmont Central School District residents can vote on a \$41,770,000 budget proposal for the 2011-12 school year on Tuesday, May 17, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the foyer of the Schalmont High School New Gym, 1 Sabre Dr. Voters will also select candidates to fill two seats on the Schalmont Board of Education.

The proposed budget maintains educational programs despite being \$550,000 less than the budget for the current school year. It also does not increase the school tax levy, which is the total amount of revenue collected from local taxpayers (see page 4).

“As a board, we tried to be mindful of our mission to provide a quality education for students and to also recognize the economic challenges facing our district and our taxpayers. I believe this budget accomplishes those goals,” said Board of Education President Kevin Thompson.

School tax rates, or the amount of tax residents pay per \$1,000 of assessed value, are set in August after Schalmont receives assessment rolls and equalization rates for all five towns in the district. Final school tax bills will reflect those rates, assessed property values and any applicable exemptions (see pages 3 and 6).

Community members helped shape the final budget proposal by

participating in a series of community forums in the fall and the Citizens Budget Advisory Committee this winter.

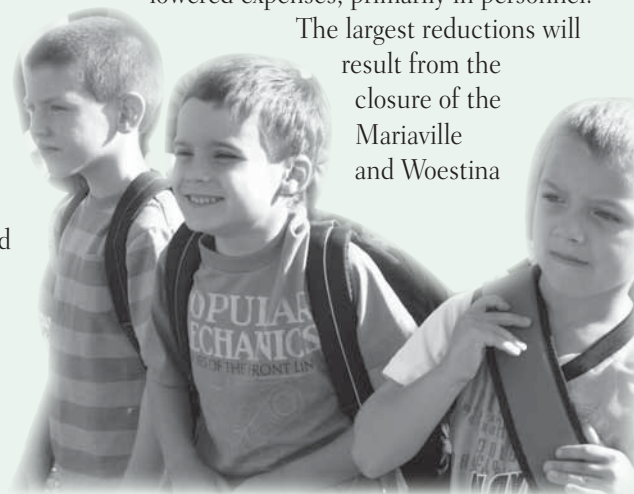
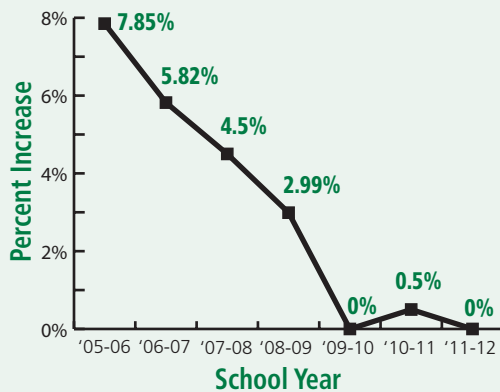
“We heard loud and clear that our district needs to provide all Schalmont students with access to the programs and resources that will prepare them to be competitive in the 21st

century. At the same time, our taxpayers said that they’re having difficulty bearing the cost of education. With the unprecedented cuts in state aid, we had to make some very difficult budgeting decisions this year,” said Superintendent Dr. Valerie Kelsey.

Those difficult decisions included nearly \$2 million in budget reductions achieved through a combination of school closures and lowered expenses, primarily in personnel.

The largest reductions will result from the closure of the Mariaville and Woestina

School Tax Levy History



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elementary schools at the end of this school year (see page 2). Personnel reductions will affect 24 full-time equivalent teaching, support staff and administrative positions, but will not decrease educational programs because the adjustments reflect the school closures and declining enrollment.

Additional details about the proposed budget, as well as Schalmont educational programs, can be found in this newsletter and online at [www.schalmont.org](http://www.schalmont.org).

Budget Summary

**2011-12 School Budget**  
**\$41,770,000**

**School Budget Change**  
**- 1.31%**

**School Tax Levy Change**  
**0%**

*We are Schalmont:*

# MS, Elementary Schools Navigate Time of Transition

An evolution is taking place in the schools and neighborhoods that make up Schalmont Central School District. This September, all students in grades K-4 will learn together in one building, Jefferson Elementary School, and fifth-graders will attend Schalmont Middle School. Many plans are in place to ensure the transition is a positive experience for all involved.

## An Elementary Community

Jefferson has already hosted several events to help transition incoming students. For example, many students in Woestina participated in a PTO-sponsored afterschool program at Jefferson. Schalmont also held one joint kindergarten registration for all district families at the building.

"It was a nice blending process," said Jefferson Principal Joby Gifford. "Our teachers use the first weeks of school to build

a sense of trust and community in their classrooms. By providing additional activities before then, we can make people feel even more comfortable."

Several other activities for students and their families are in the works. Students at Mariaville and Woestina will visit Jefferson during a school day to tour the build-

**Sign Me Up!** Schalmont held a district-wide kindergarten registration this year.

ing and to meet their new teachers and classmates. Jefferson will hold orientation days during the summer, both for transitioning students and for families new to Schalmont. Another event, "world record night," will bring families together for fun, friendship-building competitions and give parents an opportunity to mingle.

Faculty from all three schools will also have opportunities to get to know each other better and to make recommendations for a smooth transition. "We want to cultivate the best practices from each building and make that the new Jefferson," said Gifford.

The "new Jefferson" will be a community focused on togetherness and teamwork. That focus will begin with school-wide assemblies and trickle into the classroom to become a natural part of the learning process, according to Gifford. He sees the school pledge as an integral part of building that community.

"The pledge addresses the importance of caring about each other and helping one another whenever possible. Many of our teachable moments regarding friendship and unity are derived from what we collectively say each morning. It is this togetherness that makes our school a special place to learn," he said.

## Continuity, Opportunity at MS

This March, a committee of parents, teachers and support staff worked with administrators to develop ideas meant to ease the middle school transition for rising fifth-graders. Principal Michael Kondratowicz said the group's priority was to make sure students and teachers came into a comfortable, welcoming setting.

"What they'll see in September will be very much like what they were accustomed to in the elementary buildings," he said.

Continuity will be maintained both academically and socially. The fifth-grade curriculum will remain unchanged except for enhancements that might be made possible through access to middle school resources. Fifth-graders will spend most of their days in self-contained classrooms except for lunch, which will be separate from older grades, and when teachers escort them to and from special classes such as art and music. A special drop-off and dismissal procedure will also allow fifth-graders to ride on elementary school buses each day.

"We're doing the best we can to make sure that students don't feel like they've lost something," said Kondratowicz. For example, fifth-graders will continue to have regular music performances, end-of-year trips and access to many of the same extracurricular clubs. They will also have an outdoor space for recess.

Several orientation activities will take place before September. Principal Kondratowicz and Associate Principal Matthew Morgan will meet with rising fifth-graders to discuss the middle school environment. They plan to hold a formal orientation in August so students and their families can visit the fifth-grade classrooms. Teachers will also have several opportunities to socialize with each other and to set up their new classrooms.

"We want to create many opportunities for both children and adults to make a smooth transition," said Kondratowicz.



**So Much to Do:** When fifth-graders come to Schalmont Middle School, they'll join a community with unique extracurricular activities such as the Chef's Club. The winners of the club's recent Iron Chef competition were (left to right) Stanicka Mathurin, Brandi Orminski, Carlyn Beaver and Sabrina Ghirdharie.



# Budget Q&A

## Q. How was the budget proposal developed?

Each year the Schalmont Board of Education and administrators begin crafting a budget proposal by looking at factors such as the current cost to operate the district, likely increases or decreases in that cost, and trends in state and federal aid. They also consider educational standards, the success of current school programs and public feedback from the Citizens Budget Advisory Committee and a community forum series.

The superintendent presented the school board with a draft budget proposal at the end of January. The school board then revised the proposal over the next two months to reflect its educational priorities, changes in state aid and the closure of two elementary schools. The final budget proposal was adopted in April.

## Q. What reductions are included in this budget?

The proposed 2011-12 school budget is \$550,000 less than the budget for the current school year. It reflects nearly \$2 million in budget reductions achieved through a combination of school closures and other reductions, primarily in personnel. The largest reductions will result from the closure of the Mariaville and Woestina elementary schools as of June 30, 2011. Personnel reductions will affect 24 full-time equivalent teaching, support staff and administrative positions, but will not decrease educational programs because the adjustments reflect the school closures and declining enrollment.

## Q. How will this budget affect school taxes?

The proposed budget does not increase the school tax levy, which is the total amount of revenue collected from local taxpayers. School tax rates, or the amount of tax residents pay per \$1,000 of assessed value, are set in August after

Schalmont receives assessment rolls and equalization rates for all five towns in the district. Final school tax bills will reflect those rates, assessed property values and any applicable exemptions. The school board has approved all possible school tax exemptions, and exemption applications are available in the offices of town assessors.



## Q. What does Schalmont do to contain costs?

The school board and administrators regularly evaluate district purchasing practices to contain costs.

Most recently, the district partnered with six other school districts and the Schenectady County government to apply for a grant to study business-related functions and activities that could be consolidated or shared in order to reduce the cost to taxpayers.

Schalmont also competitively purchases goods and services, as required by law. For example, wherever possible, the district makes purchases through cooperative arrangements with BOCES and New York State or through the Schenectady County Schools Buying Consortium.

In October 2008, the district launched an energy savings plan that has since reduced utilities spending by \$661,611 or 31.7 percent.

## Q. How will state and federal aid affect the budget?

Schalmont looks to all other available revenue sources (e.g., state and federal aid, interest earnings, rental fees for the Schonowe, Woestina and Mariaville

buildings) before turning to local taxpayers. State and federal aid make up 26 percent of the district's revenue. Schalmont will receive \$11,212,470 in state aid in 2011-12, which is a 7.19 percent decrease from the current school year. The district will also use its one-time allotment of \$524,920 from the federal Education Jobs Fund to help preserve positions in 2011-12.

## Q. How would a property tax cap affect the budget?

A proposal to cap property taxes is under consideration in the state Legislature. The legislation would limit school districts and local governments' ability to raise revenue through property tax levies to an increase of 2 percent or the change in the Consumer Price Index for the previous calendar year, whichever is lower. This is a cap on the increase in property tax levies: It is *not* a cap on the increase in an individual's actual tax bill. If enacted as proposed, the property tax cap would take effect in the 2012-13 school year.

Under the proposed legislation, districts would continue to hold school budget votes in May. If a district submitted a budget to voters with a tax levy increase within the cap, budget approval would require a simple majority – 50 percent of all voters plus one vote. Budgets that carried tax levy increases above the cap would require a super-majority – 60 percent of all voters – for approval.

If an initial budget offering were defeated by voters, districts would be required to submit a second proposal to the community. If that proposal were defeated, a district's tax levy would be capped at the current year's level – an effective tax levy cap of zero percent.

Schalmont administrators and the school board are already considering how a property tax cap might impact the 2012-13 school budget. With the likelihood of ongoing decreases in state aid, the proposed cap would significantly hinder a district's ability to raise revenue to cover increasing expenses. If legislators

continued on page 6 ---->

# It's All About Achievement

## Academic Achievements

- Schalmont schools consistently make "Adequate Yearly Progress" in English language arts and mathematics as measured by the New York State Education Department.
- Of the Class of 2010:
  - > 89 percent earned a Regents, Advanced Regents or Advanced Regents with Honor diploma.
  - > 93 percent planned to attend a two- or four-year college.

## Athletic Achievements

- NYS Public High School Athletic Association scholar-athlete teams: fall – Boys Cross Country, Girls Cross Country, Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, Girls Tennis, Girls Volleyball; winter – Boys Indoor Track, Boys Swimming and Diving, Girls Basketball, Girls Indoor Track, Wrestling
- Section II Championship Team: Football (Class B)
- Colonial Council Championship Teams: Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, Girls Bowling



## Music Achievements

- Schalmont High School and Middle School students participated in NYS School Music Association All-State, Area All-State and solo competition festivals.
- The district hosted this year's Schenectady All-County Music Festival, and 40 Schalmont students participated.
- Six elementary students participated in the NYS Elementary Children's Honor Choir.

## Community Service Achievements

- All Schalmont schools collected food and gifts for local families during the winter holiday season.

[continued on page 5](#) →

**Where does the money come from?**

### ▶ Revenue Summary

	Approved Budget 2010-11 (\$)	Proposed Budget 2011-12 (\$)	Percent Change
State and Federal Aid	\$12,081,560	\$11,212,470	-7.19%
Fund Balance Appropriations	776,009	595,000	-23.33%
Interfund Transfers	0	324,243	
Interest Earnings/Building Use/Refunds	454,000	647,411	42.60%
Payments in Lieu of Taxes	413,431	390,876	-5.46%
Property Tax Levy for Budget	28,600,000	28,600,000	0%
<b>Revenue in budget</b>	<b>\$42,325,000</b>	<b>\$41,770,000</b>	<b>-1.31%</b>

### ▶ Expenditure Summary

	Approved Budget 2010-11 (\$)	Proposed Budget 2011-12 (\$)	Percent Change
Instruction	\$19,497,573	\$19,322,940	-0.90%
Employee Benefits	12,188,868	12,089,948	-0.81%
Operations and Maintenance	2,649,619	2,453,890	-7.39%
Transportation	2,613,910	2,618,829	0.19%
District Support	1,316,145	1,327,291	0.85%
Debt Service and Transfer	4,058,885	3,957,103	-2.51%
<b>Expenditures in budget</b>	<b>\$42,325,000</b>	<b>\$41,770,000</b>	<b>-1.31%</b>

**Where does the money go?**

(see next page for details)



## ■ Achievement

– continued from pg. 4

- HS and MS students caroled to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House and Schenectady City Mission.

- Middle-schoolers collected 300 coats for local children.
- Mariaville and Woestina students sold paper angels to raise money for the Make-a-Wish Foundation.
- Mariaville students donated equipment and supplies to a shelter for animals in Menands.
- Woestina kindergartners and Jefferson fifth-graders donated toys, crafts and money to the Albany Medical Center Children's Hospital.
- Jefferson second-graders donated more than \$300 to the Schenectady City Mission.

## ▶ Instruction

<b>46.26% of total budget</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Teaching - Regular School	\$9,859,197	\$10,010,878
Occupational Education	693,414	845,040
Special Education	5,143,661	4,919,106
Curriculum Development	202,574	209,808
Supervision	1,105,280	854,355
Summer School	63,488	64,537
Library	339,437	314,147
Computer Assisted Instruction	502,741	547,786
Guidance	570,689	561,068
Health Services	353,115	300,099
Psychological Services	235,051	275,115
Co-curricular Activities	68,565	70,622
Athletics	360,360	350,378
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,497,573</b>	<b>\$19,322,940</b>
<b>Percent Change</b>		<b>-0.90%</b>

## ▶ Employee Benefits

<b>28.94% of total budget</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Health Insurance	\$8,284,650	\$7,758,460
Teachers' Retirement	1,365,000	1,596,000
Employees' Retirement	440,000	820,000
Social Security (FICA)	1,625,000	1,425,000
Worker's Compensation	190,000	144,000
Unemployment	137,730	200,000
Life Insurance	121,988	121,988
Disability Insurance	24,500	24,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,188,868</b>	<b>\$12,089,948</b>
<b>Percent Change</b>		<b>-0.81%</b>

## ▶ Debt Service and Transfers

<b>9.47% of total budget</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Buses	\$338,520	\$288,000
Construction	3,094,684	3,045,384
Tax Certiorari	480,681	478,719
Interfund Transfer	145,000	145,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,058,885</b>	<b>\$3,957,103</b>
<b>Percent Change</b>		<b>-2.51%</b>

## ▶ Transportation

<b>6.27% of total budget</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Transportation	\$2,318,894	\$2,430,390
Garage	95,016	78,439
Contracted Transportation	200,000	110,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,613,910</b>	<b>\$2,618,829</b>
<b>Percent Change</b>		<b>0.19%</b>

## ▶ Operations and Maintenance

<b>5.87% of total budget</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Custodial Services	\$2,109,157	\$1,809,850
Maintenance	540,462	644,040
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,649,619</b>	<b>\$2,453,890</b>
<b>Percent Change</b>		<b>-7.39%</b>

## ▶ District Support

<b>3.18% of total budget</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Board of Education	\$7,281	\$6,281
District Clerk/Meeting	2,210	2,210
Central Administration	226,112	226,409
Business Administration	362,937	368,822
Auditing	47,630	47,792
Treasurer	60	60
Tax Collection	10,810	10,610
Purchasing	8,728	7,918
Legal Services	108,150	108,150
Personnel	55,144	55,566
Public Information	100,958	102,590
Central Printing	58,703	57,545
Insurance	128,000	128,000
School Dues	18,700	18,700
BOCES Administration/Capital	180,723	186,638
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,316,145</b>	<b>\$1,327,291</b>
<b>Percent Change</b>		<b>0.85%</b>

## Budget Q&A

– continued from pg. 3

were to enact mandate relief, that could help lessen a cap's potentially negative impact on educational programs and services.

### Q. How do mandates affect the budget?

State and federal mandates generally are intended to raise educational standards. The costs associated with meeting such mandates – for things like administering and grading state tests and providing struggling students with individualized/small group support – are often not fully covered by the government. Visit [www.schalmont.org/District/budget/1112/LegislativePositionPaper.pdf](http://www.schalmont.org/District/budget/1112/LegislativePositionPaper.pdf) to learn more about mandates and opportunities for mandate relief.

### Q. How do STAR exemptions reduce school taxes?

Those who own a home can significantly reduce their school property taxes through a School Tax Relief (STAR) exemption. There are two standard STAR exemptions: Basic STAR for owner-occupied, primary residences regardless of owners' ages; and Enhanced STAR for primary residences of owners aged 65 and older with yearly household incomes below the state standard. Contact your town assessor to apply or visit [www.orps.state.ny.us/star/](http://www.orps.state.ny.us/star/) for more details.

### Q. Can STAR exemptions change each year?

Yes. Exemptions can be reduced based on changes in the assessed value of a property, as determined by a town assessor, and in the equalization rates for various towns within a school district.

### Q. What happens if the budget is voted down?

If the proposed school budget is defeated on May 17, the school board can put the same budget up for a revote, put a revised budget up for vote or go

## Three Candidates to Run for School Board

Three candidates have submitted petitions for two seats on the Schalmont Board of Education. Voters can meet the candidates at the start of the school board meeting on Monday, May 9, at 7 p.m. at Jefferson Elementary School, 100 Princetown Rd.

The school board is made up of seven non-paid citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of three years each. Together, they:

- Establish district policies;
- Develop an annual budget proposal;
- Approve or disapprove the superintendent's recommendations on personnel matters and contracts;
- Review courses of study and textbooks; and
- Act as a communication link between residents and the superintendent.

The school board also helps define district philosophy, sets goals to achieve academic objectives and plans for future needs.



### John DiCocco

is running for his first term.

He is a contract manager at General Electric. For the past three years, he has served on the Schalmont Citizens Budget Advisory Committee. He also previously served as a Cub Scout

pack master.

After graduating from Draper High School, he earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

He and his wife, Brenda, have three children currently attending Schalmont schools, one at the elementary level and two at the secondary level.



### Kevin Thompson

is running for his third term. He currently serves as president of the Schalmont Board of Education.

Thompson is the chief financial officer of Quandt's Foodservice Distributors, Inc. He is also a

licensed certified public accountant. His professional memberships include the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the NYS Society of CPAs.

Thompson volunteers his time as an instructor for business/accounting courses at SUNY Cobleskill's Community Outreach Program. He also previously coached Rotterdam Little League. Prior to serving on the school board, he served on the Citizens Budget Advisory Committee for more than seven years.

Thompson received his bachelor's degree from the University at Albany.

He and his wife, Carol, live on Becker Crossing in Schenectady. They have two children who both attend Schalmont schools.



### Michael Pasquarella

is running for his first term.

Pasquarella is a clinical pharmacy manager with Ellis Medicine. He also chairs the Town of Rotterdam Ethics Committee and is an active committee person for the Our Lady

Queen of Peace Annual Festa. He recently served on the Schalmont Community Budget Advisory Committee.

After graduating from Schalmont High School in 1986, he earned a bachelor's degree and a doctorate from the University of Minnesota, College of Pharmacy.

He and his wife, Carmela, have two children currently attending Schalmont schools, one at the elementary level and one at the middle school level.

directly to a contingency budget. If the board decides to put the proposed budget up for a revote or to put a revised budget up for a vote and either one is voted down, the board must adopt a contingency budget.

### Q. What is a contingency budget?

State law mandates that under a contingency budget a school district may not increase spending in most expenditure areas by more than 120 percent of the Consumer Price Index or 4 percent,

whichever is less. Based on that formula, the spending cap for most expenditure areas is 1.92 percent for 2011-12.

If forced to adopt a contingency budget under current law, Schalmont will need to cut \$13,800 from the proposed budget. A contingency budget is calculated by removing all non-contingent appropriations from the proposed budget, including student supplies, certain equipment purchases, and community use of school facilities (i.e., must charge a fee).



# 2011-12 SCHOOL BUDGET NOTICE

School districts are required by state law to mail this information to all households within the district. If you would like more information about the budget, please call the superintendent's office at 355-9200.

## DEFINITIONS

The state requires school districts to present their annual budgets in three parts: program, administrative and capital.

### 1. ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS:

Salaries and benefits of all professional staff members who spend 50 percent or more of their time in administration and supervision. Also included: salaries and benefits of clerical staff for administrators; public relations; central printing; curriculum development and supervision; research planning and evaluation; central data processing; tax collection; most legal services; and school board costs.

### 2. PROGRAM COSTS:

Salaries and benefits of all teachers, guidance counselors, speech therapists, nurses, psychologists, social workers, aides, monitors, etc. Also included: district transportation costs (except bus purchases); interscholastic athletics; in-service training; computer assisted instruction; library, audiovisual and educational TV costs; and co-curricular recreation, youth and civic programs.

### 3. CAPITAL COSTS:

Debt service on buildings; leases; school bus purchases; tax certiorari and court-ordered costs; operation and maintenance costs, including salaries and benefits of all janitorial staff.

	Budget Adopted for the 2010-11 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2011-12 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2011-12 School Year
Total budgeted amount	\$42,325,000	\$41,770,000	\$41,756,200
Increase or decrease for 2011-12 school year		-\$550,000	-\$568,800
Percentage increase or decrease in proposed budget		-1.31%	-1.34%
Change in the consumer price index		1.6%	
Resulting est. property tax levy for 2011-12 school year		\$28,600,000	\$28,586,200
<b>Component Breakdown</b>			
1. Administrative Component	\$2,421,426	\$2,181,647	\$2,181,647
2. Program Component	\$33,260,071	\$33,242,361	\$33,228,561
3. Capital Component	\$6,643,504	\$6,345,992	\$6,345,992

## What happens if the 2011-12 school budget proposal is not approved by a majority of voters?

Under state law, school boards can submit a budget to voters a maximum of two times. If the budget is defeated twice, the board must adopt a contingency budget, which would put a cap on new spending. Based upon a formula, this year's **spending cap is 1.92 percent** (some exclusions allowed).

A contingency budget is calculated using the spending cap and by removing all non-contingent appropriations from the proposed budget. Items which are statutorily considered non-contingent expenses include student supplies, certain equipment purchases and community use of school facilities. If forced to adopt a contingency budget under current law, **Schalmont will need to cut an additional \$13,800 from the proposed budget.**

If the contingency budget is put in place as the result of two defeated budget votes, under current state law there can be no more votes on a budget for this year. Also, there can be no referendum to reinstate any of the specific components that were removed from the budget to meet the spending cap imposed by a contingency budget.

## Basic STAR Exemption Impact

Estimated Basic STAR\* Exemption savings

	Budget proposed for the 2011-12 school year
Basic STAR Tax Savings	\$532.31

\*The Basic School Tax Relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

The budget vote for the fiscal year 2011-12 by the qualified voters of Schalmont Central School District will be held in the foyer of the Schalmont High School New Gym on Tuesday, May 17, 2011, between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9 p.m., at which time the polls will be open to vote by machine.

**Photo ID or other proof of residency is required to vote.**



Produced in cooperation with the Capital Region BOCES Communications Service.

# Schalmont

CENTRAL SCHOOLS

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**WHAT'S INSIDE?** SCHOOLS NAVIGATE TRANSITIONS, BUDGET Q&A, BOARD CANDIDATES AND MORE!

# 2011-12 School Budget Vote

### What exactly am I voting on?

- ▶ A \$41,770,000 budget for the 2011-12 school year, which is \$550,000 less than the budget for the current school year. **It does not increase the school tax levy.**
- ▶ Two seats on the Schalmont Board of Education (see page 6)
- ▶ A proposition to purchase three 66-passenger buses

### When and where is the vote?

The vote will be held on **Tuesday, May 17, 2011**, from 6 a.m. – 9 p.m. in the foyer of the Schalmont High School New Gym, 1 Sabre Dr. The best parking is in the lot closest to the athletic fields.

### Who can vote?

A U.S. citizen who is 18 or more years old and has been a district resident for at least 30 days prior to the vote. No pre-registration is required.

### What should I bring with me?

Personal identification/proof of residency is required (e.g., driver's license with current address, utility bill showing your name and current address). You will not be allowed to vote without I.D.

### Can I vote by absentee ballot?

Those unable to appear in person on May 17 may vote by absentee ballot. To receive an absentee ballot, voters may obtain an application at the district office or download one at [www.schalmont.org/District/budget/voteinfo.htm#absent](http://www.schalmont.org/District/budget/voteinfo.htm#absent). The application must be returned to the DO by May 10 if the absentee ballot is to be mailed to the voter or by May 16 if the absentee ballot is to be picked up personally by the voter at the DO between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Absentee ballots must be returned no later than 5 p.m. on May 17. For more information, call 355-9200, x4002.



## Bus Proposition Would Not Increase Budget

On May 17, district residents will consider a separate proposition to purchase three 66-passenger buses.

The proposition is part of an ongoing bus replacement plan designed to ensure that students are transported on buses that meet the latest safety standards. It would also allow students in the areas impacted by school closures to be transported within time limits set by school board policy.

The initial cost of the three buses is \$315,000 spread across five years, but Schalmont is eligible for state aid on a portion of that cost. As a result, the true cost is \$126,000 before factoring in trade-in discounts for older, heavily used buses. The cost of the proposition is already included in the debt service calculation for 2011-12, so it would not increase the proposed budget.

### Meet the School Board Candidates Night

Monday, May 9 @ 7 p.m. • Jefferson Elementary School, 100 Princetown Rd., Schenectady