

We teach someone you love.

Dear friends and neighbors,

Perhaps more so than at any other time, school budgets have been in the news. As is the case with most schools in New York State, we faced a dual challenge this year while building next year's budget. First, costs continue to rise, especially in the areas of employee contracts, employee benefits, service contracts, materials, supplies and equipment. Second, Minisink Valley received a \$2.7 million dollar reduction in state aid. The district was faced with difficult choices because of this significant loss.

When we first learned of the reduction in state aid in January, the board asked the administration to build a budget with a tax levy increase as close as possible to last year's levy, which at the time of the May 2009 vote was 1.5%. We took a three-pronged approach to this problem. First, we asked all of our buildings and department administrators to reduce spending as much as possible. Working with the board's finance committee, they were able to trim nearly \$1.1 million dollars from requests made for next year. Second, the district has decided to apply \$3 million dollars from our fund balance to reduce the budget amount put before the voters. Third, we will be reducing staffing. Our continued decreasing enrollment means that there will be no significant increase in class size. In addition, our teachers in grades 7-12 will now teach six of the nine periods in a day instead of the five periods they now teach. Again, there will be no significant increase in class size at the secondary level.

In light of the fiscal crisis gripping our state and our concern for the community's ability to financially support our schools, we are recommending a decrease in the budget. Next year's \$83,058,395 budget represents a 1.34% decrease below this year's budget and will carry a 2.4% tax levy increase. With this spending plan, we will still be able to offer a quality education to our students, with no reduction in their academic programs and only a slight reduction in their extracurricular programs.

The budget development process has been difficult this year. We shared information with the community as the process unfolded. We invite you to visit the *Budget* page of our web site, [www.minisink.com](http://www.minisink.com), to view the presentations from several of our meetings, along with questions asked and answered. We hope the information shared there will help you make an informed decision on May 18, 2010. Thank you for your continued support of Minisink Valley Central School District and its students.

Sincerely,

## **EXCEL Project Work Continues This Summer**

Renovations to the elementary/intermediate school are ahead of schedule. Electrical, mechanical, heating and air handling upgrades have been completed in our classrooms, and work is now continuing in the central administration wing of the building. The superintendent's office, the business office, the personnel office and the pupil personnel office are now located in the corridor directly above. Visitors to these offices may park in the parking lot in front of the building and enter through the door at the end of the intermediate classroom wing. Parents wishing to visit the elementary and intermediate school from the back parking lot should now enter door #16, the one at the "glass staircase." We thank the community for its patience during this time of renovation.

This summer, much of the work will be concentrated in the high school. A new boiler, a new generator, new windows, new exterior doors, new bleachers and a new partition in the gym are among the improvements. These renovations are part of the capital project approved by the voters in February 2008. At that time the community approved \$26,200,000 worth of renovations and upgrades which is being funded by the state at the rate of 97.7%. Our building aid is being increased next year to match the money we have borrowed to fund the ongoing work. This money cannot be used for any other purpose.

Plans for the new bus garage are currently being reviewed by the State Education Department. We anticipate that once approval is received, work will begin some time this summer.

***Annual Budget  
Vote & Election  
Tuesday, May 18, 2010  
Noon - 9 PM***

***Memorial Day Weekend  
School Closed  
Friday, May 28 and Monday, May 31***

# Overall Budget Proposal

# Minisink Valley Central School District Budget Notice

Please note: This budget is presented in conformance with, and in the format prescribed by regulation for all public schools in New York State.

	Budget Adopted for the 2009-10 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2010-11 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2010-11 School Year
<b>Total Budgeted Amount</b>	\$ 84,183,807	\$ 83,058,395	\$ 82,476,395
Decrease for the 2010-11 school year		- \$ 1,125,412	- \$ 1,707,412
Percentage decrease in each proposed budget		-1.34%	-2.03%
Change in the consumer price index		-0.4%	
Resulting est. property tax levy for the 2010-11 school year		\$ 37,013,367	\$ 36,431,367
Administrative component	\$ 6,044,089	\$ 5,842,579	\$ 5,842,579
Program component	\$ 63,662,829	\$ 61,611,304	\$ 61,611,304
Capital component	\$ 14,476,889	\$ 15,604,512	\$ 15,022,512

- A. A contingency budget restricts the purchase of buses and certain equipment items. Under a contingency budget, reductions in equipment budget lines would be made, offset in part by increased contractual and supply expenses incurred in the absence of essential equipment.
- B. Under a contingency budget, the board of education must assess a fee for the use of the fields, gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, classrooms, and pool by all community groups.

## Basic STAR Exemption Impact

### Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings:

Please note: The STAR exemption amount varies slightly from township to township. The projected Basic STAR Tax Savings represents the average savings for a taxpayer in the Minisink Valley CSD.

	Budget Proposed for the 2010-11 School Year	PROJECTED Tax levy increase for the 2010-11 School Year 2.4%
Basic STAR Tax Savings	\$468	

## Annual Budget Vote and Election Tuesday, May 18, 2010 Noon – 9:00 PM

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2010-2011 by the qualified voters of the Minisink Valley Central School District, Orange County, New York, will be held at the intermediate and Otisville schools in said district on Tuesday, May 18, 2010 between the hours of 12:00 noon and 9:00 pm, prevailing time, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

	<b>2009 - 2010</b>	<b>2010 2011</b>
<b>Instruction</b> Principals, teachers, support staff, special education, academic intervention services, libraries, AV, computers, health services, pupil personnel services, extracurricular clubs and activities, and interscholastic sports.	\$ 47,317,569	\$ 44,816,324
<b>Transportation</b> Transportation to our five schools, 20 or more nonpublic and special education schools, athletic and field trip events, BOCES special and occupational education programs and the purchase of three 72-passenger buses, and three wheelchair buses.	\$ 5,398,089	\$ 5,010,091
<b>General Support</b> Board of education, central administration, business functions, facility operation and maintenance, legal services, insurance, data processing, and BOCES administrative costs. The largest increase involves the new mandated MTA payroll tax.	\$ 7,755,091	\$ 8,070,833
<b>Community Services</b> Includes \$500 for school/community collaborative projects.	\$ 500	\$ 500
<b>Employee Benefits</b> Costs for employees' retirement systems, social security, workers' compensation and health insurance.	\$ 16,091,030	\$ 16,054,572
<b>Debt Service, Misc.</b> Debt service on outstanding bonds which finance school building construction. The largest increase reflects the addition of the new EXCEL bonds. The state reimburses the district at the rate of 97%.	\$ 7,621,528	\$ 9,106,075
<b>TOTAL Budget Decrease Below Prior Year: - 1.34%</b>	<b>\$ 84,183,807</b>	<b>\$ 83,058,395</b>
<b>PROJECTED Tax levy increase: 2.4%</b>		

## ANNUAL BUDGET VOTE INFORMATION

### Who may vote?

To vote, you must be a district resident for 30 days, a U.S. Citizen - 18 years of age or older, and registered for either a general election or a school board election.

### How do I register?

At the district clerk's office, Minisink Valley Central School District, Route 6, Slate Hill, New York, until May 13, 2010, from 8:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. on days when school is in session. Proof of residency required. Questions? 355-5115

### When is the vote?

Tuesday, May 18, Noon to 9:00 PM.

### Where do I vote?

Residents of District #1 (Towns of Greenville, Minisink and Wawayanda) vote in the intermediate school gym A, Route 6 campus.

Residents of District #2 (Towns of Mount Hope, Mamakating and Wallkill) vote in the Otisville elementary school.

### Absentee ballots?

Applications may be obtained at the office of the school district clerk. Absentee ballots must be received by the district clerk no later than 5:00 P.M., prevailing time, on May 18, 2010.

## Board of Education Elections

There are three openings on the board of education. Two three-year terms commencing July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2013, and one (1) unexpired term commencing on or about May 18, 2010 through June 30, 2011 due to a resignation. The election will be held on May 18, 2010 from 12:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

### Community Members Running for School Board (alphabetical order)

Bill Cooper,  
Kathlee DeRose  
Joseph Flaherty  
Sheri Gurney  
Ruth Luis  
John Odland  
Tracy Sutera

Minisink Valley CSD  
P.O. Box 217, Rte. 6, Slate Hill, NY 10973

Board of Education  
Ethel Crow, President, Robert Prokopchak, Vice-president  
Stelly Brunelle, Alfred Gibbs, John M. Lenane, Gina Mozilo, Cathy Prezioso, Paul Rickard, Joan Romanyschyn

Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Martha Murray

Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Newburgh, NY  
Permit No. 731

Newsletter  
Debbie Roda

## ***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROPOSED 2010-2011 BUDGET***

### *1. Why did the district have to lay off employees?*

For the past two years, the district has been planning for the fact that there may not be an increase in state aid for the 2010-2011 school year. However, because of the growing deficit in New York State (currently over \$9 billion dollars) the district was informed that it would receive a \$2,755,626 cut in state aid. With costs going up every year, there is a growing gap between the budget and the revenues needed to support the budget. The responsible choice is to cut spending. The largest part of the budget is in employee salaries and benefits. Therefore, the district has no choice but to cut back spending in this area. If we did not have any layoffs, the tax levy increase would be 11% instead of the 2.4% increase contained in this budget proposal.

### *2. Couldn't the district find another way to save money rather than lay off personnel?*

The finance committee of the board of education reviewed each of the building and department budgets with the administrators and was able to trim \$1,097,285 from their budgets. Any further trimming would compromise the ability of these buildings or departments to operate.

### *3. Won't teacher layoffs lead to larger class sizes?*

A continuing decreasing enrollment will mean there will not be a significant change in class size for next year.

### *4. Wasn't the district criticized by the comptroller's office for having too much fund balance? Where is that money? What is it used for?*

The district was criticized in 2008 for having too much money left over at the end of the year. Any leftover money is used to moderate the tax levy. We anticipate having a \$6,900,000 fund balance to apply to the August 2010 tax levy. We developed a three-year plan, accepted by the comptroller's office, to gradually return that money to the taxpayers. In year one, the district built the 2009-2010 budget \$1,500,000 closer to actual expenditures. In year two of the plan, the district is building the 2010-2011 budget \$3,000,000 closer to actual expenditures. The comptroller's office is monitoring this corrective action plan.

### *5. Why doesn't the district return the fund balance in question to the taxpayers all at once?*

Since fund balance has been used as a source of revenue to offset the tax levy for many years, it must be "spent down" gradually. If the entire fund balance were returned to the tax payers this year, the tax levy in August 2011 would be 29.7% to make up for the sudden "hole" in revenue the fund balance used to represent.

### *6. If money is so tight, why is there so much work being done on campus?*

The renovations and upgrades currently under way on the Route 6 campus are part of the capital project approved by the voters in February 2008. New York State is funding this EXCEL Project at the rate of 97.7%. The district is getting \$26,200,000 worth of upgrades for \$600,000. The district is scheduled to receive an increase in state aid to offset the borrowing done for this capital project. This money cannot be used for anything else.

***Annual Budget Vote & Election ~ Tuesday, May 18, 2010, Noon - 9 PM***