

Balancing Priorities – The 2011-12 budget

Proposed 2011-12 budget cuts spending and uses fund balance to limit program reductions

\$47.1 million budget would raise taxes a maximum of 1.86% – less than \$5 per month for the typical homeowner

As everyone saw with the political tussles over the state and federal budgets that played out last month, it all comes down to agreeing on priorities.

The 2011-12 Scotia-Glenville budget proposal satisfies two sometimes-conflicting priorities: it maintains programs for the nearly 2,700 youngsters who rely on their schools for a good education while keeping a lid on spending and taxes despite state aid cuts and skyrocketing costs in an industry that relies heavily on people.

After see-saw discussions and trade-offs over several weeks, the Board of Education unanimously approved a \$47.1 million budget for the 2011-12 school year that spends \$248,245 *less than* the current school year's budget.

If approved by the community on May 17, the budget would increase the tax bill for a typical homeowner with a \$160,000 assessment by a maximum of \$59.45 per year – less than \$5 per month – *before* savings from the state's STAR tax reduction program (*see page 7*).

Even with an increase in building and BOCES aid and a partial state aid restoration, Scotia-Glenville still faced a net state aid *loss* of \$1.27 million – a \$473 cut for *each* Scotia-Glenville student.

SEE "BUDGET KEEPS THE LID..." PAGE 2



is deep in thought as he looks over a boat 'harbor' during the class's Boat Museum exhibit. Students showed a variety of projects related to the Erie Canal, which they had been studying.

What will I see on the May 17 ballot?

- ✓ **2011-12 budget of \$47.1 million**
The proposed budget is 0.5% (about \$250,000) smaller than this year's budget. The estimated tax rate increase would be a maximum of 1.86%. Final tax rates are set in August and will likely be lower.
- ✓ **Four candidates for three seats on the Board of Education**
Candidates – Leslie Smith, William Pytlovany, Pamela Carbone and David Bucciferro – are running for three seats on the Board of Education. Each seat is for a three-year term. Current Board of Education member Benjamin Conlon is not seeking re-election. See page 6.

Voting will be held from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, May 17, at the high school.

BUDGET KEEPS THE LID ON SPENDING, from page 1

For the third year in a row, Scotia-Glenville joined other school districts around the state in what has become an annual spring ritual: searching for places to cut spending before presenting a school budget to their communities.

“Rising costs with decreasing revenues are a recipe for disaster in anybody’s budget,” said Superintendent Susan Swartz. “We have been able to weather the past few years by trimming throughout the budget and dipping into our reserves, but next year may be very difficult without some sort of significant mandate relief from the state.”

Two years ago, state aid provided 41 percent of district revenue; that figure will sink to 32.8 percent in 2011-12.

Next year, the district will also use \$804,000 in one-time funding from the Education Jobs bill passed by Congress to buffer the state aid cut.

What was restored in the budget?

After weeks of discussion and a Community Forum on March 30, as well as a restoration of \$402,000 in state aid, the Board of Education adopted a budget that *includes* these items that had been considered for elimination:

- ✓ One OPAL enrichment teacher to work with students in kindergarten to grade 2; that person will also work with the library media specialists and grades 3-5 students to develop a grades 3-5 OPAL program;
- ✓ Young Scholars program in grades 4/5 (*not in grade 6*);
- ✓ 1-2-3 Success to work with at-risk students;
- ✓ Grades 6-12 summer school (*with driver’s education*);
- ✓ Grade 6 exploratory foreign language; and
- ✓ Late buses at the middle and high schools (*assuming expected transportation savings in other areas*).

Several programs will be revamped and run differently in the 2011-12 school year. See the story on page 3 for more information about those.

“The Board of Education has arrived at a budget that does not damage Scotia-Glenville’s instructional program, recognizes the struggling economy and is sensitive to our community’s ability to pay for its schools,” said Swartz.

‘Roll-over’ budget too steep – cuts needed

After presenting a ‘roll-over’ budget in February that she

acknowledged hiked taxes by an unacceptable 7.7 percent, Swartz proposed budget reductions that included: not replacing two retiring principals and elimination of field trips, summer school, 1-2-3 Success, the modified lacrosse and tennis teams, a half-time teaching assistant, a part-time float nurse, two OPAL enrichment teachers and the Young Scholars and exploratory foreign language programs in grade 6.

These were ultimately *cut* from the final 2011-12 budget:

- ✓ Two principal positions (\$250,000);
- ✓ Transportation and buildings and grounds budget reductions (\$165,000);
- ✓ One of the two OPAL positions (\$75,000);
- ✓ The part-time float nurse (\$35,009);
- ✓ Field trips (\$15,000), except for those required by district or state requirements;
- ✓ A half-time teaching assistant (\$12,320);
- ✓ The grade 6 Young Scholars program (\$14,520);
- ✓ Modified lacrosse and tennis teams (\$13,280);
- ✓ One full-time aide (\$11,493); and
- ✓ District-wide equipment (\$9,500).

Dipping into reserves and fund balance

The proposed budget uses \$3.578 million from the ‘emergency/rainy day’ fund balance fund and \$1.55 million from reserve funds dedicated to pay for workers’ compensation, state employee pension contributions and tax challenges. That totals \$5.128 million.

The current 2010-11 budget uses \$4.765 million of the ‘emergency/rainy day’ fund balance to balance the budget.

The fund balance is generated by having an operating surplus during the fiscal year (*revenues exceed expenditures*). The fund balance changes each year depending on revenues and expenditures. Part of the fund balance is used every year to reduce the impact of the annual budget on the tax levy.

“While we do not like using fund balance on a regular basis, doing so has allowed the district to avoid the kinds of deep budget reductions being seen in many other school districts,” said Swartz.

About \$300,000 of the restored state aid will be kept in fund balance in anticipation of additional state cuts in the 2012-13 school year, which could be “considerably worse than this year’s budget development process,” she added. 🍷

Budget Questions and Answers

What changes will I notice next year because of the 2011-12 school budget?

Several programs slated for reductions will be revamped as a result of the proposed budget:

✓ The elementary **OPAL enrichment program**, which works with students considered gifted, will change in the 2011-12 school year because of the one OPAL teacher reduction. The remaining person will work with students in kindergarten to grade 2 and work with the elementary library media specialists to develop a program for OPAL students in grades 3-5.

✓ The reduction of the **part-time float nurse** means that Scotia-Glenville will *still* employ six nurses – one for each of the schools – and one float nurse, who is used to assist the nurses and substitute if a nurse is absent.

✓ The **transportation budget** called for cutbacks in overtime, which would mean the end of the late buses that pick up students at the middle and high schools. Superintendent Susan Swartz said she was hopeful of finding other savings in the transportation budget that would restore the buses, even if only for two days per week.

✓ **Driver’s education** will be held this summer but will charge a higher fee to make it self-sustaining. The program costs an estimated \$13,661 to run. Last year, there were about 50 students in the two classes. That works out to \$274 per stu-

dent, well below the private school cost for a six-week, on-the-road teaching program.

✓ **Grade 6**, which had functioned as four two-person teaching teams similar to how grade 5 is taught, will operate with just two teams: one with four teachers and one with three teachers.

Teachers will teach specific subjects, like math or science, similar to how students are taught in grades 7-12. All teachers will teach English on the three-person team.

The budget reduced one grade 6 teaching position because next year’s incoming grade 6 class has just 178 students, 35 fewer than this year’s sixth-grade. The position would likely be restored in the 2012-13 budget because of a larger class the following year. 📌

Will there be staffing changes next year?

The Board of Education has accepted 18 retirements during this school year, including three principals.

Glen-Worden Principal James Dunham and Sacandaga Principal John Tobiassen will retire at the end of June; Middle School Principal Shari Keller will retire on December 30.

Since the 2011-12 budget does not replace the two elementary principals, there will be an administrative re-organization as of July 1:

✓ Lincoln Principal Ann Comley will move to Sacandaga as principal;

✓ Athletic Director John Geniti will become the Lincoln principal and continue as athletic director;

✓ Director of Curriculum and Instruction Maureen Long will become the Glen-Worden principal and elementary curriculum coordinator;

✓ High School Principal Lynda Castronovo will also serve as the grades 6-12 curriculum coordinator.

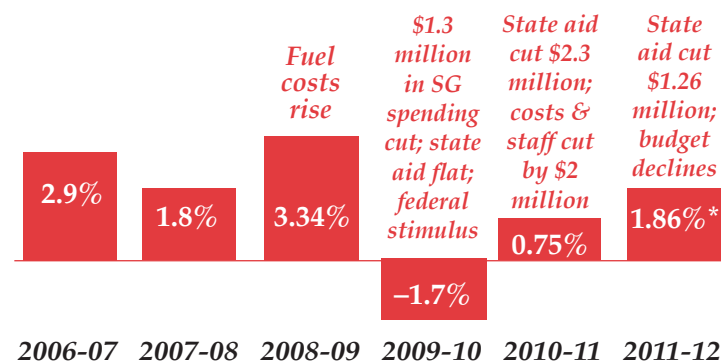
✓ Glendaal Principal Thomas Eagan will also become the elementary physical education coordinator;

✓ Interim Middle School Assistant Principal Thomas Fyvie will also become the grades 6-12 physical education coordinator.

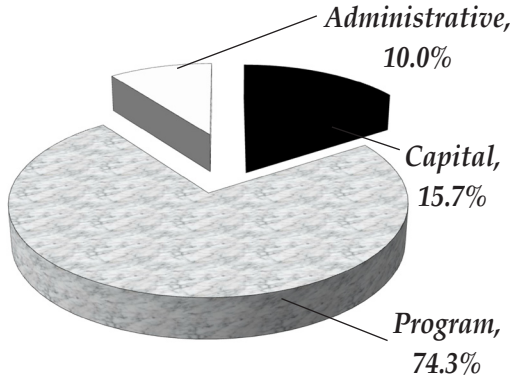
Most of the other 15 retiring staff members – except for one grade 6 position – will be replaced next year. 📌

2011-12 tax rate expected to raise taxes by a maximum of 1.86%; five year average is 1.4%

Scotia-Glenville’s proposed tax increase in 2011-12 is a maximum of 1.86 percent - less than \$60 per year or \$5 per month for a home with a \$160,000 assessment. Scotia-Glenville’s average annual tax increase from 2006-10 was 1.4 percent.



* This is an estimated figure; tax rates will be adopted in August by the Board of Education



A three-way look at Scotia-Glenville's 2011-12 budget

New York state requires school districts to show their proposed budgets in three categories: Program, Capital and Administrative.

Program

74.3% of the proposed budget

This part of the budget includes the salaries and benefits of teachers, teaching assistants, teacher aides and supervisors who spend a majority of their time teaching; instructional costs such as supplies, equipment and textbooks; and transportation operating costs.

2009-10 costs	\$34,535,033 (74.0%)
2010-11 costs	\$34,338,675 (72.6%)
2011-12 costs	\$34,961,860 (74.3%)

Capital

15.7% of the proposed budget

This part of the budget includes all purchase of buses; legal judgments 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.

2009-10 costs	\$7,548,057 (16.2%)
2010-11 costs	\$7,927,189 (16.7%)
2011-12 costs	\$7,389,962 (15.7%)

Administrative

10.0% of the proposed budget

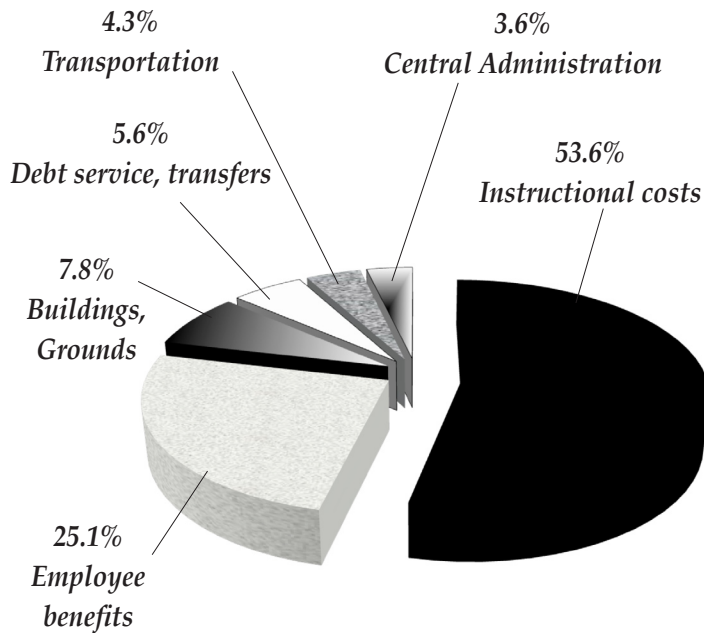
This part of the budget includes office and central administrative costs; salaries and benefits for certified and non-certified administrators who spend 50% or more of their time performing supervisory duties; data processing; supplies; legal fees; property insurance; and school board expenses.

2009-10 costs	\$4,568,291 (9.8%)
2010-11 costs	\$5,063,296 (10.7%)
2011-12 costs	\$4,729,093 (10.0%)

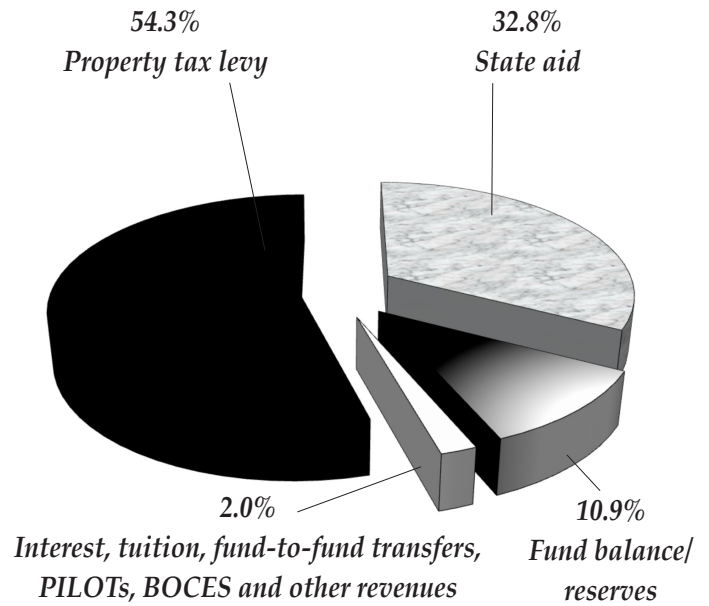
PROJECTED EXPENDITURES

	2010-11 <i>Adopted</i>	2011-12 <i>Budget</i>	% of 2011-12 <i>Budget</i>	Change from 10-11 to 11-12
Instructional costs	\$25,834,107	\$25,264,850	53.6%	– \$569,257
Employee benefits	\$10,858,682	\$11,804,980	25.1%	\$946,298
Buildings and grounds	\$3,703,294	\$3,654,180	7.8%	– \$49,114
Debt service	\$2,994,355	\$2,492,269	5.3%	– \$502,086
Pupil transportation	\$2,028,245	\$2,023,411	4.3%	– \$4,834
Central admin. functions	\$1,751,437	\$1,702,185	3.6%	– \$49,252
Transfer to special aid	\$159,040	\$139,040	0.3%	– \$20,000
Total expenditures	\$47,329,160	\$47,080,915	100.0%	– \$248,245

How would the 2011-12 budget be spent?



Where would the funding for the 2011-12 budget come from?



SHIFTING THE BURDEN: State aid accounted for nearly **41%** of district revenue in the 2009-10 budget; next year, state support drops to **32.8%** of the 2011-12 budget.

PROJECTED REVENUES

	2010-11 Adopted	2011-12 Budget	% of 2011-12 Budget	Change from 10-11 to 11-12
NYS Foundation aid	\$12,510,682	\$12,510,682		
Federal ARRA aid	\$961,641	\$0		
Building aid	\$2,400,169	\$2,935,941		
Transportation aid*	\$1,641,009	\$1,581,264		
BOCES aid*	\$989,854	\$1,158,041		
High cost special ed. aid*	\$738,380	\$581,491		
Software, hardware, textbook, library aid*	\$295,678	\$275,726		
Gap Elim. Adjustment	-\$2,832,348	-\$3,604,656		
Total state and federal aid	\$16,705,065	\$15,438,489	32.8%	-\$1,266,576
Payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT)	\$120,382	\$350,000	0.7%	\$229,618
BOCES rental, miscellaneous	\$160,000	\$160,000	0.4%	\$0
Interest, Medicaid, Medicare aid	\$175,000	\$160,000	0.3%	-\$15,000
Tuition, admissions, cap. fund trans.	\$247,676	\$293,523	0.6%	\$45,847
Dedicated reserves (tax, retire.)	\$0	\$1,550,000	3.3%	\$1,550,000
Fund balance	\$4,765,000	\$3,578,000	7.6%	-\$1,187,000
Property tax levy	\$25,156,037	\$25,550,903	54.3%	\$394,866
Total revenues	\$47,329,160	\$47,080,915	100.0%	-\$248,245

*Aid marked with an * is reimbursement for costs and programs already paid by the school district.*

Four candidates seeking three seats on the Board of Education May 17



Four candidates are seeking three seats on the Board of Education. All of the three seats are for three-year terms; board members are unpaid. Current board member Benjamin Conlon did not seek a fourth term. Candidates are shown below in the order they will appear on the ballot.

Leslie A. Smith, of 2399 Ridge Road, is seeking a first full term.

She was elected in May 2010 and has served since to complete the final year



Leslie A. Smith

of an unexpired board term. She is now seeking election to the full term.

Smith is a grade 4 teacher at Paige

Elementary School in Schenectady.

She holds an SDL administrative certificate from the College of St. Rose; a master's in curriculum development and instructional technology from SUNY Albany; and a bachelor's in elementary education from SUNY Oswego.

Smith serves on the Parent Partnership Team, Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and Building Leadership Team at Paige Elementary School.

She attends St. Joseph's Church.

She and her husband, Roger, have two children: Sara, age 4; and Marissa, age 2.

She is a lifelong district resident. 🍷

William J. "Bill" Pytlovany, of 32 Sunnyside Road, is seeking a first term on the board.

He is a photographer and computer security consultant. Also a web designer, he created the local community site VisitScotia.com

Pytlovany holds a bachelor's degree in math



William J. "Bill" Pytlovany

and physics from the College of St. Rose.

He is a member of the Freedom Park Board of Directors and is on the board at the Scotia-Glenville Children's Museum. He has also served on the Village of Scotia Parks Board as a commissioner.

Pytlovany has been recognized three times by Microsoft as one of the computer industry's 'Most Valuable Professionals.'

He and his wife, Cindi, have four children: Erica, a 1992 high school graduate; Jennifer, a 1994 high school graduate; and Christopher and Amy, both 1997 high school graduates.

He has lived in the district for 45 years. 🍷

Pamela S. Carbone, of 20 Vista Drive, is seeking a sixth three-year term.

She is the current Board of Education president, having been elected to that office in 2009 and 2010.

Carbone is a science teacher at the Success Academy for Middle

School Students, a program for at-risk students in the Schenectady City School District.

She holds a bachelor's in math and physics from Transylvania University and a master's in physics from Wright State University.

A 26-year S-G resident, she was active for years in several PTAs.

Carbone is a former president

of the Capital District School Boards Association. She has served on several committees for the New York State School Boards Association.

Her son, Drew, graduated from the high school in 2002. She has two grandchildren who attend Lincoln Elementary School.

She was first elected in May 1996 and re-elected in 1999, 2002, 2005 and 2008. 🍷

David J. Bucciferro, of 323 Glen Avenue, is seeking a first term on the board.



David J. Bucciferro

He is director of rehabilitation services

for the NYS Office of Mental Health.

He oversees the development and implementation of community-based mental health services.

Bucciferro holds a bachelor's degree from Siena College and a Certificate of Psychiatric Rehabilitation from Boston University.

He is a member of the high school PTSA and president of the All Sports Booster Club. He has been involved in several activities, including chair of the Lincoln School Shared Decision Making Committee, president of Pop

Warner Football and president of Lincoln School Pack 2 Cub Scouts.

He received the PTA Council Founders' Day award this year.

He attends St. Joseph's Church.

He and his wife, Linda, have three children: Erica Bucciferro Flanigan, age 26; Bruce, a college freshman at SCCC, and Alex, a freshman at the high school.

He has lived in S-G for 21 years. 🍷

Questions and Answers, continued from page 3

Schools have high labor costs because they employ people to provide programs.

Did any labor unions accept concessions?

All eight labor unions at the school district were asked for concessions for the second year in a row. Last year, labor unions representing S-G administrators and nurses agreed to wage and health insurance concessions that saved money this year and next year. Unions representing the secretaries and local 766 union agreed to similar concessions in settling their contracts last year. The secretaries have agreed to additional health insurance changes for 2011-12. The teachers' and teaching assistants' contracts expire June 30. 🗳️

How will the state's STAR school tax reduction program affect my tax bill?

The STAR program is a *state-run* program and is *not* administered by the school district. STAR exemptions change based on the town's equalization rate and how close property assessments are to full market value.

For the 2011-12 school year, Basic STAR recipients in SG will receive an exemption of \$27,300 (this year, it was \$26,460) and Enhanced STAR recipients (*homeowners over age 65 with qualifying incomes*) in SG would receive a \$54,690 exemption (this year, it was \$51,090).

A change to the state law this year limited STAR savings to a maximum 2 percent increase each year and also attached a \$500,000 family income maximum to the Basic STAR program. There had been no income cap in the past.

The result is that the STAR program will save \$540 for Basic STAR S-G recipients and \$1,043 for Enhanced STAR recipients. This year, those STAR savings were \$530 and \$1,022, respectively.

The STAR reduction is taken off the tax bill before it is computed and sent to homeowners. 🗳️

I've heard about a property tax cap. How would it work?

A proposal to cap property taxes was introduced in the New York State Legislature by Gov. Andrew Cuomo in January and approved by the state Senate on Jan. 31.

The state Assembly has not voted on the tax cap bill.

The legislation would take effect in the 2012-13 school year (*for budgets proposed next year, in May 2012*).

The legislation limits the increase in a local government's (*school districts, villages, towns and counties*) annual property *tax levy* to 2 percent or to the change in the national Con-

WE THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW...

Who can vote on May 17?

Scotia-Glenville community members who are US citizens may vote in the May 17 school elections if they:

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

The district uses registration books from the Board of Elections during voting. Voting will be held from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the old high school gym, Sacandaga Road. 🗳️

Can I vote by absentee ballot?

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. Absentee voters must *first* complete an application to vote and *then* complete the ballot.

▶ **Tuesday, May 10:** To have a ballot mailed to your home, the application must be completed by this date.

▶ **Monday, May 16:** To request an absentee ballot in person, you must do so by this date.

▶ **Tuesday, May 17:** All ballots are due back to the district office by 5 p.m. 🗳️

sumer Price Index (CPI), whichever is lower. The 2010 CPI was 1.6 percent.

The bill includes measures that allow districts to override the cap with 60-percent voter approval, as well as to bank unused portions of the cap for future years.

Tax levy is the total amount of money that a government collects each year in taxes. The *tax rate*, which is the per \$1,000 of assessed value figure used to compute tax bills, is factored after consideration of assessment information and state equalization rates in the towns that make up a district.

In general, a 2 percent increase in the *tax levy* does not compute to a 2 percent increase in the *tax rate*.

For example, the 2011-12 proposed Scotia-Glenville budget calls for a *tax levy* increase of 1.56 percent while the *tax rate* would rise by an estimated 1.86 percent.

Most observers agree that placing an artificial cap on a school district's tax levy increase in the face of continued state aid cuts, without a corresponding loosening of state mandates and without some type of control over rising state pension and health insurance costs would lead to dramatic future school budget cuts. 🗳️

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Scotia-Glenville

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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 Maureen A. Long
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 Andrew M. Giaquinto
 School Business Manager

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SCOTIA-GLENVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

2011-12 BUDGET

State-Required School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget adopted for the 2010-11 school year	Budget proposed for the 2011-12 school year	Contingency budget for the 2011-12 school year*
Total budgeted amount	\$47,329,160	\$47,080,915	\$47,028,872
Increase/decrease for the 2010-11 school year		- \$248,245	- \$300,288
Percentage increase (decrease) in each proposed budget		- 0.52%	- 0.63%
Change in the consumer price index		1.6%	
Resulting est. property tax levy, 2009-10 school year		\$25,550,903	\$25,498,861
Administrative component	\$5,063,296	\$4,729,093	\$4,703,916
Program component	\$34,338,675	\$34,961,860	\$34,934,995
Capital component	\$7,927,189	\$7,389,962	\$7,389,962

*Assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2011-12 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated: **Further reductions in spending for equipment and reductions of certain non-union employee salaries.**

Basic and Enhanced STAR Exemption Impact

The state's STAR program reduces a home's assessment before computing individual school tax bills (see page 7 for more information). The Basic STAR program is available to primary homeowners earning less than \$500,000; the Enhanced STAR program provides a larger savings for those over age 65 with qualifying incomes. Applications are available from the town assessor's office in each town. The application deadline is March 1. Call the Glenville town assessor at 688-1200 extension 403.

	Budget adopted 2010-11	Budget proposed 2011-12
School Tax increase (or decrease) on a \$100,000 full-value assessment	\$62.56	\$37.16
Basic STAR tax savings (2011-12 full-value reduction of \$27,300) on a \$100,000 full-value assessment	\$529.52	\$540.11
Enhanced STAR tax savings (2011-12 full-value reduction of \$54,690) on a \$100,000 full-value assessment	\$1,022.42	\$1,042.87

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2011-12 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 17, 2011**, 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.