



■ *School budget vote on May 19*

No Tax Levy Increase in 2009-10 School Budget Proposal

Schalmont Central School District residents can **vote on a \$42,325,000 budget proposal for the 2009-10 school year on Tuesday, May 19**, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the foyer of the Schalmont High School New Gym, 1 Sabre Dr. Voters will also pick candidates to fill two seats on the Schalmont Board of Education.

The proposed 2009-10 school budget is a \$775,000, or 1.87 percent, increase in spending over the 2008-09 school budget. Most expenditure areas are expected to increase next year, particularly those related to employee benefits. Two expenditure areas are expected to decrease: instruction and transportation (see page 4). This reflects a variety of cost-saving measures and cuts, including the elimination of 12.5 full-time equivalent positions (see page 2).

“With federal stimulus money, we were able to preserve some jobs and make appropriate cuts with the least negative impact on students,” said Superintendent Valerie Kelsey.

The proposed budget would not increase the school tax levy from its current 2008-09 level of \$27,763,074. This reflects a consistent reduction in the percentage increase of the school tax levy (i.e., total amount of money that the district collects from local taxpayers) over the last five years.



“This budget maintains our ability to prepare students to be competitive college and job applicants. With no increase in the tax levy, it also addresses our residents’ economic concerns,” said Kelsey.

The district will set school tax rates (i.e., amount of tax residents pay per \$1,000 of home value) for homestead and non-homestead properties in August 2009. While under this proposal the school tax levy would remain the same next year, homeowners’ school tax bills may not remain exactly the same. That is because an individual school tax bill is calculated using the assessed value of a property, any applicable exemptions, and the school tax rate for the town in which the property owner resides. The school board has approved all possible school tax exemptions, and many taxpayers may also be eligible for a STAR exemption (see page 7).

The school board built the proposed budget based on its goals and a great deal of community input. During the budget planning process, they focused on maintaining and expanding existing instructional programs, increasing fiscal responsibility, maintaining and updating facilities, and continuing to improve security (see page 2), in addition to having no increase in the school tax levy. They also considered community priorities by reviewing last year’s budget vote exit

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Budget Summary

2009-10 School Budget	\$42,325,000
School Budget Increase	1.87%
School Tax Levy Change	0%

poll results, feedback from the Community Budget Advisory Committee, comments at board meetings and via e-mail, and responses to a pre-forum survey.

“We’re very grateful for the service of the Budget Advisory Committee members and for everyone who took time to offer feedback on the budget,” said Robert Sheehan, president of the school board.

Read on for more details on the proposed budget.

■ Budget focus area #1

Maintain and Expand Existing Instructional Programs

Schalmont Central School District rose from a rank of 49 in 2005 to a rank of 21 in 2008 in an annual ranking of 85 Capital Region school districts by "The Business Review" (based on state Education Department data). The 2009-10 school budget proposal maintains and expands **existing** instructional programs so students can continue to make educational advancements.

- ▶ Continue to offer high school students:
 - All four grade levels of Project Lead the Way (PLTW) pre-engineering program
 - Advanced Placement (AP) classes in calculus, English, Java, and U.S. history
 - Distance learning classes in psychology, sociology, French, computer science, theater arts, and Mandarin Chinese
 - The opportunity to take courses for college credit from Schenectady County Community College, SUNY Albany and Syracuse University
- ▶ Continue to provide middle school students with:
 - Classes in the Gateway to Technology program (expand to all three grade levels)
 - Access to accelerated math and science programs
- ▶ At the elementary schools, continue the:
 - Everyday Mathematics program (expand to kindergarten through fourth grade)
 - Elementary Literacy Initiative designed to have all students reading at a third-grade level by third grade
 - Bulk purchase of basic school supplies (e.g., glue, scissors, paper, crayons) to reduce the cost of items and provide savings for elementary parents
 - Extracurricular clubs (e.g., foreign language, science, Odyssey of the Mind, Math Olympiad)
 - Summer Literacy Program for incoming first-, second- and third-graders receiving remedial reading services
 - Math and Science Summer Academy for incoming fourth- and fifth-graders
- ▶ Continue to give students access to occupational education opportunities through BOCES
- ▶ Continue to participate in Tech Valley High School (three students, one each in grades 9, 10 and 11)



■ Budget focus area #2

Take Cost-saving Measures and Make Cuts

The proposed budget includes reductions of \$878,318 and several measures that will help lower the cost to operate the district.

- ▶ Cut 12.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions – through attrition or adjustments due to declining enrollment – in areas that will have the least negative impact on students (1 secretary, 1 AIS teacher, .5 speech therapist, .4 occupational therapist, .3 art teacher, .4 music teacher, .5 home and career teacher, 1 section at the middle school, .4 language teacher, 1 special education teacher, 1 social worker, 1 English teacher, 3 special education aides, and 1 kindergarten aid)
- ▶ Freeze five-year bus replacement plan
- ▶ 10 percent reduction in instructional supplies throughout the district
- ▶ Relocate district office to existing space at high school
- ▶ Freeze on the purchase of sports uniforms
- ▶ Continue to participate in Schenectady County schools buying consortium for savings on bus parts, cafeteria food and supplies, computer supplies, paper, trash removal, etc.
- ▶ Continue to participate in BOCES energy consortium for savings in natural gas and electricity
- ▶ Continue an energy savings plan at all buildings

Impact of Economy, Federal Stimulus on Schools

These days, it seems there's always a new report about the troubled U.S. economy. School districts are not immune to such troubles, but an investment in education by the federal government should help many districts lessen the negative impact on students.

In December, Gov. David Paterson released a 2009-10 executive budget proposal that included a one-time "deficit reduction assessment" (DRA) of \$1,185,149 for Schalmont Central School District. The Schalmont Board of Education included the potential drop in state aid in their budget planning process this year.

In February, President Barack Obama signed off on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which included approximately \$2.7 billion in funding for schools in New York. Gov. Paterson used most of this funding to eliminate the DRA cut. Some of the

funding was also used to eliminate a proposal to shift some preschool special education costs from the state budget to school district budgets.

The federal stimulus allowed Schalmont to preserve several jobs, though some cuts were still made through attrition or adjustments due to declining enrollment. It also provided an additional \$491,000 for targeted programs related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The federal government has indicated that this money is meant to be used to create or save jobs and to improve or add on to existing services, not to replace funding from the state or local taxpayers.

While the federal stimulus bill offers immediate relief, the state's economic problems are likely to remain for some time.

In March, Gov. Paterson predicted a \$16.2 billion general fund deficit



for the state next year and increasing deficits in the following years. A state deficit could negatively impact the annual school budget because state aid accounts for almost 1/3 of the revenue for Schalmont. Federal stimulus money should help lessen the impact of a state deficit next year, but the aid is promised only for the next two years.

School budgets, now and in the future, are likely to reflect the ongoing need to cut costs in response to the troubled economy while still providing quality education programs.

■ Budget focus area #3

Increase Fiscal Responsibility

The proposed budget includes several measures designed to ensure the ongoing financial health of the district. Some are required by law, and others are based on state or independent auditor recommendations.

- ▶ Continue the Schalmont Board of Education Audit Committee
- ▶ Continue the Tax Certiorari Reserve Fund, Employee Benefit Accrued Liability Reserve Fund and Workers' Compensation Fund

■ Budget focus area #4

Maintain and Update Facilities

The Bond 2007 capital project was approved by voters in October 2007 and approved by the state Education Department in 2008.

- ▶ Completed: lighting and paving project near HS athletic fields
- ▶ Coming soon: MS gym floor and renovations to 1957 wing of HS (e.g., roofing reconstruction, replacement of single pane windows, replacement of old steam boilers with smaller, more efficient hot water boilers)

■ Budget focus area #5

Continue to Improve Security

The school board considered feedback from the Schalmont Safety Committee (includes members of the police and fire departments, parents, a student, a board member, and school personnel) and the Schalmont District-wide School Safety Plan when deciding on security improvements.

- ▶ Add motion sensor lights to exterior of HS to improve functionality of security cameras previously installed

Where does the money come from?

▶ **Revenue Summary**

	Approved Budget 2008-09 (\$)	Proposed Budget 2009-10 (\$)	Percent Change
State and Federal Aid	\$11,834,426	\$12,482,426	5.48
Fund Balance Appropriations	400,000	400,000	0
Interfund Transfers	200,000	480,000	140
Interest Earnings/Building Use/Refunds	452,500	274,500	- 39.34
Payments in Lieu of Taxes	900,000	925,000	2.78
Property Tax Levy for Budget	27,763,074	27,763,074	0
Revenue in budget	\$41,550,000	\$42,325,000	1.87%

▶ **Expenditure Summary**

	Approved Budget 2008-09 (\$)	Proposed Budget 2009-10 (\$)	Percent Change
Instruction	\$20,285,104	\$20,061,244	-1.10
Employee Benefits	10,502,619	11,221,546	6.85
Operations and Maintenance	2,717,347	2,818,544	3.72
Transportation	2,804,489	2,792,493	-0.43
District Support	1,323,981	1,339,768	1.19
Debt Service and Transfer	3,916,460	4,091,405	4.47
Expenditures in budget	\$41,550,000	\$42,325,000	1.87%

Where does the money go?

(see next page for details)

Schalmont Students in the Spotlight

Academic Achievements

- ▶ The majority of Schalmont High School students attend college after graduation. Of the Class of 2008, 92 percent went on to attend a two- or four-year college. Members of the Class of 2009 have already been accepted at higher education institutions such as Albany College of Pharmacy, Boston University, Cornell, Fordham, Hofstra, Marist, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy, Northeastern University, Penn State, Providence, RIT, RPI, Rutgers, Siena, St. Bonaventure, St. Johns, SUNY (Geneseo, Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo), Union, Univ. of Miami, Univ. of Rochester, Univ. of Rhode Island, Univ. of South Florida, Villanova, and Virginia Tech.
- ▶ Almost 80 percent of the Class of 2008 earned a Regents or Advanced Regents diploma.
- ▶ The Class of 2008's average ACT composite score of 22.3 was higher than the national average.



- ▶ The Class of 2008's average SAT critical reading score of 490 and average SAT math score of 508 were both higher than the New York State average.
- ▶ During the 2008-09 school year, 64 HS students enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) classes. Senior Andrea Fortman earned the title of AP Scholar from the College Board association.
- ▶ During the 2008-09 school year, approximately 150

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▶ Instruction

47.40% of total budget	2008-09	2009-10
Teaching - Regular School	\$10,381,408	\$10,053,580
Occupational Education	597,980	640,266
Special Education	5,344,799	5,398,972
Curriculum Development	230,347	235,120
Supervision	1,082,500	1,124,382
Summer School	93,660	93,607
Library	328,649	332,963
Computer Assisted Instruction	612,885	599,005
Guidance	586,736	591,600
Health Services	317,460	334,424
Psychological Services	251,503	197,306
Co-curricular Activities	63,681	73,600
Athletics	393,497	386,419
Total	\$20,285,104	\$20,061,244
Percent Change		-1.10%

▶ Employee Benefits

26.51% of total budget	2008-09	2009-10
Health Insurance	\$7,031,619	\$7,518,575
Teachers' Retirement	1,250,000	1,365,000
Employees' Retirement	380,000	400,000
Social Security (FICA)	1,501,500	1,555,269
Worker's Compensation	190,000	190,000
Unemployment	30,000	50,000
Life Insurance	95,000	118,202
Disability Insurance	24,500	24,500
Total	\$10,502,619	\$11,221,546
Percent Change		+6.85%

▶ Operations and Maintenance

6.66% of total budget	2008-09	2009-10
Custodial Services	\$2,195,421	\$2,222,869
Maintenance	521,926	595,675
Total	\$2,717,347	\$2,818,544
Percent Change		+3.72%

▶ Transportation

6.60% of total budget	2008-09	2009-10
Transportation	\$2,345,263	\$2,397,810
Garage	119,326	94,683
Contracted Transportation	339,900	300,000
Total	\$2,804,489	\$2,792,493
Percent Change		-.43%

▶ District Support

3.17% of total budget	2008-09	2009-10
Board of Education	\$7,999	\$7,999
District Clerk/Meeting	3,301	3,301
Central Administration	199,223	202,840
Business Administration	365,316	367,711
Auditing	47,630	47,630
Treasurer	80	80
Tax Collection	10,820	10,820
Purchasing	9,585	8,618
Fiscal Agent Fees	757	0
Legal Services	108,150	108,150
Personnel	48,048	59,783
Public Information	95,919	98,593
Central Printing	59,883	58,971
Insurance	168,000	168,000
School Dues	16,480	18,700
Assessment	0	0
Tax Refunds	0	0
BOCES Administration	178,632	174,329
Census	4,244	4,244
Total	\$1,323,981	\$1,339,768
Percent Change		+1.19%

▶ Debt Service and Transfers

9.67% of total budget	2008-09	2009-10
Buses	\$372,420	\$372,420
Construction	2,701,209	3,071,754
Tax Certiorari	477,831	482,231
Interfund Transfer	365,000	165,000
Total	\$3,916,460	\$4,091,405
Percent Change		+4.47%

Q&A ABOUT THE PROPOSED SCHOOL BUDGET

Q. How was the budget proposal developed?

The Schalmont Board of Education and administrators began crafting a proposal in the fall of 2008. They estimated operational costs for 2009-10 by looking at factors such as the current costs to operate the district, likely increases or decreases in the costs of supplies and services, and trends in state and federal aid. They also considered educational standards, the success of current school programs, and feedback from community members on educational priorities. Much of that feedback came from the Community Budget Advisory Committee: Greg Campoli, Mary Carolus, John DiCoccon, Neal Fisher, Kerry Frank, Ray Gaus, Dominic Gallo, Amelia Hallam, Arlene Lindell, Debbie Lynch, David Monroe, Paul Notar, Dave Piotrowski, John Saccocio, Carolyn Stagnitti, and Scott Thompson.

Q. What increases are included in this budget?

The 2009-10 school budget of \$42,325,000 represents a 1.87 percent spending increase over the 2008-09 school budget. The proposed budget would not increase the school tax levy.

The proposal includes \$878,318 of reductions, but most expense areas are expected to increase next year (see pages 4-5). The areas most significantly contributing to the spending increase include employee benefits and construction costs.

Q. What does the district do to limit spending and contain costs?

The 2009-10 school budget includes \$878,318 of reductions. Those reductions include cutting 12.5 full-time equivalent positions in the following areas: 1 secretary,

1 AIS teacher, .5 speech therapist, .4 occupational therapist, .3 art teacher, .4 music teacher, .5 home and career teacher, 1 section at Schalmont Middle School, .4 language teacher, 1 special education teacher, 1 social worker, 1 English teacher, 3 special education aides, and 1 kindergarten aid. They also include savings generated by a 10 percent reduction in instructional supplies across the district, freezing the current five-year bus replacement plan, relocating the district office to existing space at Schalmont High School, and not purchasing sports uniforms.

By law, school districts are required to competitively purchase goods and services. As a routine part of its purchasing practices, the district uses a competitive bidding process, and wherever possible, makes purchases through cooperative arrangements with BOCES or New York State. The district also is a member of the Schenectady

■ Schalmont Students in the Spotlight

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HS students enrolled in courses where they can earn college credit through the University in the High School program.

- ▶ The Schalmont Middle School Engineering Club won awards for "Best Air Transportation Design" and "Best Use of Construction Materials" at the Future City Competition this January.
- ▶ Schalmont HS senior Dakota Eckert took first place in the food and beverage competition at the Area III Regional SkillsUSA Competition this March.
- ▶ Schalmont HS senior Katie Urbanski's New Visions team won the "We The People: The Citizen and the Constitution" competition at Albany Law School.

Athletic Achievements

- ▶ The NYS Public High School Athletic Association recognized the following varsity teams as scholar-athletes: fall – Boys Cross Country, Girls Cross



Country, Football, Golf, Boys Soccer (pictured above), Girls Soccer, Girls Tennis, Girls Volleyball; winter – Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Boys Bowling, Girls Bowling, and Girls Indoor Track. To be named scholar athletes, a team must maintain a grade point average of at least 90 percent or higher.

- ▶ The following varsity teams were Section II Class B Champions: Girls Bowling, Football.
- ▶ The following varsity teams were Colonial Council Champions: Girls Bowling, Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer.
- ▶ The following students participated in the state



County Schools Buying Consortium, which provides savings in areas such as supplies, heating fuel and energy.

Q. How do efforts to raise educational standards impact the budget?

State and federal mandates, such as No Child Left Behind, are aimed at making students more competitive by raising educational standards. District costs associated with meeting mandates – for things like administering and grading tests and providing struggling students with individualized/small group support – are often not covered by the government. In the last year, there has been a great deal of public discussion about mandate relief. If funding for a mandate is not provided by the government, Schalmont must turn to local taxpayers to fund such initiatives.

Q. How will this budget affect school taxes?

The 2009-10 school budget would *not* increase the school tax levy (i.e.,

total amount of money the district collects from local taxpayers), which would remain at its current 2008-09 level of \$27,763,074. This reflects a consistent reduction in the percentage increase of the school tax levy over the last five years.

The 2009-10 school tax rate (i.e., amount of tax residents pay per \$1,000 of home value) for residential property owners (homestead) will be less than the rate for all other property owners (non-homestead). Rates will be set in August 2009.

Taxpayers may be able to reduce their school taxes through exemptions. The school board has approved all possible school tax exemptions, and exemption applications are available in your town assessor's office. Visit www.orps.state.ny.us/home/tpe_index.cfm for more information.

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 incomes; and Enhanced STAR for primary residences of owners aged 65 and older with yearly household incomes below the state standard. (The state will no longer offer the Middle Class STAR rebate program.) Homeowners can apply for a STAR tax break through their town assessor's office. Visit www.orps.state.ny.us/star/ for more details.

Q. Are taxpayers' STAR savings factored into the budget?

No. The STAR program is tax relief for homeowners paid for by New York State through state taxes. It is not a new source of funding for schools or a consideration in developing the annual school budget.

Q. How will the Homestead Tax Option affect taxes?

In March 2007, the Schalmont Board

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championships: Liz Kuhlkin and Natasha Bidwell - Girls Bowling, Devin Hallam - Boys Swimming, Vincent Gallo - Wrestling.

- ▶ Senior Kyle McKelvey was named the lead scorer for the Capital District HS Hockey League and selected as a Capital News 9 "Jacques of All Trades."
- ▶ Senior Devin Hallam was named a My4/U.S. Army Student-Athlete of the Week.
- ▶ Seniors Mike Azzaro and Carlo Viscusi were named to the NYS Sportswriters Association all-state teams for boys soccer.

Art/Music Achievements

- ▶ Two HS students were selected to perform at the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) All-State Festival (women's chorus, mixed chorus), and six HS students were selected for the NYSSMA Area All-State Festival (choral, instrumental).
- ▶ 70 HS students and more than 40 MS students (vocal and instrumental) participated in the NYSSMA solo competition festival.



- ▶ 45 elementary, MS and HS students were selected for the Schenectady All-County Music Festival (elementary students pictured at left).
- ▶ Eight students were selected for the Capital District Youth Chorale.
- ▶ One student was selected for the chorus of the Melodies of Christmas concert at Proctor's Theatre.

Community Service Achievements

- ▶ The MS and Jefferson and Woestina elementary schools together recycled 10,760 pounds of paper in 2008. (Mariaville began recycling this fall.)

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Budget Q&A

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of Education enacted the Homestead Tax Option for all five towns in the district. It allowed for the creation of a dual tax rate for homeowners (residential property owners) and non-residential property owners, with property designations determined by each town's assessor.

The 2009-10 school tax rate for residential property owners (homestead) will be less than the school tax rate for all other property owners (non-homestead). Rates will be set in August 2009.

Q. How will state aid and the federal stimulus affect the 2009-10 school budget?

Schalmont looks to all other available revenue sources – state and federal aid, interest earnings, facility rental fees, etc. – before it turns to local taxpayers to help pay for education. State aid accounts for about 30 percent of the district's revenue, and in 2009-10, Schalmont will receive \$12,482,426 (see page 4). This is a 5.48 percent increase from 2008-09 aid levels.

The largest portion of state aid is "foundation aid," and it has been frozen at the 2008-09 level. The formula to determine foundation aid was originally established by the state to provide school districts with regularly scheduled, predictable aid increases. The aid is based on factors such as the number of total students, disadvantaged students, special education students, and limited English proficiency students in a district. With the

freeze, the state has indicated it will delay the full implementation of the foundation aid formula for at least the next two years.

In December 2008, Gov. David Paterson included a one-time deficit reduction assessment (DRA) of \$1,185,149 for Schalmont in his 2009-10 executive budget proposal to the New York State Legislature. The DRA aid cut was eliminated thanks to federal stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The federal stimulus also provided an additional \$491,000 to Schalmont – with restrictions – for programs related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Q. What happens if the school budget proposal is voted down?

If the 2009-10 school budget proposal is defeated on May 19, the school board can put the same budget up for a revote, put a revised budget up for vote or go 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 the impact of 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. For 2009-10, the spending cap for most expenditure areas is 4 percent. Certain expenditures are exempt from this spending cap, for example tax certiorari settlements and debt service.

The 2009-10 school budget proposal is already less than the spending cap, with a 1.87 percent spending increase from the 2008-09 school budget, but a contingency budget must be less than the proposed budget. **If forced to adopt a contingency budget, Schalmont will need to cut \$73,936 from the proposed budget.**

When the proposed budget is below the contingency budget cap, the contingency budget is calculated by removing all non-contingent appropriations from the proposed budget. Items which are statutorily considered non-contingent expenses are, for example:

- Student supplies (e.g., the bulk purchase of basic school supplies for elementary students);
- Certain equipment purchases; and
- Community use of school facilities (i.e., must charge community groups a fee to cover any costs associated with the use of school facilities).

Q. What is a tax certiorari?

The district currently is subject to ongoing tax certiorari claims, which are court cases brought by businesses or property owners seeking a reduction in their property tax assessments. If the claimants win their cases, the district will have to pay them using savings from a certiorari reserve fund and/or by borrowing money. Schalmont's financial planning strategies include setting aside money in a Tax Certiorari Reserve Fund in preparation for a verdict against the district.

Don't forget to vote on May 19!

Schalmont Students in the Spotlight

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Schalmont High School and Middle School

- ▶ The students of HS teachers June Krone and GERALYN Zink sent more than 100 greetings to American service members, veterans and their families through Holiday Mail for Heroes.
- ▶ The HS Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) Club sponsored a "Giving Tree" to collect gifts for local families at Christmas.
- ▶ Senior John Warzala received a Rotterdam Outstanding Citizen Award for collecting 700 coats for community members in need.
- ▶ National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) members created a "Giving Tree" and collected more than 60

Schalmont Considers Full-Day Kindergarten

If implemented, program would not increase school tax levy

At the time that this newsletter went to print, the Schalmont Board of Education was considering implementing a full-day kindergarten program at the Jefferson, Mariaville and Woestina elementary schools in September 2009 because of the academic, social and financial benefits for students and parents. The timing would also take advantage of an opportunity to fully fund the program through a combination of state aid, federal stimulus funds and savings in transportation costs.

According to the New York State Board of Regents, children in full-day kindergarten programs, on average, make greater gains in reading and math achievement scores than their peers who attend half-day programs or who are not enrolled in kindergarten. Such programs also reduce drop-out rates and the need for intervention services.

Schalmont Central School District, which considered but was unable to afford a full-day program in 2004, is one of just a few districts across the state to not yet offer full-day kindergarten.

"Children in Schalmont deserve the same opportunities for academic success that most of their neighbors now have. By making use of this aid, we could give them that," said Superintendent Valerie Kelsey.



More and more students have two working parents, both according to U.S. Census Bureau studies and the May 2008 school budget vote exit poll. As a result, a half-day kindergarten program means children often go from home, to school, to day care, and back home again. With a full-day program, parents could eliminate one of those transitions and allow their children to stay in one place all day. This means a potential financial savings for parents, and for students, less time wasted on traveling and more time spent learning and connecting with teachers and peers.

"Many of our parents have expressed interest in a full-day program. Their priority is their children's development, but the additional financial benefit means a lot in this economy," said Kelsey.

Schalmont would be able to fully

fund this investment in early education without increasing the school tax levy. In part, this is because the district can realign existing classrooms at Jefferson and avoid building any new classrooms. The remaining costs for staffing, furniture and supplies would be covered by the combination of a state planning grant for full-day kindergarten, federal stimulus funds for the expansion of early education services, incentive aid from the state for expanding to full-day kindergarten, and savings of more than \$100,000 in mid-day kindergarten transportation costs.

The school board was scheduled to hold a vote on whether or not to adopt a full-day kindergarten program during their regularly scheduled meeting on April 27. An update on their decision will be posted at www.schalmont.org once it becomes available.



gifts for children who use the services of the City Mission of Schenectady.

► MS students collected more than 100 canned food items during a food drive at Sabre City in November (pictured at left).

► MS students and GE Elfun Essay Contest winners Abigail Dunn and Nicholas Daversa completed their grant projects. She donated books to mothers-to-be at Ellis Hospital, and he donated games to the Ronald McDonald House of the Capital Region.

Elementary Schools

► More than \$200 was collected for the City Mission

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■ *Also on the ballot:*

School Board Candidates

On May 19, voters will help fill two seats on the Schalmont Board of Education. The candidates at right have submitted petitions to run for the two three-year seats available on the school board.

The school board is made up of seven non-paid citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of three years each. New York State law does not limit the number of terms a board member may serve.

Together, school board members:

- Establish district policies;
- Develop an annual budget for public approval;
- Approve or disapprove the superintendent's recommendations on personnel matters and contracts;
- Review courses of study and textbooks; and

Albert Falcone



Albert Falcone is running for his second term on the school board. He is the owner of Mars Group, LLC, and self-employed as a manufacturers representative.

Falcone is a member of the Northeast

Retail Lumber Association and the American Millwork Distributors Association. He is also involved in the Schalmont Summer Band and the Dollars for Scholars program. He previously spent several years involved in the Rotterdam youth soccer program.

Falcone earned a bachelor's degree in music education from the College of St. Rose.

He and his wife, Debbie, have two children, one of whom is a sophomore in college and the other a junior at Schalmont High School.

- Act as a communication link between residents and the superintendent. They also help define district philosophy, set goals to achieve academic objectives, plan for future needs, and authorize certain

Gregory Campoli



Gregory Campoli is running for his first term on the school board. He is the supervisor of reliability, compliance and assessment at the New York Independent System Operator. NYISO operates the state's bulk electricity grid and administers the state's

wholesale electricity markets.

Campoli served on the Community Budget Advisory Committee in Schalmont this year. He has also volunteered as a coach for the Rotterdam Pop Warner, CYO Basketball, Rotterdam Little League and Rotterdam Youth Soccer programs.

Campoli is a Schalmont High School alumnus. He earned a bachelor's degree in electric power engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and a master's degree in business administration from Union College.

He and his wife, Colleen, have a son who currently attends Schalmont Middle School.

contracts. Visit www.schalmont.org and click on "Board of Education" for more information about the school board and the dates of upcoming meetings and Meet the Candidates Night.

■ Schalmont Students in the Spotlight

– *continued from pg.9*

of Schenectady Thanksgiving Dinner at the Jefferson second-grade holiday concert in November.

- ▶ Jefferson students, teachers and parents sponsored 30 local families in need at the holidays.
- ▶ The Mariaville PTO collected hats, gloves and mittens for Capital Region families in need.
- ▶ Mariaville students brought in non-perishable food items to be included in holiday baskets for local families.

- ▶ Woestina students, teachers and parents donated money to a "Giving Tree" collection to help purchase teddy bears for local children with cancer.
- ▶ Woestina teachers and staff donated gifts to a school drive for local families in need.





2009-10 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 2008-09 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2009-10 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2009-10 School Year
Total budgeted amount	\$41,550,000	\$42,325,000	\$42,251,064
Increase/decrease for 2009-10 school year		\$775,000	\$751,064
Percentage increase (decrease) in each proposed budget		1.87%	1.69%
Change in the consumer price index		3.80%	
Resulting est. property tax levy for 2009-10 school year		\$27,763,074	\$27,689,138
Component Breakdown:			
1. Administrative Component	\$2,402,238	\$2,459,907	\$2,459,907
2. Program Component	\$31,077,455	\$31,464,875	\$31,405,939
3. Capital Component	\$8,070,307	\$8,400,218	\$8,385,218

What happens if the 2009-10 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 4 percent (some exclusions allowed). The 2009-10 school budget proposal is already less than the spending cap, but a contingent budget must be less than the proposed budget. If forced to adopt a contingency budget, Schalmont will need to cut \$73,936 from the proposed budget.

When the proposed budget is below the contingency budget cap, the contingent budget is calculated by removing all non-contingent appropriations from the proposed budget. Items which are statutorily considered non-contingent expenses are, for example, student supplies, certain equipment purchases, and community use of school facilities.

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 2009-10 school year
Basic STAR Tax Savings	\$594

*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 2009-10 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 19, 2009, 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? BUDGET Q&A, IMPACT OF FEDERAL STIMULUS, FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN, AND MORE!

2009-10 School Budget Vote

What exactly am I voting on?

- ▶ A \$42,325,000 budget for the 2009-10 school year. **The school tax levy will not increase**, and the budget-to-budget spending increase is 1.87 percent.
- ▶ Two seats on the Schalmont Board of Education (see page 10)

When and where is the vote?

This year's **vote will be held on Tuesday, May 19, 2009**, from 6 a.m. – 9 p.m. in the foyer of the Schalmont High School New Gym, 1 Sabre Dr. Voters can find the best parking in the lot closest to the athletic fields at the rear of the HS.

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 19 may vote by absentee ballot. To receive an absentee ballot, voters may obtain an application from the district office (DO) or download one at www.schalmont.org. The application must be returned to the DO by May 12 if the absentee ballot is to be mailed to the voter or by May 18 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 19. For more information, call 355-9200, x4002.



Stepping Back in Time: On May 19, Colonial America will again return to Schalmont Middle School. In seventh grade, MS students study the United States' 13 original colonies. Colonial Day helps students visualize and better understand this important period of American history.

Don't have time to vote and make dinner? Stop by the 4th Annual Hockey Association Cookout for a sausage and pepper sandwich, hot dog or chili dog. Each is served with a dessert and drink. The cookout will be held from 1 – 7:30 p.m. near the rear entrance to the HS.