

It's Elementary



VALLEY STREAM DISTRICT THIRTEEN NEWSLETTER

Supporting Excellence, CONTAINING COSTS

YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

The reputation of the school district has a direct impact on the value of homes in the community. Thanks to a strong school-community partnership, District Thirteen's student achievement is at an all time high. Academic initiatives and a commitment to providing students with a well-rounded educational program have fostered a learning environment that works to meet the needs of every child. Students are kept in the forefront of the technology sector with an integrated instructional program. Staff and curriculum development sessions are aligned with the New York State Learning Standards and Assessments and support student achievement. Ongoing community service projects provide students with the ability to understand the importance of caring for others through a hands-on approach. The district's accomplishments are a source of community pride, the foundation for student success, and visible evidence of your tax dollars at work.

Residents are invited to review the proposed 2008-2009 budget outlined in this newsletter and become involved in the future of the district by voting on Tuesday, May 20.



DRIVING FORCES BEHIND THE PROPOSED BUDGET

- Preserves High-Quality Instructional Program •
- Continues On-going Maintenance of Facilities •
- Supports Technology-Integrated Instruction •



REMEMBER TO VOTE
MAY 20, 2008 • 6:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M.

Valley Stream Union Free School District Thirteen
585 North Corona Avenue, Valley Stream, New York 11580-2099
(516) 568-6100
www.valleystream13.com

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A Message from THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESIDENT

Dear Residents,

On May 20, District #13 residents will cast their ballots on the proposed 2008-2009 school budget. In an effort to ensure all community members are provided with the information needed to cast an informed vote on the future of the district's school learning environment and educational program, enclosed in the pages of this publication is a comprehensive overview of the district's proposed financial plan for the upcoming school year.

The Board of Education and administration have worked diligently over the past few months to ensure that this budget not only meets the educational needs of all students but also reflects an understanding of the financial impact a school budget has on the district's community residents. With this in mind, the proposed budget preserves the programs, services, and support functions that District #13 has become known for and contains the tax impact on the residents. The proposed budget represents a 5.2% increase over the current year's spending plan and a 2.24% tax increase for the average homeowner, the **lowest increase in recent history.**

As community representatives as well as taxpayers, my fellow Board of Education members and I share a concern for the escalating cost of living on Long Island and frustration for the decreasing amount of state aid our schools receive. Working in collaboration with our Superintendent and administrators, we have taken proactive measures to bring our concerns to our local legislators. We are grateful to our senator and assemblymen for ensuring a fair share of state aid for our district.

Before considering the proposed budget, it is important to take a moment to reflect on the district's past success. Our strong on-going school community partnership is largely responsible for the level of achievement we are experiencing today. Our students boast top scores on the New York State Math and English Language Arts assessments, are civic and community-minded through their participation in year-round community service projects, and are working to become the future leaders of society by learning necessary skills from our excellent faculty and staff members. In addition to these 'Points of Pride,' District #13 has many other accomplishments to be proud of – many of which can be found on page 3 of this publication.

We believe that citizens armed with facts make better decisions in the voting booth, are able to clarify key points for their neighbors, and are equipped with the information to ask important questions and monitor results. Should you have any questions or concerns on the proposed budget, please do not hesitate to contact our Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Elizabeth Lison, at 568-6100, or the Assistant Superintendent for Business, Meredith Brosnan, at 568-6110.

Sincerely,
William P. Stris
Board of Education President



WHAT IS A BUDGET?

A school district's annual budget is the best estimate made by the Board of Education and administration of the funds needed to support a quality educational program for the upcoming school year and beyond.

All District #13 residents are invited to attend the district's Budget Hearing, which will be held on Wednesday, May 7, 2008 in the James A. Dever School cafeteria at 7:30 p.m. At 8:15 p.m., the Valley Stream Central High School District's proposed budget will be presented. Members of the Board of Education, as well as district leaders, will also be available to answer questions regarding the 2008-2009 proposed budget.

POINTS OF PRIDE

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DISTRICT'S REPUTATION

An approved budget will continue to allow students to benefit from the programs and services the District is most proud of.

- Research-based and evidence-supported instructional programs
- Differentiated-learning strategies
- Literacy Program identified as a model for schools in New York State by the International Reading Association for second consecutive year
- Effective English as a Second Language (ESL) program
- Favorable student/teacher ratio
- Full spectrum of special services, special education, and gifted and talented programs responsive to diverse needs
- High percentage of students meet and exceed proficiency levels on New York State Assessments
- Highly effective academic support programs, including READ 180, Waterford Reading, Handwriting Without Tears, ReadAbout, FasttMath, and Foundations
- School/University Partnerships with:
 - Teachers College Columbia University
 - City College of New York
 - Stony Brook University
- Technology-integrated curriculum utilizing advanced technology tools
- Districtwide character and health education programs
- Summer reading clubs
- Regional recognition for outstanding musicians and artists
- Sustained professional staff development by nationally renowned experts in the fields of English Language Arts, math, science, and social studies
- Successfully returned many special education students from out-of-district placements to in-district placements, including our outstanding program for youngsters with autism
- Parent/Community Outreach Programs
 - State-of-the-Art Little League Field
 - Parents as Reading Partners (PARP)
 - Intergenerational Reading Partners
 - ESL Saturday Excursions
- Year-round student community service
- New dynamic and extensive district website
- 'Fantastic Four' and 'Final Four' Basketball Tournaments



How Do We Finance These Accomplishments?

- The Board of Education develops a **budget** that meets the needs of the district's instructional goals and allocates funds in the most efficient manner.
- The district works closely with legislators to secure **state aid** and other **revenue** from the state.
- The district makes every effort to maximize its **grant revenues.**
- The community provides the remaining monies needed to fund the budget through the **property tax.**
- In concert with the High School District and District 24, the district employs a residency officer to ensure that only students who live in Valley Stream #13 attend its schools.



A DETAILED LOOK AT PROPOSED BUDGET EXPENDITURES

PROPOSITION 1: 2008-2009 BUDGET - \$40,427,807 • 5.26% INCREASE

INSTRUCTION	2007-2008	Proposed 2008-2009	DISTRICT SUPPORT	2007-2008	Proposed 2008-2009	DEBT SERVICE/TRANSFERS	2007-2008	Proposed 2008-2009
62.0% of Budget			4.5% of Budget			1.8% of Budget		
Teaching - Regular School	\$13,893,700	\$14,278,956	Board of Education	\$19,200	\$19,750	Construction	\$510,100	\$547,640
Special Education	5,159,721	5,492,085	District Clerk	9,000	9,000	Interfund Transfer	55,000	55,000
Curriculum Development	329,900	354,885	District Meeting	11,000	25,700	TAN & Energy Performance Contract	164,288	132,754
Supervision	1,099,900	1,139,713	Central Administration	316,000	350,428	Total Debt Service/Transfers	\$729,388	\$735,394
Research & Development	6,250	6,250	Business Administration	440,600	460,300	% Change		0.8%
Reading	1,235,775	1,242,832	Auditing	87,500	92,000	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS		Proposed 2008-2009
Preschool	5,750	5,750	Treasurer	11,700	12,200	20.4% of Budget		
Gifted & Talented	228,513	213,064	Legal Services	111,000	118,500	Health Insurance	\$3,256,530	\$3,653,881
Library	549,974	588,381	Personnel	32,300	24,500	Teachers' Retirement	1,771,980	1,961,346
Computer-Assisted Instruction	475,933	621,290	Records Management	2,000	2,000	Employees' Retirement	327,000	321,000
Health Services	410,625	427,321	Public Information	78,000	71,000	Social Security (FICA)	1,929,786	2,144,124
Psychological Services	498,952	507,510	Central Mailing	12,700	12,950	Workers' Compensation	147,000	161,400
Social Worker	123,878	168,235	Central Data Processing	37,000	55,800	Unemployment	21,500	21,500
Total Instruction	\$24,018,871	\$25,046,272	Insurance	295,700	296,900	Life Insurance	1,500	1,500
% Change		4.3%	School Dues	11,095	11,300	Disability Insurance	1,600	1,600
			BOCES Administration	247,000	258,493	Total Employee Benefits	\$7,456,896	\$8,266,351
			Total District Support	\$1,721,795	\$1,820,821	% Change		10.9%
			% Change		5.8%	SUMMER RECREATION		Proposed 2008-2009
TRANSPORTATION		Proposed 2008-2009	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE		Proposed 2008-2009	0.3% of Budget		
5.5% of Budget			5.5% of Budget			Summer Recreation	\$103,000	\$103,000
Transportation	\$86,900	\$88,522	Operations	\$1,571,592	\$1,660,887	Total Summer Recreation	\$103,000	\$103,000
Contracted Transportation	2,186,040	2,130,726	Maintenance	532,123	575,834	% Change		0.0%
Total Transportation	\$2,272,940	\$2,219,248	Total Operations and Maintenance	\$2,103,715	\$2,236,721			
% Change		-2.4%	% Change		6.3%			

SUMMARY OF 2008-2009 REVENUE

	2007-2008	Proposed 2008-2009
State Aid	\$8,857,000	\$9,750,000
Fund Balance Appropriations	725,000	1,175,000
Interest Earnings/Building Use	301,000	301,000
Summer Recreation	103,000	103,000
Tuition Other Districts	200,000	200,000
Refund of Prior Year Expenditures	15,000	15,000
Misc. Revenue	9,000	12,500
Property Tax Levy	28,196,605	28,871,307
Revenue for Budget	\$38,406,605	\$40,427,807

TAX IMPACT ON THE "AVERAGE" HOMEOWNER

	2007-2008	Proposed 2008-2009	% Changed
Elementary District	\$3,043.71	\$3,111.78	2.24%
High School District	\$3,195.54	\$3,306.43	3.47%
Combined Tax	\$6,239.25	\$6,418.21	2.87%

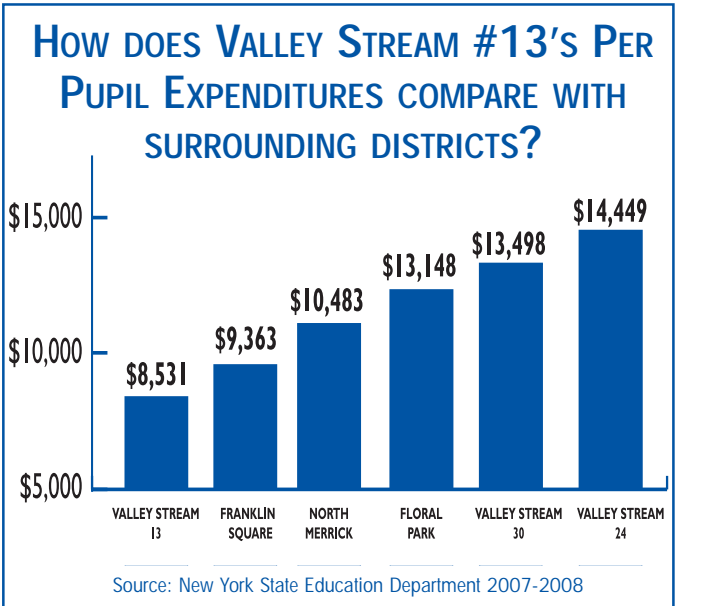
According to the Nassau County Department of Assessment the average home in Valley Stream District #13 has a market value of \$453,200.

For the "average homeowner"

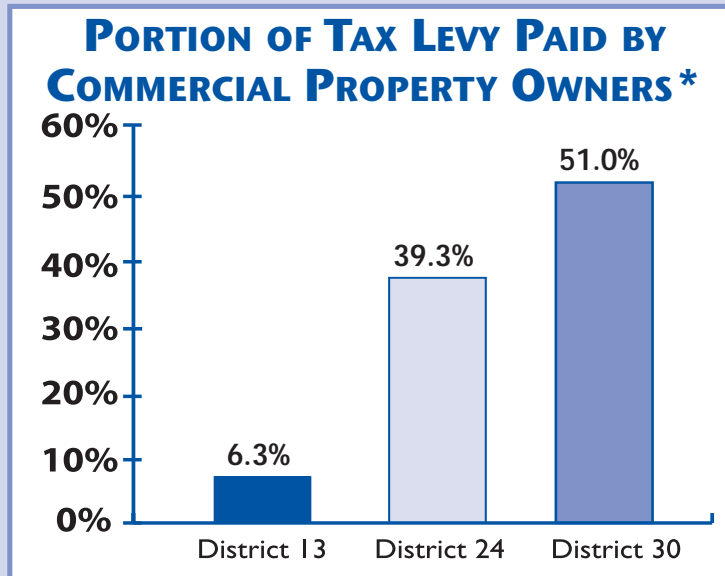
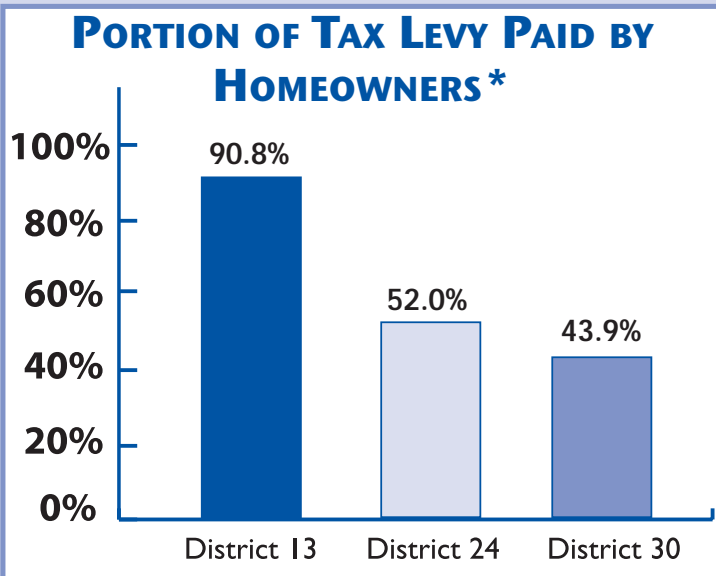
The Elementary School Tax will increase \$68.07 per year or 18.6 cents per day!

Did You Know...

- More than 80% of the budget is allocated for salaries, benefits, and mandated services.
- Salaries are determined through contract negotiations, and benefit rates are mandated by the state or federal government.
- The contribution that teachers and other employees of the district make toward their health insurance is one of the highest in the County.
- In the absence of large-scale commercial property, over 90% of the taxes are paid by residential homeowners in District Thirteen.



THERE IS LITTLE COMMERCIAL PROPERTY IN VS #13



* Percentages based on current adjusted base proportion.

WHAT IS REVENUE?

The district receives revenue from four sources:

- State Aid
- Other miscellaneous sources, including interest earnings
- Carry-over from prior years' operations
- The remaining monies needed to support the budget are called the Tax Levy

WHAT IS THE ESTIMATED TOTAL REVENUE FOR 2008-09?

Based on current projections, Valley Stream #13's estimated 2008-2009 revenues are broken down in the following manner:

State Aid	\$9,750,000
Other revenues	\$631,500
Carry-over from previous years.	\$1,175,000

TOTAL \$11,556,500

The remaining funds, \$28,871,307, needed to support the budget, will be obtained through the set tax levy.

DETERMINING THE TAX RATE

Three factors determine how much a particular piece of property is taxed:

- Tax Levy
- Anticipated Adjusted Base Proportion for that Class or type of property (Class 1 are homeowners; Class 2 are apartment owners; Class 3 are utility companies; and Class 4 are business or commercial properties)
- Assessment for the property

Of the three factors, the district has no control over two - the adjusted base proportion of a particular class of property and the assessment of a particular property.

To determine what your taxes will be, visit:

www.nassaucountyny.gov/mynassauproperty

- Click on Property Search
- Click "I Accept..." at bottom of screen
- Enter your address
- Scroll to Assessed Value (School Year 08-09)
- Multiply the figure under 2008-2009 by \$577.30
- Divide by 100
- Subtract \$1,097

What is a tax levy?

The tax levy is the amount of money determined by the Board of Education that needs to be raised in property taxes in order to balance the school budget. The district takes the total school budget and subtracts estimated revenues such as state aid, tuitions, and fees. The remaining amount is what needs to be raised in property taxes.

Questions & Answers



Q. Why are there two propositions on the ballot for Valley Stream #13?

A. In addition to the district's proposed 2008-2009 school budget, there will also be a proposition brought forth by a group of district residents proposing to change the limit for transportation to 1/2 mile for all students K through sixth grade. This would add \$267,000 to the 2008-2009 budget, resulting in additional cost for the average homeowner of \$28.78 annually.

Q. Does this budget include services for residents who do not have children in public schools?

A. Yes, as required by law, Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen offers transportation, textbooks, and special services such as speech and school health for all public and private school students. The district also makes its facilities available to community groups and organizations.

Q. What happens if the budget fails on May 20th?

A. If the budget is defeated on May 20th, state law allows the district to present either the same budget or a revised budget, which would include program cuts, for one more vote. If a second proposed budget is defeated, the district must, by law, adopt a Contingency Budget.

Q. What is a Contingency (Austerity) Budget?

A. A contingency budget is the maximum amount authorized by law that a district can impose on the community if the school budget is voted down. New York State imposes a cap on a Contingency Budget, which would result in a 3.41% expenditure increase, plus an allowance for such excludable expenses as enrollment increases. In order to meet the contingency cap, the district would need to cut approximately \$700,000 from the proposed budget.

Q. Would I save money on a Contingency Budget?

A. On a Contingency Budget your taxes will still increase and there would be a reduction or elimination of many programs and services. Under a Contingency Budget the average taxpayer's tax increase would be 7.7¢ less per day than under the proposed budget.

Q. How would a Contingency Budget affect the district?

A. A Contingency Budget would have a very serious impact on the quality of education the district has experienced over the past several years. The Board of Education has not made any final decision on what course of action it will take should the proposed budget be defeated. However, some areas the Board would evaluate include:

- reduction of instructional and non-instructional staff members
- increased class sizes K-6
- reduction of academic programs
- reduction of non-mandated student support services
- elimination of capital projects
- reduction of field trips
- reduction of clubs
- elimination of summer recreation program
- elimination of public use of school facilities

Q. Where can I get more information?

A. Complete copies of the proposed 2008-2009 Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen budget are available in the district office at 585 North Corona Avenue. Reference copies are available for inspection at all district schools. Budget information is also available on our district website at www.valleystream13.com.



PROPOSITION 2

Transportation Eligibility Increase

In addition to voting on the school district's proposed 2008-2009 budget, District #13 residents will also be asked to vote on a second proposition - a request to extend the district's transportation eligibility policy. The proposition, which was brought forth by a group of parents, proposes to change the limit for transportation to 1/2 mile for all students in grades K-6. Currently the district provides transportation at 1/2 mile for K-3 and 1 mile for 4-6 grade students.

Should this be approved, the change would be effective at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year and would increase the proposed budget (proposition 1) by \$267,000.



NEED AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?

District residents who will be out of town for the annual budget vote and election on Tuesday, May 20 may obtain absentee ballots. Applications for ballots may be obtained at the office of the District Clerk. All ballots must be received by the District Clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 20, 2008.

VOTER REQUIREMENTS

In order to qualify to vote in the upcoming Budget Vote and Trustee Election:

- You must be a U.S. Citizen.
- You must be 18 years of age or older.
- You must be a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote.
- You must have registered to vote in the general elections or have voted in a school election within the last four years (between 2004-2007).

STAR Property Tax Exemptions

Residents of the Valley Stream Union Free School District #13 may apply for the New York State STAR Property Tax Exemption Program. If you are a homeowner with your Valley Stream property as your primary residence, you may apply to the Nassau County Board of Assessors, 240 Old Country Road, Mineola, NY 11501, telephone number: (516) 571-2377. Applications for tax exemptions must be made annually (except for the Basic STAR program, which does not require annual renewal) between September 1 and December 31.

EVERY VOTE COUNTS! REMEMBER TO REGISTER AND VOTE

Public Budget Hearing - Wednesday, May 7, 2008 at 7:30 P.M.

James A. Dever School Auditorium

Last Day to Register to Vote - Tuesday, May 13, 2008 from 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. & 5:00-9:00 p.m.

At Each School Building

BUDGET VOTE TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2008

6:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M.

Voting will be in the District #13 school election district in which you live.
(Usually in the public school your child or neighbor's child attends.)



BOARD OF EDUCATION

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