

# Schoharie

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

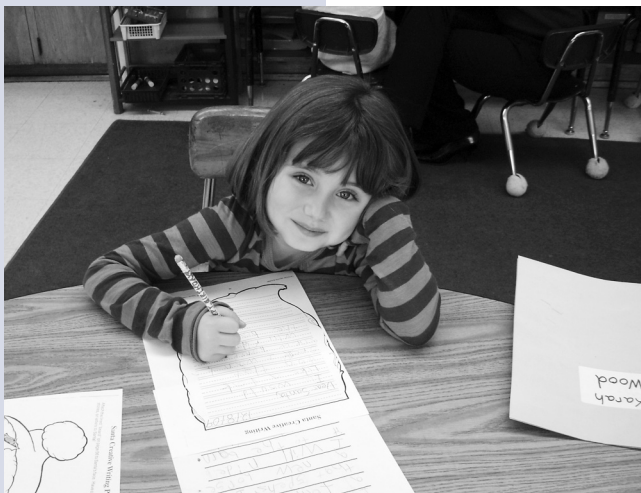


MAY 2010 • SPECIAL BUDGET EDITION • LEARNING IS THE MISSION



## BUDGET VOTE Tuesday, May 18, 2010

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Polls are open 9 a.m. to  
9 p.m. in the High School  
library lobby.



### District makes strides on state exams

The Schoharie Central School District was recently informed by the New York State Education Department that it has met its Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for all subgroups in the past year at both the elementary and secondary levels.

This moves the elementary school one step closer to being removed from the Schools In Need of Improvement (SINI) list, which it was placed on last year. According to state law, a school district must meet or exceed its AYP for two consecutive years before being removed from the list.

"We are very happy with the progress our students have been making," says Elementary School Principal Maryellen Gillis.

## Proposed 2010-11 school budget goes before voters May 18

On Tuesday, May 18, Schoharie Central School District residents will vote on a \$19.9 million budget for the 2010-11 school year. While the proposed budget is \$231,764 (-1.15 percent) *less* than the current year's school budget, it carries an estimated property tax levy of about 7 percent. This is due to an anticipated \$882,683 loss in state aid.

In addition to the school budget proposition on May 18, voters will also decide on a proposition to purchase five replacement buses, elect three candidates to serve on the Board of Education, and consider a proposition to increase the tax levy for the Schoharie Free Library. [See pages 2, 7 and 4, respectively, for details.]

### Maintaining academic programs while facing severe state aid cuts

When school administrators and the Board of Education began putting together next year's proposed school budget, they all had one thing in mind:

Save the district's academic program, despite the potentially large decrease in basic state aid.

Complicating matters, the state budget—which had not been adopted at the time this newsletter went to print—will result in an \$882,683 decrease in aid for the Schoharie Central School District.

"The steep anticipated decrease in state aid clearly presents a challenge for the district to be able to continue to fund its instructional programs while at the same time present the community with a budget that is cost-effective," says Superintendent Brian Sherman. "We did everything we could to develop a budget for the next school year that continues our commitment to provide opportunities for all of our students to be successful and which is affordable to taxpayers."

### Proposed cuts, cost-saving efforts

Along with the decrease in state aid, the district must also contend with rising operating costs that are typically outside the control of the school board. Such increased costs include employee salaries and benefits (health insurance alone is up 5 percent), debt service, heating oil, bus fuel, and the extra costs for students with disabilities.

"The district is proposing the most responsible budget possible under the circumstances of a huge decrease in aid

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## Bus purchase on ballot

A proposition on the May 18 ballot would authorize Schoharie Central School District to purchase two 66-passenger buses and three 20-to 28-passenger buses at a total cost not to exceed \$300,000.

If voters approve the bus purchase proposition, the district will be reimbursed by state aid for about 81 percent of the total purchase price over five years.

That would reduce local taxpayers' share of the purchase price to about \$57,000, or \$11,400 per year for five years. The district would also receive state aid reimbursement for a portion of its interest payments.

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## Maintaining academic programs, holding the line on spending

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and rising costs associated with operating an education institution," says President of the School Board Chris Spies.

Included in the 2010-11 proposed budget is the elimination of:

- nine teaching positions (two through retirement) which includes three elementary, four high school, and two special education teachers, and

- five support staff positions (three through retirement) which includes teaching assistants, teacher aides, and a bus driver.

The following items were reduced from next year's budget:

- non-aided equipment such as furniture;
- new sports uniforms and athletic, operations, custodial, and student supplies;
- three club advisors and the Driver Education program;
- two bus routes and one contract route;

- BOCES special education services and other BOCES academic services;

- summer employees, conferences, and overtime costs; and

- reductions in field trips costs and some library automation services.

These reductions offset a large portion of inflationary and contractual cost increases, but to further help offset such increases, the district will continue its efforts aimed at controlling costs, including:

- being a member of a health insurance group with BOCES saves the district more than \$105,000 annually;

- self-funding employee medical prescriptions saves the district more than \$95,000 a year;

- educating special education students in our own schools rather than transporting them to out-of-district programs saves the district more than \$62,000 annually;

- continuing to secure more than \$540,000 in grants to support certain academic programs [see page 6];

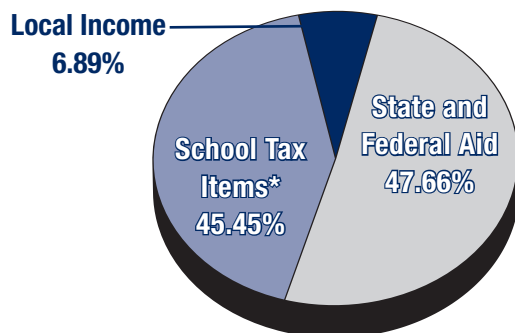
- participating in a self-funded trust for workers' compensation costs saves the district nearly \$50,000 a year; and

- participating in an energy management program that has helped to significantly reduce energy costs without negatively impacting heating, cooling, and lighting comfort saves the district nearly \$65,000 a year.

"The primary goal of the 2010-11 proposed budget is to properly fund the education of every Schoharie Central School District student," states Superintendent Sherman. "If approved, this budget will maintain a safe building environment and will continue the district's focus on improving student literacy, math, and science knowledge. In this budget, the academic success of our students is the real bottom line."

## Where does the money come from?

DESCRIPTION	2009-10 BUDGETED	2010-11 PROPOSED BUDGET	2010-11 CHANGE
<b>Local Income</b>			
Interest Income	\$431,004	\$473,000	\$41,996
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$900,000	\$900,000	\$0
<b>State and Federal Aid</b>			
State Aid	\$10,352,508	\$9,469,625	(882,883)
Medicaid Reimbursement	\$50,000	\$25,000	(25,000)
School Tax Items*	\$8,421,528	\$9,005,651	\$634,123
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$20,155,040</b>	<b>\$19,923,276</b>	<b>(231,764)</b>



\* The School Tax Items figure includes the school tax levy and payments in lieu of taxes.

# Why does the cost of education continue to rise?

The answer, in short, is mandates and contracts.

The cost of unfunded local and federal mandates continues to rise. For instance, districts are now required to administer 16 tests in grades 3-8, nearly tripling the testing requirements in just a few years. Ironically, funding for these mandates—and others—have been declining by nearly \$50,000 a year. That means the additional cost of required testing, for example, must come out of school districts’ budgets.

For the past several years, health insurance benefits have also increased by more than 10 percent each year. Schoharie’s 2010-11 budget for health insurance, alone, is \$3.5 million or 17.6 percent of the entire budget.

The district also has experienced a significant increase in retired employee pension costs that have tripled over what they were just three years ago. Pension costs are about 5 percent of the entire budget.

School district operations are subject to similar costs that impact businesses and homes, and with recent increases in heating oil and diesel fuel for school buses, the finances of SCS have also been impacted.

“We are aware of the burden rising costs place on our taxpayers,” said Superintendent Sherman. “We’ve taken steps to improve our cost-effective measures, such as authorizing an energy conservation program that will help us avoid about \$1 million in energy costs over the next 10 years.” *[A detailed list can be found on page 2.]*

## Bus proposition

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### Why does the district purchase buses on a regular basis?

This proposition is part of an ongoing bus replacement plan designed to keep the district’s fleet in safe, working order. The bus replacement schedule is based on each vehicle’s mileage, age, repair history and condition. Older buses can be traded in toward the purchase of new buses to help reduce the cost.

### What happens if the bus purchase proposition is defeated by voters?

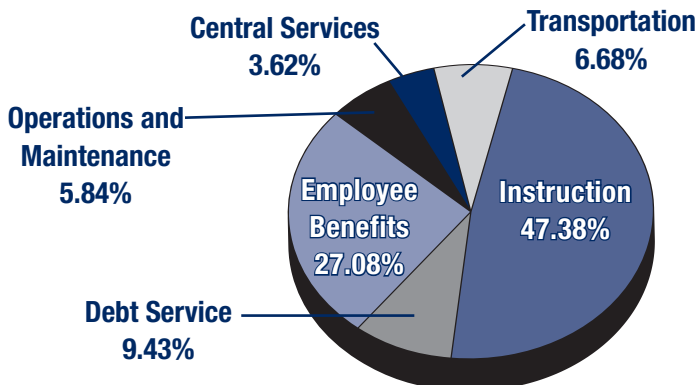
If the bus purchase proposition is defeated, the district will have to spend at least \$10,000 in 2010-11 to repair the existing buses so they remain in compliance with state Dept. of Transportation regulations. (These costs are not included in the proposed budget.)

Future repairs would also be likely, since the buses scheduled for replacement are rusting and have each logged more than 100,000 miles.

If the district were to wait an additional year to purchase new buses, manufacturers estimate that the purchase price would increase by as much as \$6,000 per 66-passenger bus due to emission system mandates and other requirements.

## Where does the money go?\*

DESCRIPTION	2009-10 BUDGETED	2010-11 PROPOSED BUDGET	2010-11 CHANGE
Central Services	\$718,763	\$721,644	\$2,881
Operations & Maintenance	\$1,241,229	\$1,163,903	(77,326)
Instruction	\$9,703,032	\$9,434,183	(268,849)
Transportation	\$1,307,208	\$1,330,605	\$23,397
Employee Benefits	\$5,329,048	\$5,394,822	\$65,774
Debt Service/Other	\$1,855,760	\$1,878,119	\$22,359
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$20,155,040</b>	<b>\$19,923,276</b>	<b>(231,764)</b>



\* Turn to pages 4-5 for a more detailed breakdown of budget expenses.

## Budget Q&A

### How will STAR affect my 2010-11 school taxes?

All New Yorkers 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 all owner-occupied, primary residences regardless of owners' ages and incomes; and Enhanced STAR for primary residences of owners age 65 and older with yearly household incomes below the state standard.

Homeowners can apply for STAR tax exemption through their town assessor's office. For information on the program, visit [www.orps.state.ny.us](http://www.orps.state.ny.us).

### What is the library proposition?

On the May 18 ballot, voters will be asked to consider a proposition to change the levy for the Schoharie Free Library by \$5,000. If approved, the new total would be \$60,000.

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## Where does the money go?

### Central Services: 3.62% of total budget

	Adopted Budget 2009-2010 (\$)	Proposed Budget 2010-2011 (\$)	Percent Change
Board of Education	5,655	3,980	
District Clerk	6,306	7,302	
District Meeting	1,100	1,300	
Central Administration	177,927	192,455	
Finance	221,812	209,171	
Auditing	30,350	32,850	
Treasurer	12,256	12,272	
Tax Collector	6,207	6,257	
Fiscal Agent Fees	1,000	1,500	
Legal	62,000	59,000	
Records Management	2,100	3,122	
Personnel	3,950	2,500	
Public Information	18,200	8,200	
Central Printing and Mailing	8,800	9,300	
Central Data Processing	0	16,610	
Insurance	58,500	55,000	
Association Dues	1,000	800	
Property Tax Refunds	4,000	2,500	
Administrative Charge - BOCES	97,600	97,525	
<b>Total Central Services</b>	<b>\$718,763</b>	<b>\$721,644</b>	<b>0.40%</b>

### Operations & Maintenance: 5.84% of total budget

Operations of Plant	1,094,349	1,037,578	
Maintenance of Plant	146,880	126,325	
<b>Total Operations &amp; Maintenance</b>	<b>\$1,241,229</b>	<b>\$1,163,903</b>	<b>-6.23%</b>

### Instruction: 47.38% of total budget

Supervision Regular Day	511,157	498,301	
In-service Training	11,800	11,800	
Teaching Regular School	5,292,375	5,128,148	
Special Education	2,358,090	2,279,740	
Occupational Education	354,750	387,550	
Summer School, Driver Ed, Tutors	32,000	23,000	
School Library	222,010	201,581	
Educational Television-AV	16,560	8,350	
Computer Assisted Instruction	204,558	178,635	
Attendance	540	570	
Guidance	255,567	254,915	
Health Services	81,020	87,820	
Psychological Services	38,360	43,000	
Social Work Services	131,835	137,800	
Co-Curricular Activities	44,850	46,585	
Interscholastic Athletics	147,560	146,188	
<b>Total Instruction</b>	<b>\$9,703,032</b>	<b>\$9,434,183</b>	<b>-2.77%</b>

### Transportation: 6.68% of total budget

	Adopted Budget 2009-2010 (\$)	Proposed Budget 2010-2011 (\$)	Percent Change
District Transportation	1,157,968	1,197,055	
Garage Building	131,240	133,550	
Contract Transportation	18,000	0	
BOCES Transportation	0	0	
<b>Total Transportation</b>	<b>\$1,307,208</b>	<b>\$1,330,605</b>	<b>1.79%</b>

### Employee Benefits: 27.08% of total budget

NYS Employees Retirement	191,000	159,267	
NYS Teachers Retirement	781,000	759,000	
Social Security	733,000	754,214	
Worker Compensation	80,000	71,000	
Life Insurance	6,500	6,500	
Unemployment Insurance	40,000	113,830	
Disability Insurance	2,675	3,400	
Hospital Medical Dental	3,494,873	3,527,611	
<b>Total Employee Benefits</b>	<b>\$5,329,048</b>	<b>\$5,394,822</b>	<b>1.23%</b>

### Debt Service/Interfund Transfers: 9.43% of total budget

Debt Service - School Construction	1,339,993	1,544,557	
Serial Bonds - Buses	347,225	257,465	
Bond Anticipation Note (Interest)	63,043	0	
Installment Purchase	12,000	12,925	
Other Debt	24,469	7,055	
Transfers	64,030	56,117	
<b>Total Debt Service/Interfund Transfers</b>	<b>\$1,855,760</b>	<b>\$1,878,119</b>	<b>1.20%</b>

<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$20,155,040</b>	<b>\$19,923,276</b>	<b>-1.15%</b>
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## What taxpayers need to know about revenues

- **State aid is not keeping pace with rising costs.** Five years ago the state contributed 51.5 percent of the district’s total revenues. In the proposed budget, state aid contributions (based on the Governor’s proposed state budget) will be reduced to 47.5 percent of total revenue resulting in a loss of \$882,000 compared to the current year.

- **Schoharie CSD has a stagnant tax base.** Many area school districts realize a 3 to 10 percent growth in their tax base every year, namely through the construction of new homes and businesses which typically generate enough revenue to offset budget increases. That’s not the case in Schoharie where the tax base has remained relatively the same for the past several years.

- **Limited commercial property.** The Schoharie Central Schools serve an almost entirely residential community with none of the malls, large businesses or industrial complexes through which other district draw taxes. In fact, limited commercial wealth is one of the reasons why Schoharie is defined by NYS as a district with less than average property wealth. As a result, SCS relies on the state for more aid than districts with greater property wealth, and is therefore more vulnerable when state aid is reduced.

## Budget Q&A

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### What happens if voters do not approve the proposed budget?

If the 2010-11 school budget proposal is not approved by voters, the school board may opt to present voters with a revised budget or go directly to a contingency budget. If a second budget proposal fails, the board must adopt a contingency budget.

Under a contingency budget, appropriation increases are capped at 4 percent. In a contingency budget, the district would still have to remove “non-contingent” items from its budget, including equipment and furniture purchases; the use of school facilities by non-school-related organizations, unless facilities use charges are paid; and financial support for school breakfast and lunch programs.

### What impact does debt service payment have on taxes?

There is no impact on the 2010-11 tax rate by paying the debt on previous capital projects. Any local share of the cost that is not covered by state aid for building projects is mostly accounted for by interest earned on investments from the bond proceeds.

## Voter information

### What am I voting on?

A \$19,923,276 budget for the 2010-11 school year, a proposition to purchase five replacement school buses, three candidates for the school board, and a public library proposition.

### When and where is the vote?

Tuesday, May 18, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the lobby of the Schoharie High School library.

### Who is eligible to vote?

Anyone who is a U.S. citizen, 18 years or older, and a resident of the Schoharie Central School District for at least 30 days prior to the vote. Registration is not required.



## Grants support academic program without extra cost

Schoharie Central School District has been awarded more than \$540,000 in grants from the federal government and the state of New York that are used to support the district's educational program, without a local share from property taxpayers. Following is a summary of the purpose of the grants that the district works diligently to secure each year:

- **Title I:** This program is the mainstay of funds provided under the federal No Child Left Behind legislation from 2002. The grant is used for teacher resources to provide even more students with an opportunity to meet challenging academic standards.
- **IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act):** This federal program focuses on providing funds for Schoharie students who have a disability and have been placed in special programs or a school outside of the district.
- **School in Need of Improvement:** This state grant provides teacher training and instructional materials for students to improve literacy and reading achievement at the elementary school.
- **Title II:** This federal grant is used to provide additional resources to Schoharie teachers and students at the early grade levels.

"We really appreciate the fine efforts of our staff who work so hard to obtain these grants that serve our children and save money for our taxpayers," said Superintendent Sherman. "Our employees are very dedicated to providing the best possible education for our students in the most cost-effective manner."

## Five things to know about Schoharie CSD

Schoharie Central School District is committed to being a high-quality, innovative, and caring school district. District staff continually strive to provide high-quality academic and extra-curricular programming in an atmosphere where students and families feel cared for and connected. Because of this level commitment, there are many signs of success in Schoharie—here's just a few:

- 1. The number of Regents diplomas granted to students in the past five years has risen.** In fact, 84 percent of Schoharie High School's Class of 2009 earned a regents diploma. This accomplishment is due, in large part, to the dedication of Schoharie's teachers who provided additional academic help to students who were struggling, and also to a new policy that requires students to work harder and retake required Regents.
- 2. Four-year graduation rate are up.** Despite the increased rigor of the high school curriculum, 81 percent of Schoharie's Class of 2009 earned their diplomas in four year.
- 3. College attendance is on the rise.** Nearly 82 percent of students in the Class of 2009 committed to going to college immediately upon graduation.
- 4. Focusing on early education.** At the elementary level, teachers and staff are committed to laying the foundation for long-term academic achievement and success by ensuring students get a strong start on their reading and writing skills.
- 5. Extra help is a must.** Every student at every grade level has the opportunity to receive extra academic help. With programs in place designed to offer assistance to at-risk students and dedicated teachers offering extra help after class, more Schoharie students are thriving with a rigorous state curriculum and succeeding in earning a regents diplomas.

## School board candidates on ballot

The four candidates listed below have filed petitions for the three open seats on the Schoharie Central School Board of Education. They are listed in the order that they will appear on the May 18 ballot.

Board members do not receive a salary, and open seats are for three-year terms. The three candidates with the most votes on May 18 will each serve a term from July 1, 2010, through June 30, 2013.



**Marion Jacqueway** is seeking her first term on the Schoharie Board of Education. She and her husband, Michael, reside in the Town of Schoharie with their two children—Thomas, a junior, and Katelyn, a sophomore. Jacqueway graduated from SUNY Cobleskill in 1978 and is currently a stay-at-home mother. An active member of the community, she has served on the Schoharie Little League Board and the Elementary and High School Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations. She volunteers on the Committee for Special Education, Schoharie Playground Association, Music Booster Club, and the 4-H program of Schoharie County.

No photo available

**Terry Burton**, lifelong resident of the Town of Schoharie, is seeking his first term on the Schoharie Board of Education. He has 16 years teaching experience, and is currently a fifth-grade teacher in the Middleburgh School District. He's also a consultant with the Greater Capital Region Teacher Center. Burton is 1986 SCS graduate, has a bachelor's degree in secondary education from SUNY New Paltz and a master's degree in elementary education from Russell Sage. He and his wife have two children in the elementary school. He used to coach for Systems Soccer and is now active with his children's little league teams.



**Edythe Schultz** is seeking her second term on the Schoharie Board of Education. She and her husband, Paul, have resided in Schoharie for the past 20 years. Their sons attend Schoharie schools, the oldest graduating in 2009. Schultz has been a middle school counselor in the Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District for the past 23 years. She holds a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in counseling and psychological services. Schultz is active in the Schoharie Reformed Church, and all school events in which her children are involved, especially athletics and music.



**Pamela Newell** is seeking her second term on the Schoharie Board of Education. She's a lifelong resident of Schoharie and a 1986 graduate. She and her husband, Chad, live in Schoharie with their three children, Jonathon, Courtney, and Jacob, and works at the Schoharie County Department of Motor Vehicles. In the past, Newell served as president of the Schoharie Elementary PTSO for three years, and currently serves on the Schoharie Recreational Committee representing the Town of Esperance. She supports higher education and is passionate about creating safe learning environments for students.

## Voter information

### How can I vote by absentee ballot?

Qualified district residents who are unable to go to the polls on May 18 can cast their votes by absentee ballot. For an application, call the district clerk at 295-6652 or stop in at the elementary school office. If the ballot is to be mailed, the application for the ballot must be received by May 12. If the ballot is to be delivered in person, the application must be received by May 17. All completed ballots must be received by the district clerk no later than 5 p.m. on May 18.

### Where do I park?

Voter parking is available and will be specifically designated in the main parking lot. The parking area and school entrances are handicap accessible. If anyone needs additional assistance, please call 295-6652 to make arrangements with school personnel.

### What if I have questions?

For further information, please call the superintendent's office at 295-6679 or the business office at 295-6673.



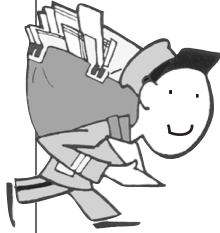
# Schoharie

Central School District

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P.O. Box 430 • 136 Academy Drive  
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## RURAL ROUTE/STAR ROUTE BOX HOLDER

Produced in cooperation with the Capital  
Region BOCES Communications Service.

School districts are required by state law to mail this "School District Budget Notice" to all households within the district.

For a more detailed breakdown of expenditures and revenues, please see pages 2-5.

If you would like additional information about the budget, please call the superintendent's office at 295-6679 or the business office at 295-6673.

**REMINDER—**

**Tuesday, May 18:**  
Annual Budget Vote and School Board Election, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m., lobby of the Schoharie High School library.

### Schoharie Central School District Budget Notice

#### Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget adopted for the 2009-10 school year	Budget proposed for the 2010-11 school year	Contingency budget* for the 2010-11 school year
Total budget amount	\$20,155,040	\$19,923,276	\$19,893,276
Increase/decrease for the 2010-11 school year		(231,764)	(261,764)
Percentage increase (decrease) in each proposed budget		-1.15%	-1.30%
Change in the consumer price index		-0.40%	
Resulting est. property tax levy for the 2010-11 school year		\$8,591,274	\$8,561,272
1. Administrative component	\$1,570,797	\$1,574,494	\$1,564,494
2. Program component	\$15,008,374	\$14,814,187	\$14,794,187
3. Capital component	\$3,575,869	\$3,532,594	\$3,532,594

\* A contingency budget is limited by law to an increase cap of 120 percent of the consumer price index or 4 percent, whichever is less, excluding certain budget categories. While the proposed budget is under the cap, a contingency budget would require reductions of about \$30,000 from the proposed budget by removing non-contingent expenses, including equipment and furniture purchases; the use of school facilities by non-school related organizations, unless facilities use charges are paid; and financial support for school breakfast and lunch programs.

#### Basic STAR Exemption Impact

Estimated Basic STAR\* exemption savings based on an owner-occupied home within the school district with a full-value assessment of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000).

Schoharie Central School District	Budget adopted for the 2009-10 school year	Budget proposed for the 2010-11 school year
Basic STAR tax savings	\$579.14	\$592.61

\* The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2010-11 by the qualified voters of the Schoharie Central School District, New York, will be held in the lobby by the high school library, in said district on Tuesday, May 18, 2010, between the hours of 9:00 AM and 9:00 PM, at which time the polls will be open to vote by ballot or machine.