

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

**Q: What is the difference between the tax levy and tax rate?**

A: The **tax levy** is the total amount of money a school district raises in taxes each year from all property owners in the district.

The **tax rate** is the amount paid for each \$1,000 of taxable assessed value of property. The rate is used to calculate each individual property tax bill. In districts that cover just one municipality, the tax rate is figured by dividing the tax levy by the total taxable assessed value of the district, then multiplying by 1,000. This gives you the tax rate, which is expressed as the amount per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

In districts like the North Syracuse Central School District, which encompasses more than one municipality, equalization rates are factored in as well to assign a fair share of the tax levy among the municipalities and to the taxpayers within them.

**Q: What is the equalization rate?**

A: In New York state, each municipality determines its own level of property assessment. This means that property in different municipalities could be assessed less than, higher than or at actual full market value (i.e., the price for which a property could be sold). In order to distribute school district or county taxes evenly among multiple municipalities, the level of assessment for each of those municipalities must be equalized to full market value. To do this, the state uses an equalization rate:

Total assessed value of the municipality ÷ Total market value of the municipality = Equalization rate

Once the full market value of each municipality is established, the school district or county can determine the amount of taxes that should be collected from each municipality.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Q: What is the tax levy limit, or tax cap?

A: The tax levy limit is the highest allowable tax levy (before exemptions) that a school district can propose as part of its annual budget with the support of a simple majority of voters (50% + 1) required for approval. In other words, if a district proposes a tax levy increase at or below the limit, a simple majority of voters is needed for the budget to pass. Any proposed tax levy amount above this limit would require the support of a 60% supermajority of voters to be approved. The tax levy limit sets a threshold requiring districts to obtain a higher level of community support for a proposed tax levy above a certain amount.

## Q: How would the proposed budget affect my taxes? Is it within the cap?

A: The proposed tax levy increase of 2.91 percent is at the tax levy limit that is calculated through a prescribed state formula. As a result, the budget requires the support of a simple majority (50% + 1) of voters to be approved based on the state's tax cap law.

Residents' tax bills are determined by several other factors that are out of the district's control, including assessment levels, which vary by municipality, and equalization rates, which are set by the New York State Office of Real Property Services. While final tax rates cannot be determined until the summer when final assessments and equalization rates become available, we estimate the following tax increases for the towns that comprise the school district:

TAX IMPACT ON \$100,000 HOME BEFORE STAR			
	Cicero	Clay	Salina
Full Value	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Assessed Value (AV)	\$70,500	\$2,750	\$81,000
Est. Tax Rate Per \$1,000 of AV	\$26.26	\$673.43	\$22.86
Est. Annual School Tax	\$1,851.33	\$1,851.93	\$1,851.56
Tax Increase Yr. / Mo.	\$52.88/ \$4.41	\$52.30/ \$4.36	\$52.55/ \$4.38

These calculations exclude the benefits of STAR.

## Q: What happens if the budget is defeated?

A: Under New York state law, if the school budget is defeated, the board of education typically has two options: hold another vote in June on either the same budget or a revised budget, or adopt a contingent budget without a second vote. If residents defeat the proposed budget during a second vote, the board must adopt a contingent budget.

## Q: What is a contingent budget?

A: State law mandates that under a contingent budget, a school district must adopt a budget with no tax levy increase and eliminate all non-contingent expenses, such as certain student supplies, certain equipment purchases and community use of school facilities that results in a district expense. (In other words, the district would likely need to charge fees for any community use of buildings and grounds.) The administrative budget would also be subject to certain restrictions.

## POLLING LOCATIONS

For residents living SOUTH of 481

Jerome F. Melvin Admin. Office (5355 West Taft Road, N. Syracuse)

\*For residents living NORTH of 481

Michael J. Bragman Stadium at Cicero-North Syracuse High School  
(6002 Route 31, Cicero)

