

## VOTER INFORMATION

### OPEN VOTER REGISTRATION

Residents not yet registered to vote for the school budget and Board of Education elections may do so between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. weekdays when school is in session, at the District Office, 50 Railroad Avenue, up to and including Thursday, May 15.

To verify your registration status, please call the District Clerk at 893-7925.

### VOTING QUALIFICATIONS

To vote on the proposed 2008-2009 school budget and Board of Education election, you must be:

- A U.S. citizen
- 18 years of age or older
- A district resident for at least 30 days prior to the vote
- Registered to vote with either the school district or Suffolk County Board of Elections and have voted within the past four years.

### ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Applications for absentee ballots can be obtained at the District Clerk's Office. If you need the application mailed, please call the District Clerk's Office at 893-7925. Absentee ballots MUST be returned by 5 p.m. on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

## BOARD ELECTIONS

There are three vacancies to be filled on the Board of Education. Voting is at large, which means the three candidates with the highest number of votes will be elected. The terms for these positions are three years, starting July 1, 2008 and ending June 30, 2011. The candidates running to fill these positions are Judy Anderson, Roger A.Katz, and Henry Brunjes.



**Your Vote Counts!  
Remember to Register and Vote**

**PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING  
Monday, May 12, 2008 • 7:30 p.m.  
Babylon Junior-Senior High School**

**BUDGET VOTE TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2008  
6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
Babylon Memorial Grade School**

[www.babylonschools.org](http://www.babylonschools.org)

THE BABYLON SCHOOL DISTRICT  
50 RAILROAD AVENUE  
BABYLON, NY 11702

#### Board of Education:

Darrell J. Conway, *President*  
Judy Anderson, *Vice President*  
Henry Brunjes  
Roger A. Katz  
AnneMarie Martino  
Thomas Melito  
Catherine Vukovich

Dr. Ellen Best-Laimit  
*Superintendent of Schools*

\*\*\*\*ECRWSS\*\*\*\*  
Residential Customer  
Babylon, NY 11702



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Official Newsletter of the District

Budget Newsletter 2008



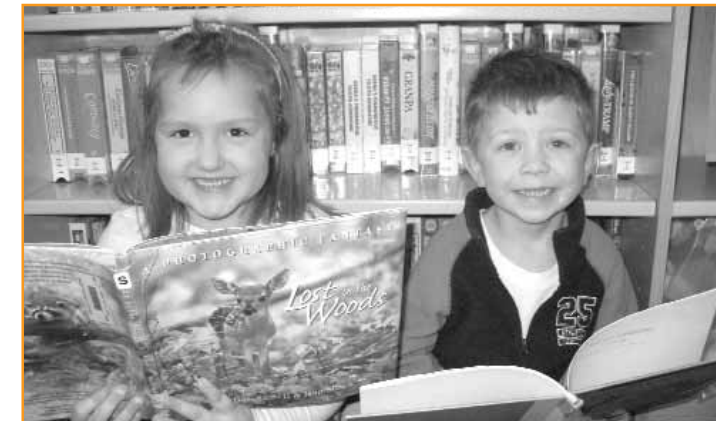
## Babylon Highlights

UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

## 2008-2009 PROPOSED BUDGET *Fiscally Sound, Educationally Minded*

**D**uring the past several months, the Superintendent of Schools, Board of Education, and administration have been working to develop a proposed school budget for the 2008-2009 school year that focuses on continuing to provide a quality educational program to students while preserving the investment made by the residents of Babylon.

Throughout the budget development process, the district received input from community residents, reviewed current and projected expenditures,



### Unable to Vote in Person? Apply for an Absentee Ballot

Residents who are registered to vote but are unable to cast their ballots on the school budget during the district's designated polling times of 6 a.m. – 9 p.m. are encouraged to obtain an absentee ballot application from the District Clerk. Please contact the Clerk's Office at 893-7925 or visit the district's website [www.babylonschools.org](http://www.babylonschools.org) for application form.



examined ways to reduce costs, and analyzed increases to the financial plan that are beyond the district's control.

The proposed budget not only works to minimize the cost impact for taxpayers, but also supports a comprehensive academic program for all students including a rigorous academic curriculum, coupled with multiple opportunities for students to become involved in the arts, sports, extracurricular activities, and community service.

Included in the pages of this publication is a detailed overview of the district's proposed budget. Residents are encouraged to carefully review this publication and cast their votes on the future of Babylon on Tuesday, May 20, 2008.

## REMEMBER TO VOTE!

**TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2008**

**6 A.M.-9 P.M.**

**BABYLON MEMORIAL GRADE SCHOOL**

# A Message From Your BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dear Community Residents,

A supportive community and a Board of Education, administration, faculty, and staff who are committed to achieving excellence are main factors behind the district's reputation of being a high-value school district – a reputation that we are sure brought many of our fellow community members to Babylon. Each year, our students bring a great deal of pride to our community by excelling both in and outside of the classroom, and our professional faculty and administration, who serve as role models for our students, have been constantly recognized as premier leaders in their field.

Unfortunately, successfully educating our young students for the future and arming them with the tools necessary to succeed does come at a price. Through careful planning and cost-saving initiatives, the district has worked to keep the impact on our community's residents to a minimum. However, New York State has proven to have different priorities. Each year our district's State Aid funding has failed to meet the amount needed to assist in supporting state-mandated programs and the changes in curriculum required to sustain a high level of achievement. Therefore, a large portion of the burden falls on you, our taxpayers.

As your elected community representatives, we take the responsibility of creating an environment that provides a quality, well-rounded education for all students very seriously. We are also mindful of our commitment and responsibility to the community with respect to presenting a proposed school budget that is cost effective. A careful

balance between the responsibility we have to our students and the responsibility we have to our community's taxpayers led to the development of our 2008-2009 proposed budget.

The proposed budget detailed in the pages of this publication supports the ongoing educational goals of the district, represents every effort to contain expenditures, continues to provide for a solid instructional program, and enables our district to build upon the strong curriculum currently offered in order to better prepare our students to meet 21st century standards.

**With a minimal impact on homeowners, the average taxpayer would see an increase in the school tax of 4.95%, or \$1 per day.**

On May 20<sup>th</sup> residents will be asked to vote on this proposed budget, which includes funding allocated to make enhancements to the English curriculum, restore a computer lab assistant position at each of our schools, and purchase the necessary math equipment needed to meet the new state curriculum.

We thank you for your past support and encourage you to vote on Tuesday, May 20, 2008. The polls will be open 6:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. at Babylon Memorial Grade School.

Sincerely,

Darrell J. Conway, President	Judy Anderson, Vice President
Henry Brunjes	Thomas Melito
Roger A. Katz	Catherine Vukovich
AnneMarie Martino	

## BOARD OFFERS SPECIAL COST-SAVING OPTIONS



### **Additional Senior Citizens' Tax Exemptions**

Four years ago, the Board of Education approved a resolution to increase the allowable income level for senior citizens, thereby lowering their property tax rates.

This cut is in addition to the *STAR Program* and *Enhanced STAR Program* that was implemented to assist residents aged 65 and older by increasing the allowable income eligibility level to \$32,400 on a sliding scale.

### **Tax Exemption for Rescue Workers**

The Babylon Board of Education authorized the firefighter tax exemption that gives volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers residing in the community a 10% reduction on school taxes for the 2008-2009 school year.

To qualify, volunteer emergency workers must live in the home and have served the community for at least five years. Only one exemption per property is permitted.

# RESULTING IN ACHIEVEMENT TAX DOLLARS FUND EXCELLENCE

## ACADEMIC SNAPSHOT

Babylon HS Class of 2007: 137 Graduates

- 99.3% Regents Diploma Rate
- 20 AP Scholars, including 1 National AP Scholar
- 241 AP Exams Administered
- 92% are attending college
- 7 National Merit Scholarship Finalists
- Grade School named State School of Character & National School of Character Finalist
- Comprehensive Literacy Collaborative Program
- National Merit Scholarship Commended Student
- Districtwide curriculum focus on health, wellness, and character
- Congressional Page duties awarded to student representative
- Research-based and evidence-supported instructional programs
- Differentiated learning strategies
- Effective student/teacher ratio
- High percentage of students meet and exceed proficiency levels on New York State assessments
- Staff development opportunities provided to teachers by renowned experts in all fields
- Technology-integrated curriculum, utilizing advanced technology tools
- Year-round student community service
- Award-winning staff members

## CO-CURRICULAR HIGHLIGHTS

- Comprehensive Fine and Performing Arts Program
- More than 200 participants in NYSSMA with outstanding results
- 21 student-musicians selected for All-County and All-State Music Festivals



- NYS Scholar-Athlete Teams
- Numerous athletes named All-League, All-Conference, and All-County student-athletes
- Student music groups selected to play at both regional and national locations, including Walt Disney World
- Dedicated and civic-minded student-based National Honor Societies
- High performing DECA organization
- Community-Minded Student Councils
- Outstanding Theater Productions
- Supportive Parent Organizations
- PTA Reflections Contest State Winner



## Did You Know...

- The district is a service industry and more than 80% of the annual budget is spent on contractual obligations, mandated services, salaries, and benefits
- Student assessment data shows that Babylon students are achieving at record high levels
- The district's fund balance appropriation not only meets auditing standards, but falls below the county average
- Compared to surrounding and comparable school districts, Babylon has one of the lowest central administration expense percentages

# PROPOSED 2008-2009 SCHOOL BUDGET BREAKDOWN

	2007-2008 Budget	2008-2009 Proposed Budget	Difference
<b>GENERAL SUPPORT</b>			
<i>Board of Education: The elected, seven-member Board serves the community without pay. Its responsibilities include proposing/promoting a budget, levying taxes, meeting requirements set by State law, and setting educational policy. Expenditures incurred include costs for conducting Board business, plus salary and expenses for the District Clerk's Office, and the annual district meeting.</i>			
Board of Education	\$8,900	\$10,100	\$1,200
District Clerk	16,775	17,377	602
District Meeting	7,220	7,545	325
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$32,895</b>	<b>\$35,022</b>	<b>\$2,127</b>
<i>Central Administration: Services of Central Administration include the Superintendent's Office, Business Administration, Personnel, Treasurer, Auditing, Legal Services, and District Publications.</i>			
Staff/Operation of Chief School Admin.	\$249,254	\$274,006	\$24,752
Business Administration	393,484	448,589	55,105
Auditing	81,500	98,484	16,984
Treasurer's Office	11,650	13,650	2,000
Legal Services	150,000	150,000	0
Personnel	49,716	52,168	2,452
Public Information	58,234	62,675	4,441
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$993,838</b>	<b>\$1,099,572</b>	<b>\$105,734</b>
<i>Central Services: Operations and maintenance expenses for maintaining the district's three buildings and grounds. Expenditures include costs for personnel services, equipment, contractual expenses, supplies, and materials. Central Services also includes districtwide printing costs and BOCES data processing.</i>			
Plant Operation	\$2,153,837	\$2,543,822	\$389,985
Plant Maintenance	568,803	748,413	179,610
Central Printing	31,738	32,483	745
BOCES Data Processing	86,700	105,850	19,150
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,841,078</b>	<b>\$3,430,568</b>	<b>\$589,490</b>
<i>Special Items: This category includes cost for the district's insurance, which provides for general liability, property insurance, student accident insurance, and vehicle insurance. Also included are BOCES administrative charges, school association dues, and unclassified items.</i>			
Unallocated Insurance	\$204,765	\$210,078	\$5,313
School Association Dues	17,300	18,712	1,412
Judgments	0	0	0
BOCES-Administration Charge	127,509	129,127	1,618
Unclassified Items	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$349,574</b>	<b>\$357,917</b>	<b>\$8,343</b>
<b>General Support Total</b>	<b>\$4,217,385</b>	<b>\$4,923,079</b>	<b>\$705,694</b>

	2007-2008 Budget	2008-2009 Proposed Budget	Difference
<b>INSTRUCTION</b>			
<i>Curriculum Development and Supervision: Expenditures in this category include costs for districtwide development, coordination, supervision, and administration of instructional programs. Supervision includes salaries for the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, building principals, directors, administrative assistants, and clerical staff. Also included are costs for in-service training.</i>			
Curriculum Development & Supervision	\$1,406,976	\$1,505,554	\$98,578
<i>Instruction – Regular School: Expenditures in this category include salaries for K-12 classroom teachers, substitutes, and classroom aides and monitors. Also included are expenses for instructional equipment, textbooks, contractual expenses, and tuition to BOCES for vocational students.</i>			
Instruction – Regular School	\$14,245,544	\$14,625,908	\$380,364
<i>Services for Handicapped Children: This portion of the budget includes instructional programs and services for students with handicapping conditions. These services are mandated by federal and state education laws. Costs cover administrative, teacher, and support staff salaries, supplies, equipment, and tuition charges for BOCES and other special schools outside the district.</i>			
Services for Handicapped Children	\$4,764,737	\$5,187,399	\$422,662
<i>Teaching – Special Schools (Summer School): This category covers the costs associated with the Elementary Summer School Program. Included are teaching and support staff salaries and supplies.</i>			
Summer School	\$53,834	\$62,580	\$8,746
<i>Instructional Media: This segment of the budget provides salaries for librarians, aides, and monies for audiovisual equipment, film, video rental, and purchase of computer hardware, software, and repairs.</i>			
Instructional Media	\$767,647	\$824,309	\$56,662
<i>Support Services: Programs included in this code are attendance, guidance, health services, and psychological and social worker services. Parental notification of student absences continues to promote high attendance. Additional expenditures include salaries for school nurses, supplies, equipment, and contract services.</i>			
Support Services	\$1,564,756	\$1,643,686	\$78,930
<i>Co-curricular &amp; Interscholastic Activities: Expenditures in this code cover expenses for school plays, bands, chorus, orchestra, yearbooks, newspapers, and the district's interscholastic athletic programs. Also included are expenses for coaches' salaries, athletic department purchases and repairs, officials' fees, and costs of maintaining all athletic teams.</i>			
Co-curricular & Interscholastic Activities	\$737,831	\$840,990	\$103,159
<b>Instruction Total</b>	<b>\$23,541,325</b>	<b>\$24,690,426</b>	<b>\$1,149,101</b>

# PROPOSED 2008-2009 SCHOOL BUDGET BREAKDOWN

2007-2008 Budget      2008-2009 Proposed Budget      Difference

## PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

*Pupil Transportation: Costs for transporting to and from public, private, and parochial schools, field trips, and athletic events are within this code. Clerical staff salaries and supplies are also included.*

Pupil Transportation	\$1,859,256	\$2,234,907	\$375,651
<b>Transportation Total</b>	<b>\$1,859,256</b>	<b>\$2,234,907</b>	<b>\$375,651</b>

## UNDISTRIBUTED EXPENSES

*Undistributed Expenses: This category includes employee benefit expenditures and debt service. Employee benefits are mandated and regulated by negotiated contracts. Debt service expenditures are also mandated and represent the cost incurred to retire scheduled long-term debt payments. It also includes the cost of borrowing money to meet cash flow requirements.*

Employee Benefits	\$7,710,339	\$8,077,045	\$366,706
Debt Service	\$2,839,054	\$2,809,923	\$(29,131)
Interfund Transfers	\$643,514	\$40,000	\$(603,514)
<b>Undistributed Expense Total</b>	<b>\$11,192,907</b>	<b>\$10,926,968</b>	<b>\$(265,939)</b>

**TOTAL BUDGET      \$40,810,873      \$42,775,380      \$1,964,507**

## ESTIMATED REVENUE FOR THE PROPOSED 2008-2009 BUDGET

	2007-2008 Budget	2008-2009 Proposed Budget	Difference
EXCEL	609,514	0	(609,514)
State Aid	7,326,175	8,113,345	787,170
Misc. Income (Investments, Medicaid, Health Services, Foster Tuition, etc.)	430,310	430,310	0
Appropriated Fund Balance	400,000	600,000	200,000
Property Tax Levy	32,044,874	33,631,725	1,586,851
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$40,810,873</b>	<b>\$42,775,380</b>	<b>\$1,964,507</b>

## INCREASED COST TO THE AVERAGE HOMEOWNER\*

	% Increase	Cost Per Year	Cost Per Month
Proposed Budget	4.95%	\$365.00	\$30.41
Contingency Budget	3.01%	\$222.00	\$18.50
Difference	1.94%	\$143.00	\$11.91

\* This estimated projection is based on a Babylon home with an assessed value of \$4,299.

# Questions & Answers

### 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 3.01% 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 \$1,223,256 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 \$0.40 less per day than under the proposed budget.

### Q. How would a Contingency Budget affect our 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
- reduction of clubs and athletic offerings
- elimination of public use of school facilities

### Q. Where can I get more information?

A. Complete copies of the proposed 2008-2009 Babylon budget are available in the district office. Reference copies are



available for inspection at all district schools. Budget information is also available on our district website at [www.babylonschools.org](http://www.babylonschools.org). Residents with questions on the budget can also contact Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ellen Best-Laimit 893-7925 or Assistant Superintendent Dr. Peter Daly, at 893-7914.



## Driving Forces Behind the Budget's Increase:

- Lack of funding by New York State
- Rising costs of employee benefits
- Mandated contributions to retirement systems
- BOCES services
- Transportation (in-district, private, parochial)
- Utilities, including escalating cost of fuel
- Unfunded Federal & State mandates
- Unpredictability of the economy

