

Averill Park

#AP_EveryStudent
EveryDay

BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday
June 9, 2020

Voting will take place using absentee ballots only per Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Executive Order due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ballots must be received by 5:00 p.m. on June 9.



Students and staff went from being in school to remote learning during the 2019-2020 school year.

2020-2021 BUDGET SUMMARY

- ▶ **Proposed Budget**
\$60,993,612
- ▶ **Budget-to-Budget**
Increase 2.22%
- ▶ **Estimated Tax Levy**
Increase 2.58%
(Meets the tax levy limit)

The Proposed Budget maintains programs and services offered in 2019-20 and meets the changing needs of the district.

Also on the Ballot...

- ▶ **Board of Education Election** (See page 2)
- ▶ **Bus Purchase Proposition**
(See page 5)

2020-21 Proposed Budget Maintains Rigorous Curriculum; Reduces Staff Through Attrition

On Tuesday, June 9, Averill Park Central School District residents will vote on a spending plan for the 2020-2021 school year that maintains a rigorous academic curriculum and supports diverse extracurricular, arts and athletic programs. This vote will be solely by absentee ballot. If you have not received an absentee ballot, please contact Yvonne Phillips at phillipsy@apcsd.org as soon as possible.

This year schools across the state have dealt with a variety of issues and have been forced to adapt to a very fluid situation due to the impact of the COVID-19 virus, which has made the development of this budget very challenging.

“Due to long-term financial planning, we are able to develop a 2020-2021 budget that allows us to fulfill our mission of meeting the needs of and creating opportunities for every student every day, while adjusting our staff size to reflect declining enrollment.” Superintendent Dr. Franchini said.

The \$60,993,612 budget is supported by a 2.58% tax levy increase which continues the District’s practice over the past nine years of adopting tax levies which are within the State’s statutory Property Tax Cap limit. The final State budget allocates \$22,268,172 in aid to Averill Park for 2020-2021 – a decrease of \$12,901 over the current year.

Highlights of the proposed budget include:

Faculty: The budget reduces the faculty by 4.0 positions. The reduction is the result of retire-

ments that will not be filled, a transfer to address an enrollment-based need, and the decision to not fill a new position that was budgeted for.

Staff: The District has reduced support staff through attrition, as well. The 2020-2021 budget reduces support staff by 5.0 positions.

Administration: The District is reducing the number of administrators by 1.0 position. Similar to faculty and staff, this reduction is being realized due to restructuring which was made possible through attrition.

Miscellaneous: The proposed budget calls for budget line increases for technology classes to support course offerings, and the addition of a girls swim team due to student interest and Title IX compliance. The District will also expand the 1:1 Chromebook initiative. Currently, the District is 1:1 in grades 6-8. This budget allows for the expansion of this initiative to grades 6-12.

The community will also vote on a proposition to purchase eight school buses at a maximum cost of \$695,790 as part of the district’s long-term bus replacement plan (page 5).

If the proposed budget is approved by voters, Averill Park CSD will maintain current academic programs, AP classes, college credit courses and athletic teams. The budget continues to hold a wide range of academic programs, extracurricular activities and services for students in K-12.

For more information about the proposed budget, please visit averillpark.k12.ny.us and click on the “Budget Corner.”

Averill Park High School PE Improvements

Included in the 2020-21 budget is funding to correct the environmental and safety deficiencies in the high school weight room teaching station as noted by the District's architect during the most recent facilities assessment. Funding is also being allocated to replace the failing High School football field scoreboard that was originally installed in 1997.

Specifically, the weight room improvements will include installation of air conditioning, heating improvements, ventilation enhancement and potentially the addition of natural lighting. Strength and Conditioning is a PE strand that is offered every period of the day with approximately 170 students using the weight room during the school day and additional students using it after school. Renovations to remedy the weight room conditions will be the primary focus of this project, with any remaining funds being allotted toward the scoreboard replacement.

Both the weight room improvements and scoreboard replacement will be accomplished through a \$100,000 Capital Outlay project. These projects receive State Building Aid in the year following project completion. The cost of this project will be paid for in 2020-21 through an offsetting revenue transfer of \$100,000 from our reserves, resulting in no tax impact. The District will then receive State Building Aid in 2021-22 as reimbursement for this project.

Board of Education Election

Voters in the Averill Park Central School District will elect two members to the Board of Education this year using absentee ballots. Board members serve three-year terms. For more information on candidates running for the Board of Education, visit averillpark.k12.ny.us and click on "Budget Corner".

Food Service, Childcare Highlighted During Pandemic

When the COVID-19 pandemic closed school buildings across New York state, a chain reaction took place that affected school-age children.

Students had to quickly adapt to remote learning, figure out if their Wi-Fi connection would be suitable to connect with teachers, and face the challenge of not being able to see friends and family. Where necessary the District was able to provide hotspot WiFi connections to homes that did not have the necessary internet connectivity.

On a much more basic level, some students and families had to figure out where meals would be coming from daily.

To assist with that need, District staff members came together to form a meal preparation and delivery program. Those committed staff members are making and distributing roughly 2,500 meals per week, including 1,250 breakfasts and 1,250 lunches.

Another issue school districts had to tackle was childcare.

In order for essential workers to fill our hospitals, grocery stores, police stations and many other places, they need to be able to have safe, reliable childcare during the COVID-19 pandemic. To meet this mandate from the Governor, the Averill Park Central School District chose to partner with Greenbush Child Caring (GCC) to provide this service in its own community, using one of its Elementary School buildings.

This program came at no expense to parents who were classified as essential workers.

School aged children were not the only ones affected, and District partnered with Brightside Up to coordinate childcare for anyone four years old and younger.

Proposed 2020-21 Budget Questions & Answers

Q: Is the proposed budget within the tax levy cap?

A: Yes. Under the state's calculation for 2020-21, Averill Park CSD has a tax levy limit of \$32,481,774, an increase of \$2.58% percent, which meets Averill Park's "tax levy limit" under the state's tax cap law.

Q: Is Averill Park Central School District getting an increase in state aid in the coming year? If so, how much?

A: No. Averill Park is expecting a state aid decrease of \$12,901 over the current year for a total of \$22,268,172 in state aid for the 2020-21 school year. The district has worked to minimize the increase in expenses in order to compensate for the decrease in state aid.

Q: What is a fund balance? How is it used?

A: A fund balance is a reserve much like a homeowner's savings account. Just as homeowners are careful not to use up their savings accounts, school districts also must plan carefully how they use their fund balance to ensure it does not run out. When a district's expenses are less than what was expected or revenues are higher than expected, the money is held in the fund balance. The money can be used for

unforeseen expenses throughout the school year. AP does not have a substantial fund balance to help compensate tax increases. However, the District will use \$780,000 of its fund balance to help meet its tax levy limit. Currently, the District expects to end the fiscal year with an unassigned fund balance of about \$2,435,744, which is within the 4% limit allowed by state law in unassigned fund balance.

Q: If the budget is defeated on June 9, what options does the Board of Education have?

A: If the proposed budget is defeated by voters on June 9, the Board of Education will have three options: present the same budget to voters a second time, present a revised budget to voters, or adopt a contingent budget. If the budget is defeated a second time, the board must adopt a contingent budget. In addition, with property tax levy limit or "cap" law in effect, under a contingent budget the district can levy a tax no greater than that of the prior year's budget – essentially a zero percent tax levy increase. For Averill Park, a contingent budget would be \$60,176,807, which would mean the district would have to cut \$816,805 from the proposed budget.

Spotlight on Student Success

HIGH SCHOOL

- Lydia Ware and Adam Limoges were named National Merit Scholarship finalists.
- APHS was honored as a Recognition School by NYSED.
- Seven students participated in the Capital Region Media Arts Festival.
- The National Honor Society inducted 62 seniors into the Class of 2020.
- APHS ran a pilot program Video Game Design Course which was the first in the area.
- Dr. Panzanaro was selected for the Science Coaches Program at UAlbany.
- Senior Haley Surprenant participated in the 2019 NAFME All-National Honor Ensembles.
- National Honor Society students implemented the first ever student-to-student Peer Tutoring Program, which ultimately assisted over 50 HS students attain improved academic success.
- The Athletic Department was honored with an Award of Excellence for its exemplary display of sportsmanship, ethics and integrity.
- Joe Milanese and Bryanna Swinson earned New York State Leadership Awards.
- Girls varsity soccer advanced to the Section II, Class A championship.
- Girls varsity basketball won its 7th consecutive Section II, Class A championship, advancing to the state tournament.
- Bowler Parker Brown had a perfect 300 game and qualified for the state championships.
- Sean Malenfant competed at the NYS Wrestling Tournament.

- Varsity cheer won the Section II, Division II championship and placed 6th at states.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- 141 students were honored with the Presidential Award for Educational Excellence.
- Students made use of the video conferencing/distance learning room by attending a virtual field trip with the RPI Makerspace. Students learned about the university's 3-D printers.
- Named a "Teach Kindness Champion" school in the National Kindness Challenge.
- Named a Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History affiliate school.
- Danielle MacLeod was named "Top 13 Teacher" by WNYT.

ELEMENTARY

- APCSD announced a partnership with CDPHP and the Addictions Care Center of Albany to bring the "An Apple a Day" program to all three elementary schools.
- Vivian Savage was accepted to be a member of the Capital District Youth Chorale.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, a joint initiative between students, families and staff of all three elementary schools saw more than 100 people participate.
- PES raised money and donated \$1,310 to the Ronald McDonald House.
- WSL faculty and staff raised \$1,000 for the Backpack Program.
- WSL K-Kids packaged approximately 10,000 pounds of food at the Regional Food Bank.

- MHS K-Kids created a fundraiser with profits donated to Kelsey's Promise and Maddy's Angel Pigs.

Capital Project Vote Rescinded

The Averill Park Central School District Board of Education voted to rescind the Capital Project referendum, which was slated to take place at the same time as the annual budget vote.

"Throughout the process of building this capital project, the Board of Education always put the needs of our community at the forefront," BOE president Jessica Zweig said. "We realize that we are in a much different economic state right now and must continue to think of our community members and the hardships that they are currently facing. For that reason, we have decided that we cannot bring a proposition of this magnitude to our community at this time. We look forward to a time when we can conduct this vote as we believe that this capital project is a necessity and is valuable to our school community."

APCSD spent two years researching, developing and collaborating on the Capital Project. The result was a \$38.8 million project which focused on three key areas: Safety and Security, Critical Building Maintenance and Program Enhancements. All seven buildings that the district owns, including all three elementary schools, middle school, high school, transportation building and the George Washington School would see improvements.

"While we feel strongly that the work encompassed in the project needs to be completed, we are sensitive to the struggles in our community, the state, and the country as a whole during this pandemic. With that in mind, we did not feel that it was appropriate to add this burden onto our taxpayers at this time," APCSD Superintendent Dr. Franchini said. "Throughout this process we decided to do everything right, not rushed. Delaying the vote is in the best interest of our community."

Though the vote has been rescinded, it will still take place in the future. APCSD is now targeting the Fall as a time for the project referendum.

Faculty, Staff, Students Rose to the Occasion With Remote Learning

The COVID-19 pandemic forced our buildings to be closed for a significant portion of the 2019-2020 school year, but our faculty, staff and administration fought hard to continue our mission of meeting the needs of and creating opportunities for every student every day.

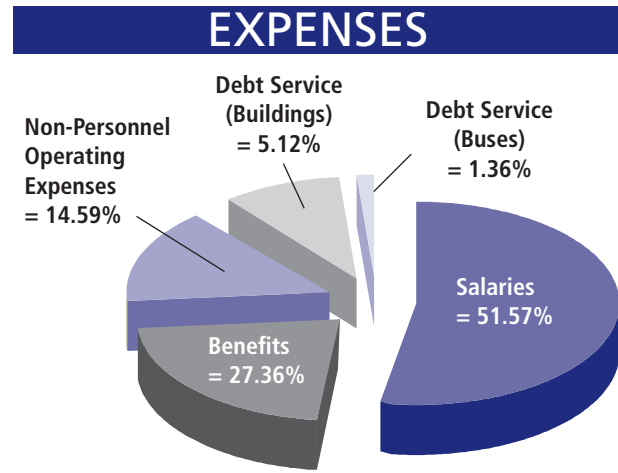
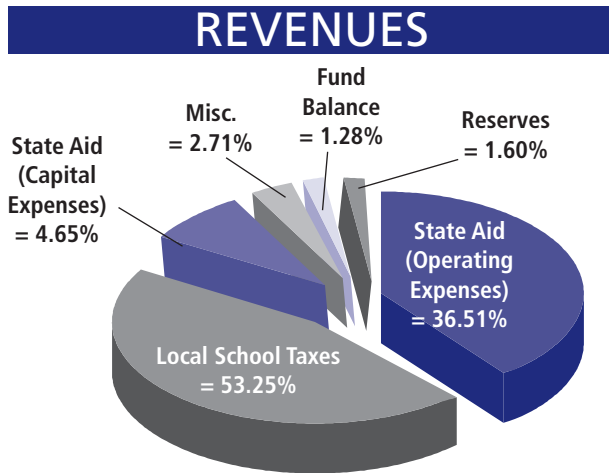
Distance learning was once a luxury, connecting students with a college professor or high school teacher from another district. In March, a new form of learning came into focus and remote learning became a necessity with our faculty and students being forced to essentially build a plane while it was being flown.

Teachers made every effort possible to make sure they maintained relationships with all of their students and provided them with the instructional support they needed to be successful. We are very proud of the work our teachers put in over the past few months. We are also thankful to our school community and all of the parents and guardians that put in countless hours at home helping students achieve their learning goals.

This unprecedented journey saw our teachers soar to new heights. Many became even more creative and enhanced student learning through outside of the box strategies. They created unique challenges and delivered quality instruction, ensuring that students were provided with a foundation for future grade levels, courses and, in some cases, post-secondary plans.

REVENUES: Where money comes from to pay for Averill Park's schools

| Source of Revenue | Actual 2019-20 | Proposed 2020-21 | Dollar Change |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| State Aid – Operating | \$22,281,073 | \$22,268,172 | (\$12,901) |
| Local Tax | 31,664,969 | 32,481,774 | 816,805 |
| State Aid – Capital | 2,839,161 | 2,839,161 | — |
| Miscellaneous | 1,600,221 | 1,655,221 | 55,000 |
| Fund Balance | 780,000 | 780,000 | — |
| Debt Service Reserve | — | 100,000 | 100,000 |
| ERS Reserve | 500,000 | 869,284 | 369,284 |
| Total Revenues | \$59,665,424 | \$60,993,612 | \$1,328,188 |



EXPENSES: How money is spent for Averill Park's schools

| Expenses | Actual 2019-20 | Proposed 2020-21 | Dollar Difference |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Operating Expenses | | | |
| Personnel Salaries | \$30,725,923 | \$31,454,572 | \$728,649 |
| Personnel Benefits | 16,032,806 | 16,685,060 | 652,254 |
| Non-Personnel Items | 8,982,093 | 8,901,210 | (80,883) |
| Total Operating Expenses | \$55,740,822 | \$57,040,842 | \$1,300,020 |
| Capital Expenses | | | |
| Debt Service Buildings | \$3,135,925 | \$3,124,575 | (11,350) |
| Debt Service Buses | 788,677 | 828,195 | 39,518 |
| Total Capital Expenses | \$3,924,602 | \$3,952,770 | \$28,168 |
| Total Expenses | \$59,665,424 | \$60,993,612 | \$1,328,188 |

School Bus Purchase Proposition

On Tuesday, June 9, when Averill Park residents vote on the 2020-21 school budget and school board, they will also consider a bus purchase proposition. The proposition seeks voter approval to purchase eight (8) school buses at a total cost not to exceed \$695,750 (see the breakdown of bus cost and financing below). The bus purchase is part of the district’s long-term bus replacement plan designed to keep the district’s fleet in a safe working order.

The School Bus Purchase Proposition breaks down as follows:

- \$462,618 for the purchase of four (4) 65-passenger buses at \$115,654.50 each
- \$132,264 for the purchase of two (2) 21-passenger wheelchair buses at \$66,132 each
- \$115,368 for the purchase of two (2) 28-passenger buses at \$57,684 each



Bus drivers get ready to deliver meals to students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

| Breakdown of Bus Cost & Financing | |
|--|------------|
| Bus Total | \$ 710,250 |
| Less Trade-ins | \$ 14,500 |
| Net Borrowing Cost | |
| After Trades | \$ 695,750 |
| Total Principal to be financed (5 years) | |
| | \$ 695,750 |
| Add Finance Cost | \$ 63,851 |
| Total Purchase Cost | |
| | \$ 759,601 |
| Less State Aid | \$ 539,316 |
| Total Taxpayer Cost | |
| | \$ 220,285 |
| Annual Local Taxpayer Cost (over 5 years) | |
| | \$ 44,057 |

Because the District is eligible to receive approximately 71 percent State Aid on the purchase of these buses, the actual cost to the District will be significantly less than the amount requiring voter approval. The District would also trade eight buses with a total value of \$14,500 that have become too costly for the district to maintain. These buses are one 2006 bus with 143,574 miles; two 2007 buses with average mileage of 144,795; two 2009 buses with average mileage of 153,985; and three 2010 buses with average mileage of 113,747 miles.

TRANSPORTATION FACTS

- ▶ Between daily transport, sports, field trips, summer school, and summer camps. Averill Park’s 75-unit bus fleet travels nearly one million miles a year.
- ▶ In 2019-20, there are 38 in-district runs covering 130 square miles and 18 out-of-district runs to 36 different private, parochial, charter and special needs schools. New York State requires the district to provide transportation to students living in district who attend private and parochial schools within 15 miles of their home.
- ▶ The average life of fleet buses, due to terrain traveled and Northeast weather conditions, is about 10 years with each bus logging approximately 90,000-130,000 miles over that time.

Bus Purchase Questions & Answers

Why does the district purchase buses on a regular basis?
 The proposed bus purchase is part of an ongoing bus replacement plan designed to ensure students are transported on buses that meet the latest safety standards. The plan also allows the District to trade in or phase out older, high-mileage vehicles to avoid the cost inefficiencies related to keeping them in service.

How does the district determine when to replace a bus?
 Mileage is not the only consideration when determining which buses to remove from service and to replace. The primary consideration is the age of the bus. The average life span of a school bus in Upstate New York is roughly 10 to 12 years mostly due to weather conditions. The salt mixture used on local roads is corrosive to a bus’ structure. After about 10 to 12 years, buses require costly and necessary repairs to pass New York State’s rigorous inspection process. It is not cost effective for the District to repair these vehicles.

Why do I sometimes see buses with only a few students on them?
 Usually, when you see a bus with only a few students on it, you are probably seeing a bus at the beginning or end of its route, depending on the time of day. Because we have combined high school and middle school bus runs, you may see a bus light in passengers as it travels between the schools for pickup or drop off. We also transport students to several private, parochial, charter and special needs schools, using smaller vehicles in our fleet better suited to transport smaller numbers of students.

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Michael Ouimet, *CPA*
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For more information,
please call the district at
(518) 674-7066

Averill Park

CENTRAL SCHOOLS

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Warrior Strong: We are very proud of the way our faculty, administration, support staff, students and families came together to meet the needs of and provide opportunities for every student every day during the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHO MAY VOTE?

In order to vote, you must be at least 18 years old, a U.S. Citizen, and a resident of the Averill Park CSD for at least 30 days prior to June 9, 2020. Advance registration is NOT required. All voting will be completed through absentee ballot due to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing regulations. Completed absentee ballots must be mailed to the District Clerk's office, located in the Averill Park High School at 146 Gettle Road. Ballots must be received no later than June 9, 2020.

HOW CAN I VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT?

Residents who will be out of town or unable to vote in person can vote by absentee ballot. You must complete an application to receive an absentee ballot. Applications may be requested by calling the District Clerk's office at 674-7085 or picked up at the District Office, located in the Averill Park High School at 146 Gettle Road. Completed applications for absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk at least seven (7) days prior to the vote if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or the day before the election, if the ballot is to be delivered personally to the voter. Absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk no later than 5 p.m. on June 9, 2020.