

# DISTRICT DISPATCH

A Publication of the North Syracuse Central School District

Volume 29 No. 3

May 2013

## School budget vote set for **May 21** Community input shaped 2013-14 budget proposal

North Syracuse Central School District officials used the district's strategic plan and stakeholder conversations to develop recommendations for strengthening its programs and services while also making reductions to the district's 2013-14 proposed budget.

The proposed \$144,716,279 budget for the 2013-14 school year increases spending by 4.3 percent compared to the current year. It also includes the elimination of several staff positions to increase efficiency and savings in employee health care costs (see page 3 for a list of cost reductions).

The budget proposal includes a 5.33 percent property tax levy increase, or \$4,047,682, which is above the district's calculated tax levy limit. That means at least 60 percent of the people who vote on May 21 must approve the budget for it to pass, according to the state's property tax levy cap law. The law determines what percentage of voters must approve a budget.

"We realize that attaining a 60 percent budget authorization could be challenging. However, without this increase, we would have been forced to make damaging cuts to programs, services and staff. We felt that would not be in the best interest of our students, staff or the community they live in," said Pat Carbone, North Syracuse Central School District Board of Education president.

► *continued on page 3*



## Being **responsible** stewards

North Syracuse Central School District officials grappled with proposing a fiscally responsible budget for a district that has already sustained significant reductions to programs, services and staff in recent years.

In the past five years, the district has eliminated 200 staff positions and is proposing to eliminate an additional 14.5 positions in 2013-14.

The school budget is the biggest investment the community makes with its tax dollars, and those dollars are used to prepare each and every student

► *continued on page 7*

## 2013 - 14 Budget at-a-glance

### Proposed budget

\$144,716,279

### Budget increase

\$5,945,078

Proposed school tax levy increase = \$4,047,682 or 5.33%

**Vote: Tuesday, May 21 from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.**

**For residents living SOUTH  
of Route 481**

**Administrative Office Building  
5355 West Taft Road  
North Syracuse, NY**

**For residents living NORTH  
of Route 481**

**Cicero Elementary School  
Route 31  
Cicero, NY**

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## TAX IMPACT ON \$100,000 HOME \$117 INCREASE BEFORE STAR

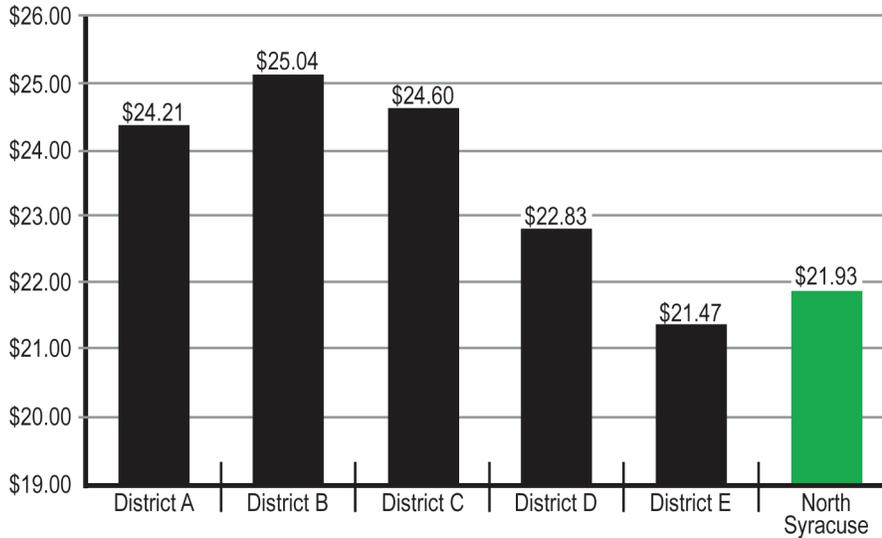
	Cicero	Clay	Salina
			
<b>Full Value</b>	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
<b>Assessed Value (AV)</b>	\$100,000	\$4,340	\$100,000
<b>Estimated Tax Rate Per \$1,000 of AV</b>	\$23.10	\$532.39	\$23.10
<b>Estimated Annual School Tax</b>	\$2,310	\$2,310	\$2,310
<b>Tax Increase</b>	\$117	\$117	\$117

**These calculations exclude the benefits of STAR**

# Tax rate on true value

(per \$1,000 of true value)

## Large suburban districts in Central New York



The North Syracuse Central School District's tax rate on true value has historically been lower than other large suburban districts in Central New York. The tax rate on true value allows the district to compare its local school tax rates with other districts.

As the chart above shows, North Syracuse's tax rates are significantly lower than four of the five large suburban districts in Central New York. These lower rates are the reason that the district has been forced to make difficult expenditure cuts during the past five years. The district will not be able to sustain its current level of program offerings unless its tax on true value rates are increased.

### Tax levy, tax rates, tax bills:

## What does it all mean?

A **tax levy** represents the amount of money the school district will collect from local property owners to fund its budget. It is figured after taking into account all other revenues, including state aid.

Next year's tax levy for North Syracuse Central School District residents would increase by \$4,047,682, or 5.33 percent, under the budget proposal.

The **tax rate** – or the amount to be charged per \$1,000 of assessed property value – is figured by dividing the tax levy into the total assessed value of properties in the school district. Assessed values are determined by the town assessor.

**Tax bills** – the final amount that each homeowner pays – can vary depending on individual property assessments. By August, the towns finalize their assessments and the state sets equalization rates, which equalize the tax burden between towns.

Some taxpayers may see their bills go up by more than 5.33 percent while others may see their tax bills go up by less. Keep in mind that equalization rates do not mean the school district is collecting more taxes. Rather, they redistribute the tax burden to take into account shifting property values.

## What happens if the budget doesn't get 60 percent approval?

If voters reject the 2013-14 budget proposal, the Board of Education can resubmit the same budget – or a revised budget – for a revote on June 18, or it could decide to adopt a contingent budget.

If residents vote down the budget a second time, the Board must adopt a contingent budget. Under the tax levy limit law, **there can be no increase – \$0 – in the tax levy in a contingent budget.**

In other words, North Syracuse would have to levy the same amount of taxes as in the current year **without any adjustments** for state pension rate increases, contractual obligations or other costs – mandated or not.

This would mean the district would make **an additional \$4,047,682 in cuts.** The following cuts would be in addition to those required by law under a contingent budget:

- Elimination of some or all athletic programs;
- Elimination of some or all extra-curricular activities;
- Additional administrative cuts, including the assistant director of special education;
- A school resource officer proposed in the budget would not be added;
- A school worker proposed in the budget would not be added; and
- Elimination of additional teacher positions, which would result in larger class sizes at all grade levels.

### Board of Education

Pat Carbone, *President*  
Robert Crabtree, *Vice President*  
Catherine Cifaratta-Brayton  
Sandra M. DiBianco  
Michael Donofrio  
George Harrington  
Scot McClintock  
Michael Mirizio  
Patrick J. Svoboda

### Superintendent of Schools

Kim J. Dyce Faucette, Ed.D.

## Budget proposal ▶ *from page 1*

On April 22, the Board adopted the 2013-14 budget proposal. A public hearing on the proposal is scheduled for May 14, and district residents will vote on it May 21.

The district's calculated tax levy limit for the 2013-14 school year is 3.45 percent, or \$78,498,349, meaning it could increase the amount of revenue it collects from taxpayers up to and including that amount and require a simple majority (more than 50 percent) vote for budget approval. Any amount above that figure triggers the law's requirement for a supermajority authorization.

However, proposing a budget with a 3.45 percent tax levy increase would have left the district with a \$1.5 million gap between revenues and expenses, forcing it to cut programs such as elementary band and orchestra, increase class sizes and not add staff in areas that would address critical needs, such as providing reading and math support for the district's at-risk elementary students.

As of January, 17 percent of the district's third- and fourth-grade students were considered at serious risk for not passing the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) assessment and 20 percent were considered at serious risk for not passing the New York State math test.

Additionally, only 37 percent of third- and fourth-grade students have a 50 percent chance of passing the New York State ELA and math tests. To support these students, the budget proposal includes the addition of three

elementary academic intervention service (AIS) teachers.

"We have elementary students who are in serious need of help with the basics of a sound education: reading and math," Superintendent Kim Dyce Faucette said. "We could not in good conscience propose a lower tax levy increase knowing that it would mean we weren't doing our best to help our most at-risk students."

The budget proposal also includes hiring one additional school resource officer at an estimated cost of \$80,000 and one full-time social worker to share time between the middle schools and the high school, also at an estimated cost of \$80,000.

The Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings that occurred in Connecticut led North Syracuse officials to review the district's safety and security measures. The administration recommended, and the Board agreed, that an additional school resource officer would be able to provide coverage for the high school and middle schools and an additional social worker would position the district to better assist its students in times of crisis.

"The safety of our students and staff is critical," Dr. Dyce Faucette said. "We looked at ways we could improve and feel that hiring another school resource officer and social worker would add an additional level of support to our students and staff."

## How does the district fund its budget?

School districts have two main sources of funding – state aid and the tax levy. For 2013-14, the North Syracuse Central School District is expected to receive about \$51.4 million in general state aid, which is about a \$2.2 million increase compared to the current school year. Of that amount, about \$24.3 million is to reimburse the district for expenses in previous school years.

The district also lost \$8.3 million in state aid through the Gap Elimination Adjustment, a mechanism by which the state takes back a portion of a district's base aid to help offset the

state's budget deficit. Other smaller sources of revenue include county sales tax revenue and payment in lieu of tax agreements.

Some of the factors driving up the district's expenses next year include pension contributions, which are estimated to increase by \$2.8 million, and health insurance costs that are expected to rise by \$1.2 million.

"This has been a challenging budget year for districts across the state, and I think we're going to see that budget challenges are here to stay for the foreseeable future," said Donald F.X. Keegan, associate superintendent for business services.

## Cost-savings and reductions

The following reductions and cost-saving measures will be implemented if the 2013-14 budget proposal is approved by voters on May 21:

- Elimination of one Gillette Road Middle School administrator position;
- Elimination of one part-time director of music and art position;
- Elimination of seven elementary teaching positions;
- Elimination of five teaching assistant positions;
- Curtailment of bus camera project; and
- Pricing concessions from current health care providers.

If the district proposed the 3.45 percent tax levy increase that would require a simple majority for budget authorization, it would have had to reduce the budget proposal by another \$1.4 million. That would have required the loss of more programs, services and staff members.

In the past five years, the district has eliminated more than 200 employee positions.

"Our mission is to prepare every child to succeed in college, career and as global citizens. To do so, we need to have the appropriate programs, services and staff members in place," Superintendent Kim Dyce Faucette said.

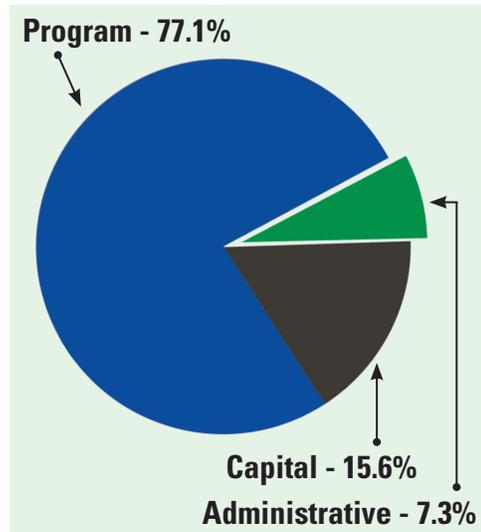
One of the ways the district plans to enhance its programs is by implementing full-day kindergarten for 2013-14; however, that program will not impact next year's budget because the state is funding the program in full for its first two years (see page 7).

To offset the need to either further increase the tax levy or make more reductions to balance the budget, the district is proposing using \$600,000 of fund balance as revenue. Draining that "savings account" is risky because districts use their fund balance to pay for unforeseen expenditures, such as emergency repairs.

# Three-part budget summary

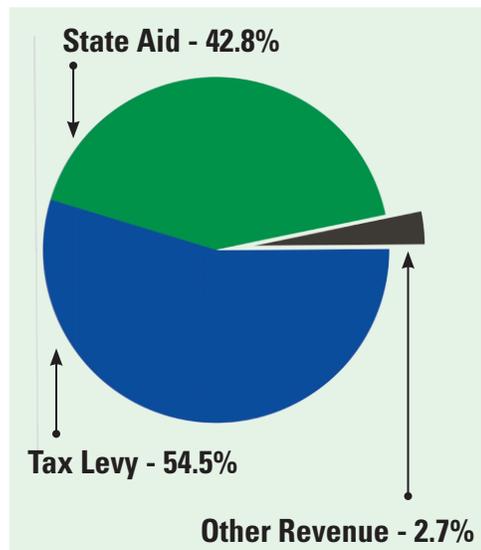
All public schools in New York State are required by law to report spending in three categories: program, administrative and capital. The district's *program component* represents the largest portion and focal point of its budget, *accounting for 77.1 percent of the entire budget.*

## District expenditures



	2012-13 Budget	2013-14 Proposed	Dollar Change
<b>Program Expenditures</b>	<b>\$105,947,560</b>	<b>\$111,535,164</b>	<b>\$5,587,604</b>
Regular Instruction	\$38,644,516	\$39,423,156	\$778,640
Special School Program	\$14,975,017	\$15,504,243	\$529,226
Student Services	\$9,202,426	\$9,442,641	\$240,215
In-Service Training	\$290,912	\$366,039	\$75,127
Legal	\$79,800	\$95,000	\$15,200
Transportation	\$8,082,283	\$7,998,541	(\$83,742)
Employee Benefits	\$34,672,606	\$38,705,544	\$4,032,938
<b>Administrative Expenditures</b>	<b>\$10,171,848</b>	<b>\$10,587,886</b>	<b>\$416,038</b>
Board of Education	\$105,782	\$107,671	\$1,889
Central Administration	\$1,605,770	\$1,545,133	(\$60,637)
Central Support	\$1,205,022	\$1,229,434	\$24,412
Supervision/Staff Development	\$4,620,967	\$4,791,737	\$170,770
Census	\$1,550	\$1,000	(\$550)
Employee Benefits	\$2,632,757	\$2,912,911	\$280,154
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>	<b>\$22,651,793</b>	<b>\$22,593,229</b>	<b>(\$58,564)</b>
Operation/Maintenance of Plan	\$9,323,325	\$9,420,229	\$96,904
Central Support	\$120,000	\$205,000	\$85,000
Employee Benefits	\$1,848,486	\$2,026,086	\$177,600
Debt Service	\$11,359,982	\$10,941,914	(\$418,068)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$138,771,201</b>	<b>\$144,716,279</b>	<b>\$5,945,078</b>

## District revenues



	2012-13 Budget	2013-14 Proposed	Dollar Change
<b>State Aid</b>	<b>\$58,366,479</b>	<b>\$62,725,256</b>	<b>\$4,358,777</b>
General Aid	\$49,145,524	\$51,379,899	\$2,234,375
Building Aid <sup>1</sup>	\$9,220,955	\$8,094,391	(\$1,126,564)
Kindergarten Aid <sup>2</sup>	\$0	\$3,250,966	\$3,250,966
<b>Property Tax Levy</b>	<b>\$75,876,961</b>	<b>\$79,924,643</b>	<b>\$4,047,682</b>
<b>Other Revenue</b>	<b>\$4,527,761</b>	<b>\$3,963,461</b>	<b>(\$564,300)</b>
PILOTS	\$441,000	\$526,450	\$85,450
County Sales Tax	\$430,000	\$250,000	(\$180,000)
Interest	\$135,000	\$120,000	(\$15,000)
Fund Balance	\$750,000	\$600,000	(\$150,000)
Rent	\$381,000	\$346,000	(\$35,000)
Other	\$2,390,761	\$2,121,011	(\$269,750)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$138,771,201</b>	<b>\$146,613,360<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>\$7,842,159</b>

<sup>1</sup> Represents funds that will be used to pay debt service on buildings rather than support programs.

<sup>2</sup> \$1.4 million will be used in 2013-14, the balance of \$1.9 million will be put into fund balance and used in future budgets.

<sup>3</sup> The revenue total is greater than the expenditure total because the district is only spending \$1.4 million of the state's kindergarten conversion aid in 2013-14. The remainder will be spent in future years.

## SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

The Board of Education is the official policy-making body of the North Syracuse Central School District. It is composed of nine members who are elected by district voters to three-year terms. Members receive no salary for serving on the board. The terms of three board members expire annually on June 30. Board members may seek re-election at the annual budget vote.

This year, there are four candidates running for three vacant seats due to the expiration of terms. The three candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be elected to serve from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2016.



**Catherine Cifaratta-Brayton** is a lifelong resident of the village of North Syracuse and a graduate of North Syracuse High School. She also graduated from the Beaux Art School of Beauty Culture, Inc. and is a New York state licensed cosmetologist, serving senior citizens and the physically challenged on a part-time basis.

Cifaratta-Brayton raised five sons as a widowed-single parent. Her sons Joseph,

Leonard (deceased), John, Peter and Philip are all graduates of the North Syracuse Central School District and live in the district with their families.

Since 1982, Cifaratta-Brayton has served as a member of the North Syracuse Central School District Board of Education. She is a highly visible and supportive Board of Education member, attending student events, including academic and co-curricular activities at all grade levels.

Since 1988, she has also served on the Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES Board of Education, which represents 23 component school

▶ continued on page 6



**Sandra DiBianco**, a resident of the town of Clay, has made her home in the North Syracuse Central School District since 1974. Her children, Jennifer and Richard, are graduates of the district.

DiBianco has had a life-long interest in children, their education and development. She first sought election to the Board of Education after 15 years of active involvement in the schools as a Parent Teacher Organization and district-wide Parent Awareness Council officer, volunteer, tutor and substitute teacher.

DiBianco chaired the Board of Education's Legislative Action Committee for seven years. She currently chairs the Policy Committee and sits on the Executive Committee and the District Action Committee. During her 25 years on the Board of Education, DiBianco has represented the Board on numerous committees, among them: the Committee for Academic Intervention Services, the Safe Schools Against Violence In Education Committee and the Universal Pre-Kindergarten Committee. In addition, DiBianco has served on the North Syracuse

▶ continued on page 6



My name is **Mary Scanlon**, and I am a candidate for school board membership in the North Syracuse Central School District. I reside in Cicero and have been a resident in the school district since 1988.

My husband, Michael, and I have been married 25 years and have two children, Andrew and Corey. Corey is a 2012 graduate of Cicero-North Syracuse High School. Both sons

currently attend Utica College, enrolled in undergraduate studies.

I am a graduate of East Syracuse-Minoa High School and attended State University College of New York at Geneseo. I worked in the financial service industry for 27 ½ years with a successful career as a senior business analyst at AXA Equitable working in a team environment on corporate initiatives, involving project coordination and management with IT Partners and Business Clients. I've also held positions as life insurance and disability underwriter at Mutual of New York and The MONY Group. In fall 2011, I retired due to

▶ continued on page 6



**Patrick Svoboda**, his wife Jessica and their five children, Gabriella, age 9; Cassidy, age 7; Brody, age 6; Joseph, age 4; and Adalaide, age 1; live on Topsfield Lane in Clay. Patrick has been a life-long resident of the North Syracuse Central School District, attending Bear Road Elementary, Roxboro Road Middle School, NSJHS, and C-NS High School. He has been employed by a communication company for the past 13 years in the Syracuse area.

Patrick is seeking re-election to the Board of Education for his second term to continue to work in collaboration with the community and district staff as well as further build upon our strong Culture of Excellence in Education. Before running for his first term on the Board of Education, Patrick was involved in the Superintendent's Advisory Committee and KWS Bear Road Elementary PTO, where he learned the need for parent involvement. During his tenure, Patrick has served on a hiring committee for a new principal at KWS BRE, the Policy

▶ continued on page 6

**Each Board of Education candidate is responsible for writing his or her own biography.  
The school district does not endorse one candidate over another.**

**Catherine Cifaratta-Brayton** ▶ *from page 5*  
districts in CNY. Also since 1988, she has served on the Central New York Teaching Center Policy Board, in 2011 merging with Oswego County Teachers Center Policy Board representing 27 districts.

*Cifaratta-Brayton was named to the 1995-96 Wall of Distinction and received the Community Service Award in 2000.*

*Cifaratta-Brayton is a current member of the New York State Association of Computers/Technologies in Education, New York State School Boards Association, National School Boards Association, Career and Technical Education Advisory Council and Alumni Hall of Fame Selection Committee.*

*Cifaratta-Brayton is a volunteer for St. Joseph's Hospital, Crouse Irving-Memorial Hospital and NAVAC. She also judges for the Central New York National History Day, sponsored by the Onondaga Historical Association. She is a Board of Education panelist for the New York State Education Department for hearings.*

*In her 30 years as a North Syracuse Central School District Board of Education member, she has served on many committees and attended workshops and conferences on effectively dealing with educational issues.*

*Cifaratta-Brayton is very dedicated and community oriented, participating in village and town functions, including church and volunteer events.*

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**Patrick Svoboda** ▶ *from page 5*  
Committee and the Legislative Committee.

*Patrick works hard to be a highly visible board member, attending district events with his family. He has considered himself to be fair and he would like to continue to foster relationships that are both positive and beneficial to our children. Patrick has maintained his involvement in his children's education and sees value in what every stakeholder has to say about the process.*

**Sandra DiBianco** ▶ *from page 5*  
*Dollars For Scholars Advisory Board, the Community Connections Advisory Board, the Cicero North Syracuse Optimist Club, the Friends of the Can Teen, Literacy Volunteers, the Central New York Reading Council, the Board of Directors of the Onondaga County Cultural Resources Counsel, the Syracuse Stage Guild Board of Directors, the Everson Museum of Art Members Council, Early Literacy Volunteers and the Board of Directors of Chadwick Residence, which provides shelter and needed services to homeless women and their children.*

*DiBianco, an active and visible board member, is a staunch advocate of high academic standards, fiscal responsibility and accountability. She believes that strong and successful schools result from the active involvement, support and cooperation of all stake-holders: teachers, administrators, non-instructional staff, students, parents and members of the surrounding communities.*

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**Mary Scanlon** ▶ *from page 5*  
*family obligations. I have been an active volunteer in our community, with past board experience on the Cicero Falcons Pop Warner Board, serving as fund raising coordinator, and the CNS Touchdown Club, serving as secretary in 2011.*

*I believe I would be an active contributor and positive influence on our school board and district community, helping our schools provide a learning environment that is supportive, with a quality education to develop each student's potential, promoting confidence and positive growth, giving students a solid foundation for their future success.*

### Learn more

For more budget news, including videos and fact sheets on issues impacting the district, go to [www.nscsd.org/budget](http://www.nscsd.org/budget).

## Bus purchase proposition

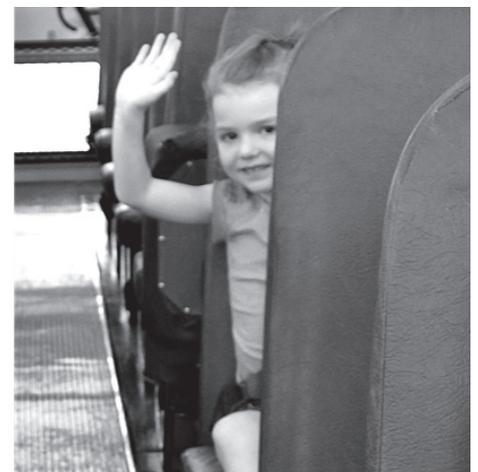
On May 21, the North Syracuse Central School District will be asking voters to decide upon the purchase of several new buses as recommended in the district's long-term bus replacement plan.

This proposition is part of an ongoing plan to keep the district's fleet up to date. Each year, all school buses must pass a rigorous state inspection. Replacement of buses normally occurs after 10 years when it is no longer cost-effective to make the repairs necessary to meet those standards.

The 2013-14 proposition includes the following purchases at a total cost not to exceed \$1,299,145:

- 10 new 65-passenger diesel school buses;
- One new 39-passenger diesel school bus with one to three wheelchair positions, air conditioning and a hydraulic lift; and
- One 48-passenger bus with air conditioning.

The state would reimburse the district over a five-year period for approximately 78 percent of the cost. Local property taxes would pay for the remainder of the cost, which would be about \$61,903 annually for five years, which is a \$1.80 tax increase for a home assessed at \$100,000 before the STAR exemption.



# Full-day kindergarten to begin in 2013-14

The North Syracuse Central School District is launching full-day kindergarten beginning in the 2013-14 school year, and New York State is picking up the tab.

On March 25, the Board of Education approved expanding the district's kindergarten program from a half-day to a full-day program using \$3.25 million in state conversion aid – a one-time infusion of money that could be spread over multiple years to expand a district's kindergarten program.

That means North Syracuse will be able to offer the full-day program for 2013-14 and 2014-15 **at no cost to local taxpayers.**

"We are so pleased that we can offer full-day kindergarten to our incoming students in the fall," Superintendent Kim Dyce Faucette said. "The community identified early on in our strategic planning process that expanding our kindergarten program should be a top priority. By using the state's conversion aid funds, we can do it in a way that will not place any additional

burden on our taxpayers for the next two school years."

Research has shown the benefits of full-day kindergarten include improved language skills, social development and academic achievement. Students who attend full-day kindergarten demonstrate more growth and are better prepared for first grade than their half-day peers, Dr. Dyce Faucette said. Also, the state's new Common Core Learning Standards for kindergarten are geared to a full-day program, she said.

With the addition of full-day kindergarten, the district's half-day program will be eliminated, along with the school's mid-day bus runs, which will no longer be needed.

Conversion Aid will cover North Syracuse's



full-day kindergarten expenses for the program's first two years, after which, the program costs would be absorbed into the district's 2015-16 operating budget.

## Responsible stewards ▶ *from page 1*

for success. So it was after much consideration that the Board of Education adopted a 2013-14 budget proposal on April 22 that includes a 4.3 percent spending increase compared to the current school year. The proposal includes a property tax levy increase of 5.33 percent.

"We are already lean. We have made cuts and reductions in recent years, and we are proposing more for next year. To adopt a budget proposal with a lesser tax levy increase would have meant making program reductions we were not comfortable with," said Board President Pat Carbone.

Reductions proposed for next year include eliminating a building administrator position at Gillette Road Middle School, a part-time director of music and art, seven elementary positions and five teaching assistant positions. In addition, the North Syracuse Junior High School 8.5 academic assistance program will no longer be offered.

District officials point to several key factors to illustrate the district's financial condition and responsible stewardship:

- North Syracuse's per-pupil spending is among the lowest in the state and 22<sup>nd</sup> out of the 23 districts within the Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES region.
- The district's tax rate on true value has historically been lower than the surrounding large suburban school districts. (See chart on page 2.)
- As of June 30, 2012, the district's fund balance, which it uses for emergency repairs or to reduce future tax levies, was estimated to be 1.9 percent of the total budget, which is well below the average of other Central New York districts.

"We feel we have put together a spending plan that is sensitive to the financial challenges of our taxpayers. Making further cuts to our

programs and services would be detrimental," Superintendent Kim Dyce Faucette said. "There's a difference between being lean and being irresponsible."





## POSTAL PATRON ECR WSS

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
SYRACUSE, NY  
PERMIT NO. 4

**DATED MATERIAL – PLEASE RUSH**

### On the ballot:

- 2013-14 school budget proposition: \$144,716,279
- School bus purchase proposition: \$1,299,145
- Salina Free Library budget proposition: \$408,877
- Three seats on the Board of Education

## Please Vote!

### Tuesday, May 21, 2013

### 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

### Polling Places

For residents living  
**SOUTH** of Route 481

**Administrative Office  
Building**  
5355 West Taft Road  
North Syracuse

For residents living  
**NORTH** of Route 481

**Cicero Elementary  
School**  
Route 31  
Cicero

### Voter qualifications:

- U.S. citizen;
- 18 years of age or older;
- Resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote; and
- Not under sentence for a felony conviction and not adjudged mentally incompetent.

**Registration Information:** If you are not registered to vote with Onondaga County by May 3, you must be registered with the school district by May 16. The district is holding a special evening registration 4 to 8 p.m. May 14 at Cicero Elementary School and the Administrative Office Building. Residents may also register at the District Office Building 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday through May 16.

**Absentee Ballots:** Qualified voters of the district may obtain absentee ballot applications from the Office of the District Clerk. The district clerk must receive completed applications no later than 5 p.m. May 20, 2013 OR no later than 5 p.m. May 14, 2013 if the absentee ballot is to be mailed to the voter. Completed applications received after 5 p.m. May 14, 2013 will require the voter to personally appear at the Office of the District Clerk to receive an absentee ballot. Completed ballots must be received by 5 p.m. May 21, 2013 to be counted.

*For questions regarding voter registration, absentee ballots or polling places, please contact Connie A. Gibson, District Clerk, at 218-2131.*

## Polls open 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. May 21 Changes to make voting easier

The North Syracuse Central School District has made some changes that should make it easier for residents to vote May 21 on the proposed 2013-14 school budget and to elect members of the Board of Education.

The changes include new voting machines, a new software program to help with voter registration and sign-in procedures, and extended polling place hours.

To make it easier for residents to vote, **the district will open polls at 6 a.m. on May 21**, which is three hours earlier than in past years. Voting will take place from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

In addition to extending the polling times, residents will also see changes that should make the experience more efficient.

To be eligible to vote, district residents must be registered either with Onondaga County Board of Elections or the school district. In the past, residents who had not pre-registered with the school district were asked to fill out registration cards at the time of the vote so election workers could use the information to confirm their county registration. This slowed down the sign-in process and frustrated voters.

The district is now using a computerized voter registration and election management system that will streamline the sign-in process. The system, operated by Bold Systems, LLC, integrates county and district voting records into one searchable database.

Another change that will make voting easier is that the district will also be using new voting machines. There were several machine breakdowns last year that caused residents to wait longer to vote because there were fewer machines in use.

## Budget public hearing

### May 14, 2013

### 7 p.m.

Jerome F. Melvin Administrative Office Building  
5355 West Taft Rd., North Syracuse

### More budget information:

- Copies of the budget can be reviewed 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays at the District Office, 5355 West Taft Rd., North Syracuse.
- More information is available at [www.nscsd.org/budget](http://www.nscsd.org/budget).