



2009-2010 SCHOOL BUDGET: No Increase in Tax Levy

On Tuesday, May 19, residents in the Brunswick (Brittonkill) Central School District can vote on a \$22,517,718 budget for the 2009-2010 school year with no increase in the tax levy and no layoffs of full-time employees.

Voting will take place from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the district auditorium lobby. Voters will also elect three school board members (see page 5).

Spending in the budget is up 5.79% over the current \$21.3 million budget. But much of that increase is due to an additional \$1.5 million in debt service for the Capital Project. Otherwise, spending is down by more than \$265,000.

The district was able to cut spending largely due to a retirement incentive that 17 employees took advantage of. To achieve savings, six teaching positions, one bus driver and one lunch monitor will not be refilled next year (see page 3 for story on staffing.)

While spending was reduced, Tamarac schools will continue to offer our students the same excellent education our community expects.

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The district remains committed to supporting its priorities including:

- Improving our reading, writing and speech programs for all grades.
- Exploring initiatives to raise graduation rates.
- Continue the limited pre-kindergarten program.
- Continue the mentoring program for students with academic challenges.
- Explore career planning and other outside programs for students such as job shadowing and internships.



Fifth graders recreate the Lincoln-Douglas debates during a Civil War play. Students researched history and then wrote and recreated historical events.

“Fortunately, thanks to savings from employee retirements and funding from the federal stimulus plan, we were able to hold the line on the tax levy and help our community in these difficult economic times,” said Superintendent Lou McIntosh. “At the same time, we were careful not to make cuts that would diminish the education our students receive, ensuring they have the tools to be successful when they graduate from Tamarac.”

There will be no separate proposition for school buses again this year as \$209,400 for the purchase of three buses is included in the budget.

What Will I Be Voting on May 19?

- **A \$22,517,718 budget for the 2009-10 school year.**
 - **This budget has a projected 0 percent tax levy increase.**
 - **This budget is up \$1,234,203 or 5.79 percent.**
- **Selection of three candidates for the Board of Education, who will appear on the ballot in this order (see page 5):**
 - **Paul Daley, Christine Fox, Peter Meskoskey and Ryan Matthews.**

How is the district reducing costs?

Brunswick CSD continually looks for ways to reduce costs and operate our schools more efficiently. Here are some examples of ways we reduce operating costs.

Personnel

To minimize the cost of health insurance, we participate with other area school districts in a health insurance consortium to increase the school's purchasing power and obtain lower rates.

Last year, we conducted a thorough study of classroom sizes and implemented a minimum class size of 15 students to allocate our personnel resources more effectively.

The district participates with other Rensselaer County schools in a worker's compensation consortium to minimize administrative costs while self funding our own cases to save money.

Energy

To minimize our energy costs, the district joins a BOCES energy consortium to purchase natural gas and electricity at a discounted rate. This saved the district \$8,000 last year.

We now use a computer-automated system to monitor and control heating in our schools with greater efficiency. The system automatically raises or lowers building temperatures for the start and end of the school day. It also provides energy usage reports to help energy management.

New energy efficient windows, doors, lights and ballasts were installed as part of the Capital Project. Automatic lighting sensors were installed in classrooms and offices to turn off lights when not needed.

A student-led recycling program started last year has decreased the amount of trash our schools produce. This avoids increases in trash hauling costs.

Transportation

This year, the district consolidated bus routes, saving 250 miles a day for school buses that average 8 miles to the gallon. The district saves approximately \$82,000 a school year. Bus runs have been reduced from 57 bus runs last year to 44 bus runs this year.



Tamarac High School students participate in a Masterminds competition, testing their knowledge of history, geography and other facts.

Other

The district seeks grants whenever possible to provide additional revenue sources to fund school programs. For example, a \$300,000 Physical Education for Progress grant expanded our physical education and after-school programs including the purchase of a climbing wall for elementary students and weight room equipment for secondary students.

Maintenance staff has been trained so they can perform almost all maintenance

and repairs of heating and ventilation equipment, instead of hiring a private service.

Most supplies are purchased through a competitive bid practice, ensuring the lowest available prices. Whenever possible, we purchase items such as fuel, computers, school buses, and office supplies on state contract which is considerably less expensive.

How was the budget developed?

In November, the district began preparing for next year's budget by initiating a spending freeze in light of New York's economic crisis. Over the next several months, meetings were held with building principals, administrators, and leadership of the Brittonkill Teacher Association and CSEA as the district determined what its expenditures would be.

A retirement incentive was offered to employees which 17 faculty and staff members took advantage of. As a result, the district was able to save significant money and present a budget in March with no increase in the tax levy. When the state adopted its budget in April and details of the federal economic stimulus funding became clear, the district used the additional revenues to restore items such as a Student Counselor position and Modified "B" sports teams. The budget was adopted with a unanimous vote from the Board of Education on April 8.

The budget was made available on the district website, local libraries and the town hall. Superintendent Lou McIntosh gave budget presentations to groups such as the Parents Teacher Student Association, the Brittonkill Educational Foundation, and the Key Communicators Committee.

What staffing changes are proposed?

This year, 17 employees took a retirement incentive. To reduce spending, eight of those positions will not be refilled. Here are details of those staffing changes.

Tamarac Elementary

No full-time Elementary teaching positions will be reduced. Two teaching assistant positions will be eliminated, although both positions were specifically added just for the 2008-09 school year.

A fifth section of kindergarten will be added due to the number of children registering for school next year. Second grade will drop to four sections, although the largest class size will be 21 students. All other grades will remain at the same number of sections. The pre-kindergarten program will continue next year with 20 students.

“We’ll essentially have the same staffing levels as we do now,” said Principal Karen Lederman. “We’ll offer as good a program next year as we have this year.”

Tamarac Secondary School

Six teaching positions in the Secondary School will not be filled next year in areas of Art, English, Physical Education, Social Studies, and Special Education.

As a result, some teachers will teach six sections of classes, instead of the current five sections they teach; six sections is the maximum number teachers can contractually teach. A few electives will not be offered next year, including 8th grade studio art and AutoCAD.

Exact class sizes won’t be determined until summer, when schedules are arranged, but some classes will be larger.

But Principal Richard Pogue said class sizes largely will remain in the range of 21 to 24 students.

“I feel we’ll still have reasonable class sizes,” Pogue said. “They should remain close to this year’s class sizes.”

Keeping low class sizes in required Regents courses will be a priority while Honors courses may be slightly larger. Maintaining support programs for students – such as the Reaching Academic Potential Program – will also be a priority.

Other Positions

One bus driver and one lunch monitor will not be replaced. The bus driver position is no longer needed due to fewer bus runs resulting from this year’s bus route consolidation plan. Current staff will share the work from the reduced lunch monitor position.

Additionally, a bus dispatcher position will not be filled as staff will share the duties. Assistant coaches will no longer be paid positions but instead volunteer positions.

How will STAR savings affect school taxes?

Residents enrolled in the state’s School Tax Relief (STAR) program will receive a reduction on their 2009-10 school tax bills. STAR works by exempting a certain amount of a taxpayer’s assessed value from being taxed. While the state eliminated the Middle Class STAR Rebate check, the rest of the program still applies.

The Basic STAR exemption is available for owner-occupied, primary residences regardless of the owners’ ages or incomes. The Enhanced STAR exemption is available for primary residents ages 65 and older with yearly household incomes below the state standard. Applications for STAR should be filed with your local assessor.

Here are the STAR exemptions for towns in the Brunswick CSD as set by the state:

Town	Basic Exemption	Enhanced Exemption
Brunswick	\$ 8,040	\$ 15,220
Grafton	\$ 2,610	\$ 4,940
Pittstown	\$ 18,950	\$ 36,060
Poestenkill	\$ 8,300	\$ 15,730
Schaghticoke	\$ 8,040	\$ 15,220

If the tax levy stays the same, will my tax bill be the same as last year?

Not necessarily. Because your tax bill is based on a number of things outside the control of the school district – such as your home’s assessment, equalization rate, the tax rate and STAR savings – your tax bill could increase, decrease, or stay the same.

For example, this year’s STAR exemption rate, as determined by the State Office of Real Property Services (ORPS), is less than last year’s rate. As a result, residents with a STAR exemption will pay taxes on a larger portion of the assessed value of their home.

Also, because our school district contains parts of five towns, equalization rates set by ORPS also impact tax rates. For instance, if ORPS determines that property values have risen more in one town than another in the past year, the tax increase in that town may be somewhat higher than another town. This makes it impossible for the district to predict actual tax increases in each town accurately. The school district plays no role in determining what portion of the tax burden is placed on any one town or property owner.



High School Senior Corrine Wilson stands with Principal Richard Pogue after winning a Good Citizens Award for her first-place winning essay on the Founding Fathers and patriotism.

Expenditures by Category

Category	2008-2009	Proposed 2009-2010	Change	Percent of Total
Staff Salaries & Benefits	\$ 15,599,488	\$ 15,415,562	\$ -183,926	68%
Contractual	\$ 2,426,097	\$ 2,523,726	\$ 97,629	11%
Books, Materials & Equipment	\$ 906,230	\$ 576,530	\$ -329,700	3%
Fuel, Energy & Utilities	\$ 851,700	\$ 901,900	\$ 50,200	4%
Debt Services	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 3,100,000	\$ 1,600,000	14%
Total Budget	\$ 21,283,515	\$ 22,517,718	\$ 1,234,203	100%

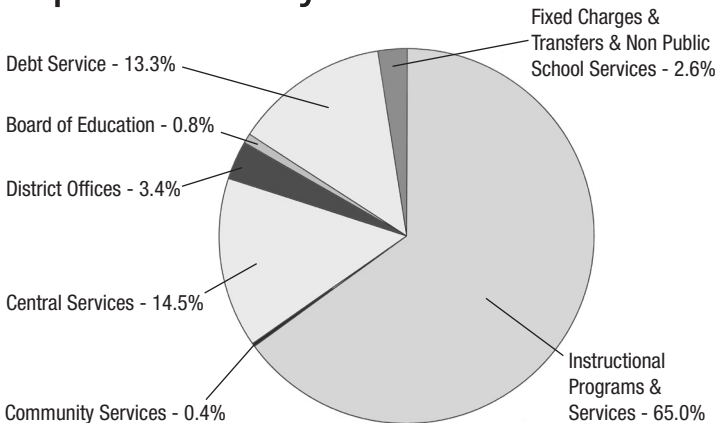
Expenditures by Function

Category	2008-2009	Proposed 2009-2010	Change	Percent of Total
Regular Instruction	\$ 12,898,135	\$ 12,668,969	\$ -229,166	56.3%
Special Education	\$ 1,934,400	\$ 1,971,401	\$ 37,001	8.7%
Community Services	\$ 78,700	\$ 87,082	\$ 8,382	0.4%
Transportation	\$ 1,639,853	\$ 1,317,825	\$ -322,028	5.9%
Operations & Maintenance	\$ 1,610,193	\$ 1,621,501	\$ 11,308	7.2%
Technology Services	\$ 262,706	\$ 316,958	\$ 54,252	1.4%
District Offices	\$ 733,985	\$ 763,918	\$ 29,933	3.4%
Board of Education	\$ 179,981	\$ 180,469	\$ 488	0.8%
Debt Service	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 1,500,000	13.3%
Fixed Charges and Transfers and Non Public School Services	\$ 445,562	\$ 589,595	\$ 144,033	2.6%
Total Budget	\$ 21,283,515	\$ 22,517,718	\$ 1,234,203	100%

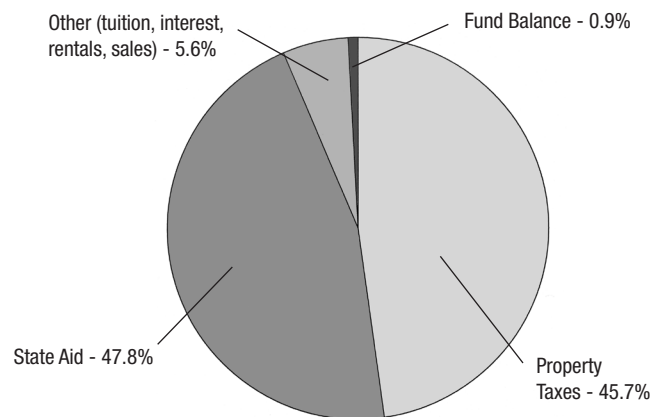
Revenue Summary

	2008-2009	Proposed 2009-2010	Change	Percent of Total
State Aid	\$ 9,264,206	\$ 10,771,409	\$ 1,507,203	47.8%
Property Taxes	\$ 10,288,309	\$ 10,288,309	\$ 0	45.7%
Tuitions & Admissions	\$ 550,000	\$ 645,000	\$ 95,000	2.9%
Interest Earnings	\$ 350,000	\$ 159,000	\$ -191,000	0.7%
Rentals and Sales	\$ 280,000	\$ 308,000	\$ 28,000	1.4%
Other	\$ 126,000	\$ 146,000	\$ 20,000	0.6%
Fund Balance	\$ 425,000	\$ 200,000	\$ -225,000	0.9%
Total Revenue	\$ 21,283,515	\$ 22,517,718	\$ 1,234,203	100.0%

Expenditures by Function



Revenue Summary



Candidates for the Board of Education

This year there are four people running for three open seats on the Brunswick (Brittonkill) Central School District Board of Education. All three open seats are three-year terms. The candidates will appear on the ballot in the following order as determined by a random drawing.

Paul Daley

I am seeking re-election to a fourth term on your Board of Education. My wife Lisa and I both graduated from Brittonkill and our two sons; Bennett and Justin have attended the Brittonkill schools for their education. I am currently employed as the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds at East Greenbush School District (14 years) after working for 18 years here at Brittonkill, the last eight of those years as its Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds. I have served Brittonkill in various roles for over 27 years, and feel my experience qualifies me to serve you well on the Board. Thank You.

Ryan Matthews

Hello I'm Ryan Matthews, a twenty year resident of the Brittonkill Central School District. I am a husband of a Tamarac alumnus and father to two current district students. I have volunteered thousands of hours in the past two decades for our community and now I wish to focus on representing you by having a positive impact on this school system's future. I am passionate about "the program" and want in these trying times, to work for our children to provide the best possible educational program available. Please be sure to give me your support on May 19th. Thank You!

Christine M. Fox

I have been a resident of the Brittonkill District since August 1989. I reside in Pittstown with my husband Brian and our three children who span the 4th to 12th grade levels. I am a licensed Physical Therapist for the last 21 years. I am also a private business owner since 1997 and a director with Mary Kay Cosmetics since January 2002. I am a member of the dynamic Brittonkill P.T.S.A. and the Brittonkill Educational Foundation. It would be my honor to serve and represent you on the Board of Education as a worthy advocate for our children, schools, and community.

Peter Meskoskey

I have been a resident of the town of Brunswick for 19 years and have served on the School Board for the past three. My wife is a long-time resident of the district and we have a daughter in the elementary school. I retired from UPS after 34 years as a manager. I enjoy being part of the process of helping children and families. I am open to all thoughts and opinions and bring a strong background in operations. I am very community and family oriented and ask for your support to serve this community for another three years.



Students at Tamarac Elementary School won't soon forget the difference between potential and kinetic energy. Students this year created wooden cars for a science project that taught them about different forms of energy.

What happens if the budget is defeated?

If voters do not approve the budget on May 19, the district has three choices: put the same budget up for a second vote, put a revised budget up for a second vote or adopt a contingency budget.

If the budget is defeated twice, the Board is required to adopt a contingency budget, which caps spending based on a state formula. Brunswick's contingency budget for 2009-2010 would be capped at \$22,082,833, which is \$434,885 less than the proposed budget.

Under a contingency budget, New York State places restrictions on how schools operate including the elimination of some field trips, requiring the district to charge groups for the use of school buildings, and restricting spending on items such as equipment.

Voter Information

What am I voting on?

A \$22,517,718 budget for the 2009-10 school year and candidates for the school board.

When and where is the vote?

Tuesday, May 19 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the lobby of the district auditorium.

Who is eligible to vote?

Anyone who is a U.S. citizen, 18 years or older, and a resident of the Brunswick (Brittonkill) Central School District for at least 30 days prior to the vote.

How can I vote by absentee ballot?

Qualified district residents who are unable to go to the polls on May 19 can cast their votes by absentee ballot. For an application, call the district office at 279-4600 ext. 2604. 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 18. All completed ballots must be received by the district clerk no later than 5 p.m. on May 19.

What if I have questions?

For further information, please call the District Clerk's Office at 279-4600 ext. 2604.



A Tamarac Elementary student shows off her reading skills for her grandmother during this year's Grandparents and Special Friends Day.

Brunswick Central School District

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In Partnership with the Community

Board of Education

Karen Zagursky, President

Nancy LaRocque, Vice President

Paul Daley • Mary Ann Doyle

Darren Galipeau • Kathleen McGrath

Jamie Meehan • Pete Meskoskey

Matthew Wade

Superintendent

Louis McIntosh

Director of Business Operations

Gail Lathrop

Current Resident at