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Proposed 2007-08 budget spends more for classroom learning

Art, physical education and foreign language spending to increase; taxes would rise 2% or less in 2007-08

Scotia-Glenville students from kindergarten to high school will benefit from the boost in academic spending included in the proposed \$44.57 million budget for 2007-08.

Kindergarten pupils will be taught art for the first time, students in grades 4 and 5 will have an extra day of physical education each week, grade 8 students will take foreign languages every day (instead of every other day

SEE "BUDGET INCREASES CLASSROOM SPENDING," PAGE 2

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What will I be considering on May 15?

✓ **2007-08 budget proposal: \$44,567,743**

Spending is up \$2.6 million or 6.1% from this year. About \$935,000 or 2.2% of this increase is to pay for buses and building improvements without borrowing
(see page 2)

✓ **Three candidates for two seats on the Board of Education:**

Jerry Moore, Colleen Benedetto and Margaret Smith (see page 7)

Tax impact:

2% or less estimated tax increase

An estimated \$61.47 tax increase per year or \$5.12 per month on a Scotia-Glenville home with a \$160,000 assessment

These figures are **BEFORE** savings from the state's STAR tax reduction program.

BUDGET INCREASES CLASSROOM SPENDING, from page 1

as they currently do) and high school students will have new course offerings and choices of activities during physical education classes.

“This is a budget that offers something for every student,” said Superintendent Susan Swartz. “The budget proposal accomplishes a lot at a reasonable cost while continuing to position us for the future.”

See pages 3 for budget details.

Taxes to rise 2 percent or less; uses more fund balance

The tax rate is expected to increase by 2 percent or less. For a homeowner with a typical assessment of \$160,000, that means an estimated tax bill increase of \$5.12 per month or \$61.47 per year. The Board of Education sets final tax rates in August.

The district has projected a large accumulated fund balance because of lower costs in areas such as utility costs, special education and health insurance as well as higher revenues.

The Board of Education dedicated \$2.3 million of the fund balance toward reducing the tax levy for next year. Typically, the budget includes \$1.4 million to \$1.6 million of a fund balance toward reducing taxes.

“Our community has supported the schools during very tough times,” said Swartz. “The board felt very strongly that a large share of the fund balance be returned in the form of lower taxes in the coming year.”

The board was also able to include \$935,000 from the fund balance in the budget to buy new buses and make building improvements, all without borrowing (see story, at right).

Budget pays for building improvements and bus purchases without borrowing

The proposed budget for 2007-08 includes \$935,000 to replace the aging roof and playground at Glendaal and to buy three, 28-passenger buses.

Generally, the district asks voters for approval to borrow money to purchase buses and to make building improvements.

The large accumulated fund balance – created by lower-than-expected costs in health insurance, special education costs and utilities and higher-than-expected revenues – would be used to lower the estimated tax levy as well as making the Glendaal improvements and purchasing the buses.

The Board of Education is studying a building project that would affect every school building, replace the other three elementary roofs and rehabilitate the athletic fields. A vote on that plan could occur as early as this fall.

By including the building improvements and bus purchases, next year’s proposed budget increases spending by 6.1 percent or \$2.6 million. However, 2.2 percent or \$935,000 of the increase would be spent for two, one-time items:

- ▶ \$800,000 to fund a building project to replace the aging roof, 20-year-old wooden playground and make other building improvements at Glendaal Elementary School. State aid would reimburse approximately 81 percent of the cost over an estimated 15 years.

The Glendaal Playground Committee will raise the “local share” of the playground cost while the rest will be paid by state aid. Each elementary playground was also included in a building project and paid for in a similar manner.

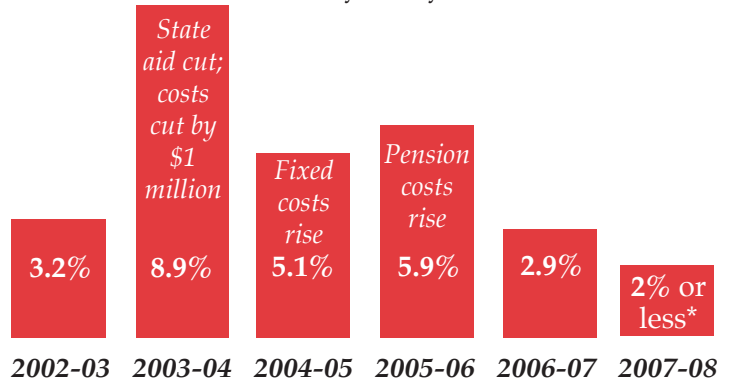
- ▶ \$135,000 to buy three, 28-passenger buses as part of the district’s usual bus replacement plan. State aid would reimburse approximately 65 percent of the costs over an estimated 5 years.

Typically, the district borrows money to purchase buses; the Board of

Education opted to use part of the accumulated fund balance to purchase them next year. These expenditures would be made without increasing district debt, paying interest or borrowing money.

2% or less tax increase proposed in 2007-08

Scotia-Glenville’s proposed tax increase – 2 percent or less – for 2007-08 is below the inflation rate and among the lowest proposed school tax increase in Schenectady County.



* This is an estimated figure; tax rates are set in August by the Board of Education

Highlights of the 2007-08 proposed budget

Here are some of the other initiatives included in the 2007-08 budget plan to be considered by the community on May 15:

Elementary

▶ **.2 part-time art teacher for kindergarten:** Kindergarten students would receive art once the Transitional Kindergarten program extends to full-day in January.

▶ **.2 part-time physical education teacher:** This would allow grades 4 and 5 students to take physical education three days each week, up from the current two.

▶ **Primary Skills Program (PSP) grade 2:** This would be an in-district special education program for students with learning disabilities in grade 2. The budget includes funding for a teacher, teaching assistant and other staff needed for students with special needs. The PSP program, as well as other S-G programs for children with special needs, allow students to remain in their community schools instead of being educated outside of Scotia-Glenville.

▶ **Increased Homework Club funding:** This would increase funding for the after-school elementary homework clubs, allowing them to begin earlier each year or provide additional staff to work with students.

▶ **6 hr. per day teaching assistant for the four computer labs:** This would allow students and teachers to have more time and extra help in the computer labs. Currently, one teaching assistant travels to the four elementary schools during the week to assist teachers with students in the labs.

Middle School

▶ **1.0 full-time foreign language teacher:** This would allow grade 8 students to take foreign languages every day (they currently take foreign languages every other day) and meet the state requirements a year early. Beginning this year, grade 7 students studied foreign languages every day.

▶ **.2 part-time business education teacher:** All grade 6 students would be taught computer keyboarding and software programs. Adding this position will allow grade 7 students to take a computer class taught by technology teachers. In the past, technology teachers taught the grade 6 computer class.

▶ **6.5 hr. per day teaching assistant:** This position would oversee the Time Out room for students who are disruptive and those on in-school suspension.

High School

▶ **New courses:** The budget proposes a grade 9 English honors class and new high school electives, like a medical diagnostics course, AP statistics and AP sociology.

▶ **.4 part-time science teacher:** This position provides a decrease in class size for earth science classes and staff for the medical diagnostics course.

▶ **.8 part time physical education teacher:** This position would allow students more choices of activities in physical education classes.

▶ **7 hr per day building monitor:** This would provide more building, hallway and door coverage and added student supervision.

▶ **6.5 hr. per day teaching assistant:** This position will allow more Academic Intervention Services (AIS) classes to be held for students who need extra help.

▶ **Tech Valley High School tuition:** Tuition is budgeted for one grade 8 student to attend the new Tech Valley High School in North Greenbush next year. The new Capital Region/QUESTAR III BOCES high school will be a full-day program. Students specialize in a project-based mathematics, science and technology curriculum.

▶ **Full-time cleaner:** This position would be used to keep the building in good condition.

Districtwide

▶ **.5 part-time central registrar:** This position would be able to better track student enrollment in all grade levels, conduct a census and coordinate state requirements for student data.

▶ **Increase in athletics spending:** The budget includes funding for a modified (grades 7 and 8) lacrosse team and high school and elementary intramural sports.

▶ **Increase in technology spending:** The board agreed to increase spending for equipment and supplies.

▶ **1.0 full-time teacher** was maintained in the budget to address potential enrollment fluctuations. 📌

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A three-way look at Scotia-Glenville's 2007-08 budget

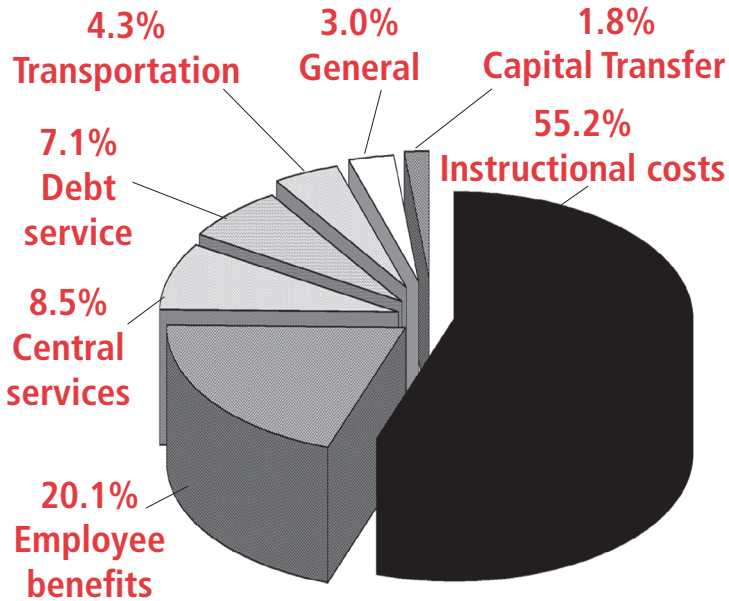
The state requires school districts to show their proposed budgets in three categories: program, capital and administrative.

Here is that information for the proposed 2007-2008 budget:

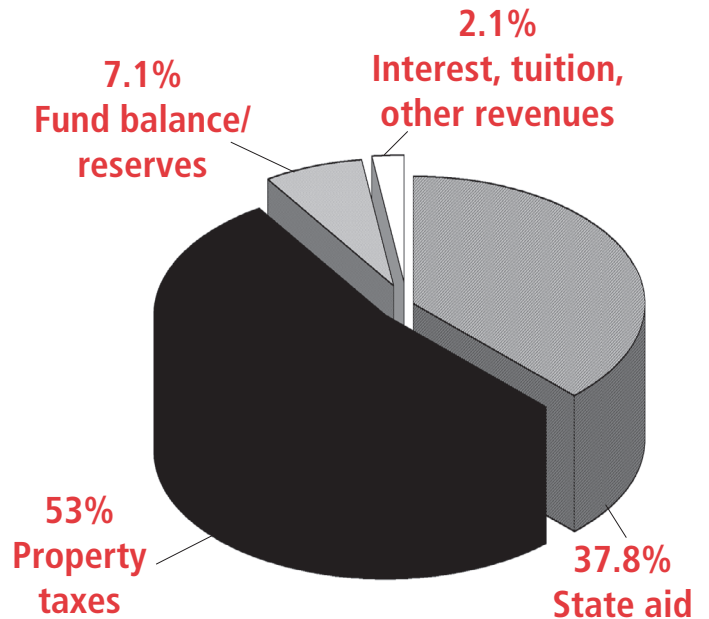
Program	Capital	Administrative
71.5% of the proposed budget	19.1% of the proposed budget	9.4% of the proposed budget
This part of the budget includes the salaries and benefits of teachers, teacher aides and supervisors who spend a majority of their time teaching; instructional costs such as supplies, equipment and textbooks; and transportation operating costs.	This part of the budget includes all purchase of buses; legal judgements and settled claims; salary and benefits for custodial and maintenance staff; all facilities costs, including service contracts, supplies, utilities, maintenance, repairs, construction, renovation and debt; leasing costs; and capital transfers.	This part of the budget includes office and central administrative costs; salaries and benefits for certified school administrators who spend 50% or more of their time performing supervisory duties; data processing; supplies; legal fees; property insurance; and school board expenses.
2005-06 costs \$29,364,942 (73.3%)	2005-06 costs \$6,840,696 (17.1%)	2005-06 costs \$3,854,238 (9.6%)
2006-07 costs \$30,724,574 (73.1%)	2006-07 costs \$7,313,168 (17.4%)	2006-07 costs \$3,972,657 (9.5%)
2007-08 costs \$31,878,847 (71.5%)	2007-08 costs \$8,492,435 (19.1%)	2007-08 costs \$4,196,461 (9.4%)

PROJECTED EXPENDITURES	2005-06 <i>Budget</i>	2006-07 <i>Budget</i>	2007-08 <i>Budget</i>	% of 2007-08 <i>Budget</i>	Change from 06-07 to 07-08
Instructional costs	\$23,001,357..	\$24,024,006 . . .	\$24,601,305 . . .	55.2% . . .	+\$577,299
Employee benefits	\$7,961,238.	\$8,362,619	\$8,952,603	20.1%	+\$589,984
Central services	\$3,309,183.	\$3,689,393	\$3,804,096	8.5%	+\$114,703
Debt service.	\$3,073,123.	\$3,068,671	\$3,163,287	7.1%	+\$94,616
Pupil transportation.	\$1,496,258.	\$1,586,968	\$1,891,605	4.3%	+\$304,637
Transfer to Capital Fund	0.	0	\$800,000	1.8%	+\$800,000
General support	\$1,218,717.	\$1,278,742	\$1,354,847	3.0%	+\$76,105
Board of Education	40,600.	42,800	\$44,700		<div style="border-left: 1px solid black; padding-left: 10px;"> <i>General support areas of Scotia-Glenville's budget</i> </div>
Central administration	217,420.	221,760	\$233,270		
Finance department	339,020.	358,723	\$380,244		
Staffing costs.	205,013.	224,803	\$255,341		
Special items.	415,464.	429,456	\$439,492		
Community services	1,200.	1,200	\$1,800		
Total expenditures	\$40,059,876	\$42,010,399	\$44,567,743.	100.0%	+\$2,557,344

How would the 2007-08 budget be spent?



Where would the money come from?



The chart at the left shows how Scotia-Glenville spends its budget each year. More than 55% of the budget is spent for direct instructional costs. The chart at the right shows the district's four main sources of funding.

PROJECTED REVENUES	2005-06 <i>Budget</i>	2006-07 <i>Budget</i>	2007-08 <i>Budget</i>	% of 2007-08 <i>Budget</i>	\$ change 06-07 to 07-08
Total state aid	\$15,223,182	\$16,166,662	\$16,839,294	37.8%	+\$672,632
General, Lottery and Aid for Special Education	10,770,769	11,628,464	11,987,314		
Building	2,339,642	2,359,298	2,372,000		
Transportation*	1,020,000	1,030,000	1,200,000		
BOCES*	800,000	860,000	1,000,000		
Textbook	179,751	176,500	168,400		
Computer Hardware*	43,032	43,000	42,900		
Computer Software*	49,988	49,600	49,000		
Library/ other aid*	20,000	19,800	19,680		
Interest, federal aid	\$289,400	\$419,400	\$387,400	0.9%	-\$32,000
Tuition, admissions, etc.	\$249,500	\$255,000	\$247,700	0.6%	-\$7,300
Payments in lieu of taxes	\$220,000	\$230,000	\$215,000	0.5%	-\$15,000
BOCES refund, sales	\$69,000	\$89,000	\$69,000	0.1%	-\$20,000
Fund balance/reserves	\$1,620,000	\$1,620,000	\$3,172,733	7.1%	+\$1,552,733
Property taxes	\$22,388,794	\$23,230,337	\$23,636,616	53.0%	+\$406,279
Total revenues	\$40,059,876	\$42,010,399	\$44,567,743	100.0%	+\$2,557,344

These are the types of state aid received by S-G. Aid marked with an * is reimbursement for costs already paid by the district.

Budget Questions and Answers

What has the district done to keep taxes and costs down?

- ▶ S-G is part of a **health consortium** with other school districts and BOCES to help keep health insurance costs in check. S-G employees pay a share of the premium costs.
- ▶ **Heating and fuel costs** – natural gas and electricity – is budgeted at \$1.2 million. S-G has controlled these costs by participating in a joint competitive bid with other school districts and municipalities. The district also buys bus fuel and heating oil through state contracts, ensuring a lower cost.
- ▶ **State aid** – The state Legislature and Gov. Eliot Spitzer proposed increases in public education for all school districts in the state. Scotia-Glenville budgeted an increase of about \$670,000 in state aid.
- ▶ **Fund balance** – The budget includes \$2.3 million to reduce taxes. These funds are projected because costs have been less than expected in the budget and revenue was higher than expected. The budget also includes fund balance to pay for \$800,000 in repairs at Glendaal and to purchase three buses for \$135,000, thus avoiding new debt and future interest costs (*see story, page 2*).

Did the state Legislature change the STAR tax reduction program? What are the “Middle Class STAR” rebate checks?

The Basic and Enhanced STAR programs remain the same as in the past. For homeowners living in Scotia and Glenville, school tax assessments would be reduced by \$37,120 for Basic STAR recipients and \$70,270 for Enhanced STAR recipients (*those over age 60 with qualifying incomes*) before school taxes are computed. The deadline for the 2007 program was March 1. Glenville’s town assessor has more information at 384-0093.

The state Legislature this year also passed a “Middle Class STAR” program that will provide a further benefit to taxpayers on a sliding income scale. The benefit will be provided through a rebate check and is *in addition to* the Basic or Enhanced STAR exemption described above. Details on the Middle Class STAR program are still being worked out. Information is being posted as it unfolds on the state Office of Real Property Services (ORPS) Web site at www.orps.state.ny.us/

This fall (year one of a three-year phase in), homeowners with incomes below \$250,000 will receive a rebate check in addition to their STAR exemption based on their incomes. ORPS estimates that the *average* upstate rebate check will be \$384 for homeowners with incomes below \$90,000. Smaller rebate checks will go to homeowners with incomes from \$90,000 to \$250,000. Those with incomes above \$250,000 will receive only the STAR exemption on their school tax bill and no rebate check. Rebate amounts will increase in 2008 and 2009, and income limits are scheduled to rise in 2010.

What if the budget were defeated on May 15?

By law, the Board of Education may:

- ▶ **Present another budget to the community.** The budget may be the same or a revised budget presented to the community. If a budget were defeated twice, the board *must* adopt a contingency budget (*see next item*).

▶ **Adopt a contingency budget.** By state law, a contingency budget may NOT increase spending by more than 3.84%, excluding debt service and other items. Contingency budgets require school districts to cut non-contingent spending. Scotia-Glenville estimates that \$1.4 million in non-contingent items (*see page 8*) would have to be cut from the proposed budget.

Who can vote in the May 15 school election?

S-G community members may vote on May 15 if they:

- ▶ Have been a resident for at least 30 days before the May 15 election; and
- ▶ Are at least 18 years old.

The district uses registration books from the Board of Elections during voting.

Can I vote by absentee ballot?

Scotia-Glenville residents who are either disabled, in the hospital or will not be in town on the day of the vote may cast their vote by absentee ballot.

- ▶ **Tuesday, May 8:** To have a ballot mailed to your home, you must have the application completed by this date.
- ▶ **Monday, May 14:** To request an absentee ballot in person, you must do so by this date.
- ▶ **Tuesday, May 15:** All ballots are due back to the district office by 5 p.m.. 🗳️

Three candidates vie for two seats on the Board of Education May 15

Three candidates are running for election to two seats on the Board of Education. Each one is for a three-year, unpaid term. Board member Joseph Crisafulli decided against seeking re-election to a second term. As their names will appear on the ballot, the candidates are:



Jerry Moore

JERRY MOORE, of 122 Jay Street, is seeking a first term on the board.

Moore and his wife, Ann, have a daughter, Kezia, a 2004 Scotia-Glenville graduate.

He is an attorney and has worked as an assistant prosecuting attorney and served in the US Navy as an electronics technician.

Moore is a former Schenectady County human rights commissioner and co-chair of the county's Jail Oversight Committee.

He received a bachelor's degree in economics and a law degree from Ohio State University.

He received a master's degree in criminal justice from the University at Albany.

He has been a district resident for 15 years. 🍷



Colleen Benedetto

COLLEEN BENEDETTO, of 513 Charles Street, is seeking a first term on the board.

She and her husband, Ken, have three children: Gabriella, grade 6; Alexandria, grade 3; and Nicholas, a kindergartner. The last two are at Sacandaga.

She owns a home-based jewelry business and has worked in the banking, retail management and photography fields.

Benedetto graduated from Scotia-Glenville and studied child psychology at SCCC.

A teaching assistant and youth group leader with the First Reformed Church, she has also held several Girl Scout positions, is a division coordinator with Highland Soccer and is a Sacandaga PTA member. She served on the K-5 Instructional Organization Advisory Committee and the Redistricting Focus Groups.

Benedetto is a lifetime community resident. 🍷



Margaret Smith

MARGARET SMITH, of 11 Vista Drive, is seeking a fourth term on the board.

She was vice president of the board in 2003 and has been board president since 2004.

She and her husband, Larry, have two children: Lauren, grade 8, and Andrew, grade 5 at Glen-Worden.

She teaches at A Special Place for Children Pre-School.

Smith received a bachelor's degree in special education from Russell Sage College and a master's degree in early childhood education from the College of St. Rose.

She is a Glen-Worden PTA member, has participated in the Relay for Life fund-raiser for the American Cancer Society and is a eucharistic minister at St. Madeleine Sophie Church in Guilderland.

She has been a district resident for 12 years. 🍷

State-Required School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget adopted for the 2006-07 school year	Budget proposed for the 2007-08 school year	Contingency budget for the 2007-08 school year*
Total budgeted amount	\$42,010,399	\$44,567,743	\$43,154,086
Increase/decrease for the 2007-08 school year		\$2,557,344	\$1,143,687
Percentage increase (decrease) in each proposed budget		6.09%	2.72%
Change in the consumer price index		3.2%	
Resulting est. property tax levy, 2007-08 school year		\$23,636,616	\$22,222,959
Administrative component	\$3,972,657	\$4,196,461	\$4,088,611
Program component	\$30,724,574	\$31,878,847	\$31,604,790
Capital component	\$7,313,168	\$8,492,435	\$7,460,685

*Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2007-08 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated. **Elimination of the transfer to capital fund; supplies; bus purchase; technology, maintenance, classroom and other equipment; non-instructional staff; other services; and community use of district facilities.**

Basic STAR Exemption Impact

Estimated Basic STAR exemption savings based on a hypothetical home within the school district with a full value of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000). This shows a home at full value, not at taxable assessment.

	Budget adopted for the 2006-07 school year	Budget proposed for the 2007-08 school year
Basic STAR tax savings on a full-value assessment of \$100,000	\$576.27	\$528.45
School tax increase/decrease on a full-value assessment of \$100,000	-\$233.40	-\$159.40
Net basic STAR savings - \$30,000 full-value assessment reduction	\$809.67	\$687.85
Net enhanced STAR savings - \$56,800 full-value assessment reduction (as of 2006)	\$1,324.47	\$1,159.93

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2007-08 by the qualified voters of the Scotia-Glenville Central School District, Schenectady, Montgomery and Saratoga counties, New York, will be held at the Senior High School in said district on Tuesday, May 15, 2007, between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9 p.m., prevailing time in the Senior High School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine. Voters must be 18 and a resident of Scotia-Glenville for 30 days.

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ScotiaGlenvilleSchools.org



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