

# GLOVERSVILLE

ENLARGED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## School budget vote set for Tuesday, May 17



### Inside the 2005-06 budget newsletter

- Residents will vote on a \$125,000 proposition to purchase two school buses. See page 3.
- Changes in the accounting for pension contributions and a more than 5 percent increase in the contribution rate hit the district hard. See page 3.
- Are you wondering where the money comes from, and where it goes? See page 4.
- STAR program offers tax breaks. See page 5.
- Grant funds supplement the general fund, and help students achieve. See page 6.
- The Capital Project is underway. See page 8.

**GESD residents will go to the polls on May 17 to decide on a proposed \$37.5 million budget for the 2005-06 school year.**

Spending in the proposed budget is up \$1.7 million over the 2004-05 spending plan. The proposed budget would translate to an estimated local tax rate increase of **2.17 percent**.

Residents will also elect three candidates to the Board of Education, and vote on a \$125,000 proposition to purchase two school buses.

#### Why are taxes going up?

Much of the spending increases in the 2005-06 proposed budget are the result of increases in areas that school officials have little control over.

These costs include:

- A 5.5 percent increase in the contribution rate for the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) and a

**The \$60.3 million Capital Project approved by voters in February 2004 is currently underway. The project will have NO impact on the 2005-2006 budget.**

**See back page for details.**

1 percent increase in the rate for the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) will result in the school district paying \$850,000 more to fund its share of pension costs in 2005-06. See page 2 for details.

- An expected increase of \$397,000 in health insurance costs.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

### Gloversville

#### Board of Education

**President**  
Katherine Hillock

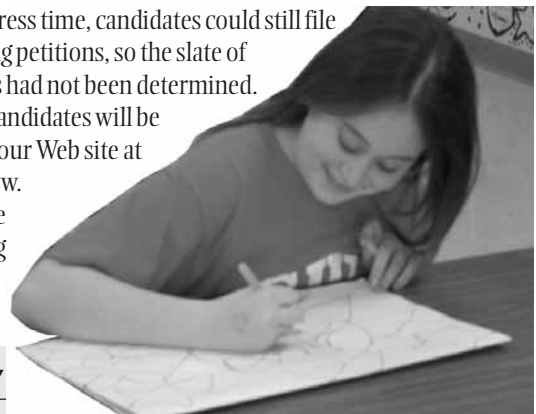
**Vice President**  
Joan Oare

**Board Members**  
Gino Calandra  
Sheri McCloskey  
Perry Paul  
Elizabeth Simek  
Harry Wiggins  
James Yanno  
Mark Yost

### Residents to elect three candidates to Board of Education

Voters may choose up to three candidates for the Gloversville Enlarged School District Board of Education. The three-year terms of Harry Wiggins, Sheri McCloskey and Gino Calandra expire on June 30.

As of press time, candidates could still file nominating petitions, so the slate of candidates had not been determined. The final candidates will be posted on our Web site at <http://www.gloversville.schools.org>



**"Our business is teaching and learning."**

## Vote set for May 17

(Continued from Page 2)

- A \$61,000 increase in fuel costs, which will double the fuel costs from 2004-05.
- A \$185,000 increase in BOCES special education services due to an increase in the number of students being served.

### Increases result in spending cuts

In order to keep the tax levy increase at 5 percent, district officials were forced to make several budget cuts for the 2005-06 school year.

These cuts include the elimination of 21 part- and full-time non-instructional positions. However, half of those cuts will be achieved through attrition—meaning out of the 21 positions that were eliminated, 11 are already vacant positions that will not be refilled.

Superintendent of Schools Daniel Connor said that while the cuts were difficult to make, they will not affect programming.

The board's charge, Connor said, was to make those cuts that would have the least impact on student learning.

"I am pleased with our ability to maintain both programming and staff so that there isn't a negative impact on the educational environment," he said.

"The entire Board of Education and administrative staff are to be commended for working together to find solutions for next year's budget."

## District facing higher costs for employee pensions

Public school districts in New York State are required by law to offer pensions to employees, and to make contributions for their employees' pensions into both the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) and Employees' Retirement System (ERS).

Two recent changes in the state requirements regarding district pension contributions have resulted in a dramatic increase in GESD's costs for the 2005-06 school year.

The first change is the sharp jump in the mandatory contribution rate paid by the district.

In fiscal year 2004-05, GESD budgeted \$837,000 for pension costs. For fiscal year 2005-06 the district is budgeting \$1.7 million.

The increase of more

than \$850,000 is due mainly to the TRS contribution rate changing from 2.5 percent to 8 percent.

This 5.5 percent increase, combined with the 1 percent increase in the ERS contribution, has made the budget process very difficult and has forced the administration to cut in other areas of the budget.

### Change in law requires use of fund balance

The second change is a new accounting rule that essentially requires the district to pay two years of pension costs in one year.

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board, (GASB) is now requiring all districts that use a cash method of accounting, including the Gloversville Enlarged School District, to change to an accrual method.

Under the cash method, the

district pays its obligation to the TRS and ERS in the school year after those obligations are incurred. The accrual method requires the expenditure to be paid in the same year the costs are incurred.

Because the change was recently announced, the district is required to account for last year's retirement system payments as well as this year's in the 2004-05 budget.

In order to make both pension obligation payments, district officials have had to use more than \$1.5 million from the fund balance. This makes less money available from the fund balance to help lower the tax levy in 2005-06.

*GASB sets the accounting rules for all school districts. There are no formal sanctions for ignoring the standards, but districts that do not follow them are subject to lower bond ratings and criticism from auditors.*

**To learn more about the 2005-06 budget, including last minute revenue projections and tax levy information, please attend a budget hearing at 7 p.m., on May 10 in the middle school auditorium.**

### What happens if voters reject the budget

Under state law, a school district can submit a budget to voters a maximum of two times. If it is defeated twice, the board must adopt a contingency budget, which would limit new spending. For 2005-2006, the cap is 3.24 percent.

However, the district's proposed budget calls for a spending increase of 4.75 percent, which is more than the state's spending cap would allow. Thus, if the budget is defeated the Board of Education would have to consider the options before them.

### Central Administration

**Superintendent**  
Daniel T. Connor  
775-5600

**Business Manager**  
D. Paul Blowers  
775-5604

**Assistant Sup't for Curriculum and Instruction**  
Roger Rooney  
775-5609

### Who to contact for more information

More information about the proposed school budget is available in the district's Business Office, located in Gloversville Middle School, 234 Lincoln Street, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. You can also visit us on the Web at <http://www.gloversvilleschools.org>



**“The Board of Education and GESD administration have worked together to produce a budget that will continue to offer the academic programs that are proving to be successful, while being sensitive to the welfare of our children and taxpayers.”**

**– Board of Education**

## Residents to decide on school bus purchase

Voters will be asked to decide whether the school district should purchase two 65-passenger school buses. The maximum cost for the two buses is set at \$125,000.

Ninety percent of the bus-purchase costs would be reimbursed by state aid, leaving local taxpayers to pay for the remaining 10 percent.

The school district would borrow money to pay for the buses, which would be paid over a five-year period. Including interest payments, the local cost of the bus purchases would be approximately \$14,221.

See chart at right for more details about the repayment schedule.

## Who is allowed to vote?

### To vote on May 17, you must be:

- A citizen of the United States;
- At least 18 years old; and
- A resident of the Gloversville Enlarged School District for at least 30 days preceding the vote.

Those not already registered to vote may do so at the Fulton County Board of Elections, 2714 State Highway 29, Johnstown.

### Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots may be applied for at the school district office, located on the second floor of Gloversville Middle School. The application must be received by the school district clerk at least seven days prior to the vote if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or by May 16 if the resident is picking up the ballot in the district office.

Completed absentee ballots

must be received by the clerk by 5 p.m. on May 16. Persons are qualified for an absentee ballot if they are absent from the district while polls are open because:

- They are away for business, occupation or studies;
- They are confined in a hospital or jail;
- They have a physical disability or illness; or
- They will be absent because of vacation.

### Polling Places

Polls will be open from noon-9 p.m. on May 17 at the following locations: Forest Hill Towers, Park Terrace School, Boulevard School, McNab School, Kingsboro Towers, Sacred Heart Community Center, Kingsborough School, Meco School and Bleecker Town Hall. If you have any questions about where to vote, please call the school business office at 775-5606.

## Bus purchase repayment schedule

**Here is the estimated repayment schedule for the proposed \$125,000 bus purchase in 2005-06.**

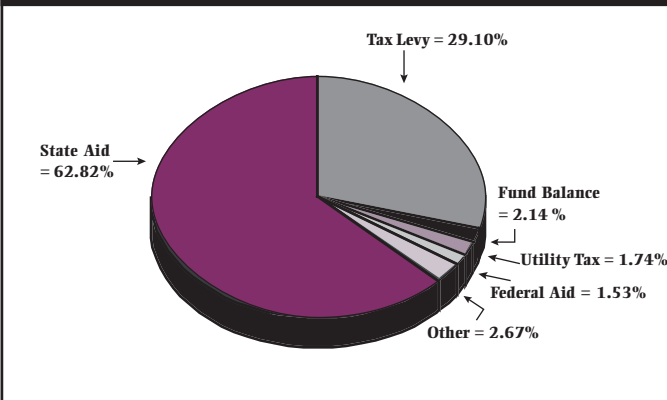
School Year	Estimated Principal/Int.	Estimated Aid	Estimated Local Share
2005-06	\$0	\$0	\$0
2006-07	\$25,313	\$0	\$25,313
2007-08	\$24,463	\$22,782	\$1,681
2008-09	\$28,613	\$22,017	\$6,596
2009-10	\$32,550	\$25,752	\$6,798
2010-11	\$31,275	\$29,295	\$1,980
2011-12	\$0	\$28,147	\$(28,147)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$142,214</b>	<b>\$127,993</b>	<b>\$14,221</b>

## Where the money comes from...and where it goes

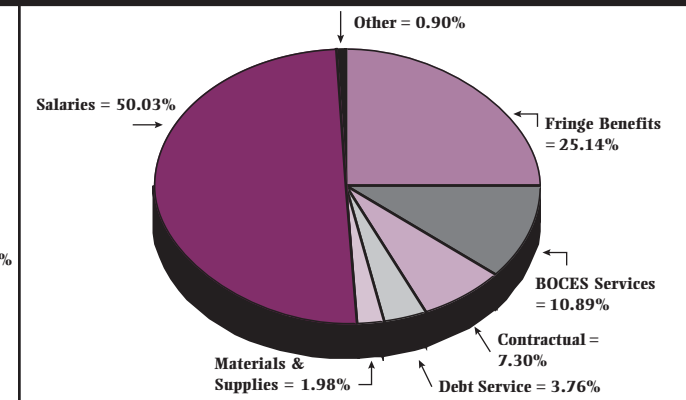
### Revenue Summary

Category	2003-2004(Actual)	2005-2006 (Proposal)	Amount of Change
Tax Levy	\$10,376,102	\$10,899,678	\$523,576
Penalty on Taxes	45,100	60,100	15,000
Utility Tax	620,000	650,000	30,000
Charges for Service	73,500	121,900	48,400
Use of Money & Property	236,800	226,800	(10,000)
Miscellaneous	360,500	435,500	75,000
State Aid	22,046,244	23,532,837	1,486,593
Federal Aid	500,000	575,000	75,000
Interfund Transfers	99,818	158,362	58,544
Appropriation of Fund Balance	1,402,764	800,000	(602,764)
Totals	\$35,760,828	\$37,460,177	\$1,699,349

### Summary of Projected Revenues



### Summary of Projected Expenditures



### Projected Expenditures

Category	2003-2004(Actual)	2005-2006 (Proposal)	Amount of Change
Salaries	\$18,442,268	\$18,737,598	\$295,330
Fringe Benefits	8,778,659	9,417,574	638,915
BOCES Services	3,571,486	4,080,556	509,070
Contractual	2,778,691	2,734,319	(44,372)
Materials & Supplies	635,142	741,071	105,929
Equipment	123,689	61,292	(62,397)
Computer Hardware	50,000	50,000	0
Textbooks	185,000	200,000	15,000
Debt Service	1,195,868	1,407,767	211,899
Interfund Transfers	25	30,000	29,975
Totals	\$35,760,828	\$37,460,177	\$1,699,349

MAY 17, 2005 BUDGET VOTE

# STAR program offers some tax breaks

The state's STAR program offers eligible homeowners a partial exemption from school property taxes.

There are two components:

**• Basic:**

This exemption is available to homeowners on their primary residence regardless of age or income.

**• Enhanced:**

This exemption is available to senior citizen homeowners (age 65+) on their primary residence within certain income guidelines.

See chart at right for more details.

In 2004-05, 31 percent of the school district's tax levy was paid for through the STAR program.

## School district offers tax breaks for senior citizens

The Gloversville Enlarged School District also offers tax exemptions for residents age 65+, on a sliding scale based on income.

See chart below for more details

For more information about STAR or the Senior Citizens exemption, please contact your city or town assessor.

2005-2006 Property Tax Report Card				
New York State requires school districts to prepare and report the following data				
	2004-2005	2005-2006	Increase	% Change
Total budget and change	\$35,760,828	\$37,460,177	\$1,699,349	4.75
Total tax levy and change	\$10,376,102	\$10,899,678	\$523,576	5.05
Enrollment	3160	3167	7	0.22
Net budget increase (Excluding debt service and transfers)			\$1,457,475	4.22
Consumer Price Index				2.70

Estimated School Tax Increase			
This table assumes a property that is assessed at \$55,000 in the City of Gloversville			
	2004-2005 (actual)	2005-2006 (proposed)	Estimated Increase
School tax without STAR exemption	\$1,214.95	\$1,241.34	\$26.39
School tax after enhanced STAR exemption of \$50,000	110.45	112.85	2.40
School tax after basic STAR exemption of \$30,000 on \$55,000 assessment for all qualifying residents	552.25	564.25	12.00

Senior Citizen's Exemptions	
The Board of Education has adopted a sliding scale for tax exemptions for residents age 65+	
Income Level	Exemption
■ \$16,500 or less	50%
■ More than \$16,500 but less than \$17,500	45%
■ More than \$17,500 but less than \$18,500	45%
■ More than 18,500 but less than \$19,500	35%
■ More than \$19,500 but less than \$20,400	30%
■ More than \$20,400 but less than \$21,300	25%
■ More than \$21,300 but less than \$22,200	20%



## Grant Funds helping to supplement general fund, continue new student programs

**In Gloversville, our students continue to achieve at high levels. From the increase of the number of students on our high school honor roll, to our elementary students reaching the 25-book goal, to the implementation of our Middle School Homework Policy, great things are happening every day at GESD.**

Part of this success is due to the many programs and initiatives aimed at boosting student achievement. These programs are successful thanks to local tax dollars, as well as several state and federal grants.

These programs include: (grant amounts refer to funds received in 2004-05)

### **Title I School Improvement Grant**

**Grant Funding: \$75,000**

This federal funding has helped to implement a program in Gloversville Middle School that is already helping to boost student achievement on the Grade 8 English Language Arts exam.

Last year school officials witnessed a substantial increase in student scores, and are expecting the same when results are released later this spring.

With help from outside consultants, middle school teachers have built a research-based English Language Arts program that enhances student writing, comprehension, listening and thinking skills.

This will be a continuous program for students in grades 6-8, and will help all students develop a base of key skills that

will only help them succeed as they progress through school.

### **Title IID Technology Grants**

**Grant Funding: \$293,453**

This federal funding has allowed teachers to receive extra training in key computer skills that are enhancing several educational programs across the district.

The grants have allowed the district to provide an on-site technology trainer for each school building for the next two years, and is allowing teachers to create their own Web sites to be used as educational resources for students to use at school and at home.



It has also provided computer software that offers additional instructional resources in math for middle school students.

The programs are offered in cooperation with the Greater Amsterdam School District through HFM BOCES.

### **21st Century Community Learning Grant**

**Grant Funding: \$182,000**

Federal Funds make it possible for at least 100 middle school students to attend an after-school program that runs until 5:30 p.m. each school day.

The program blends academic assistance and tutoring with support services from guidance and community agencies, along with parent

involvement and recreational activities.

### **Reading First and Voyager Universal Literacy**

**Grant Funding: \$962,516**

This three-year federal grant has allowed the district to redesign the reading program for students in grades K-3. Through the program, teachers are learning the fundamentals of current reading research, and all students will learn to read using scientifically based methods and materials.

The Voyager Universal Literacy program is funded through the Reading First grant. This program is allowing the district to use a new reading series in the early grades, which is supported by educational research. The program is based on student needs and abilities, and has provided lending libraries for most of our elementary schools. Both the tutoring program and summer school are designed to support the use of this new series.

### Special Education

#### Grant Funding: \$700,599

The district has focused its efforts on special education programs for students in grades K-8, helping students in the early years achieve to the best of their abilities. The goal is to provide a consistent grade-to-grade program in language arts and math using materials that match the goals of the regular education program and that have a strong research base for increased student achievement. Federal textbook and curriculum development grant funds pay for this initiative.

#### Other grant funded programs include:

- Title I: \$1,244,402
- Innovative (tutoring): \$16,960
- Safe & Drug Free Schools: \$27,043
- REAP (tutoring): \$293,453
- Early Grade Class Size Reduction: \$259,647
- Youth At Risk: \$60,000
- Head Start: \$616,415

#### Other ongoing educational initiatives include:

#### Middle School Homework Policy

Middle school students have always been expected to complete their homework assignments. However under the new homework policy, if a

student's work is not completed, he or she will face consistent consequences.

Throughout this past year, the policy has proven to be effective, and students are consistently following through on their daily assignments.

#### Saxon Math

This program, implemented last year, is used in all GESD elementary schools and offers a strong foundation in fundamental math skills by introduc-

ing key math concepts at an early age.

#### Tutoring

Tutoring is the most powerful method of instruction, and thus all GESD buildings offer after-school tutoring for students who are struggling with reading, math, and specific tests.

This intensive support is provided for an hour each day for up to three days a week depending on the need.



## GESD Students Continue to Achieve

- So far this year, GESD has had four scholar-athlete teams, showing once again that Gloversville students are shining both off and on the field. The teams and their collective grade-point averages:
  - Girls Basketball, 93.735
  - Girls Indoor Track, 93.039
  - Volleyball, 93.095
  - Girls Soccer, 91.964
- GESD High School is currently offering 18 college-level courses (in conjunction with SUNY Albany, FMCC, and Syracuse University), as well as five AP courses.
- In 2004, Gloversville Middle School was named a New York State Most Improved School for Mathematics.
- The GESD 21st Century Program was recently given a "Model Program" award from the State University of New York.
- The required Homework Policy implemented in the Middle School last year continues to push students to complete their daily assignments, and has proven to be effective.
- The High School Odyssey of the Mind team recently competed at the state level, after winning at the local and regional levels, and came in fourth-place overall.
- Student scores on New York State Exams continue to improve at a rate of 10 percent a year.
- In 2003-04, 64.9 percent of graduates received a regents or regents with honors diploma. Sixty-percent of graduates went on to a two or four year college, and six percent went on to the military.
- All of our elementary students are participating in the Read to Succeed program, and hundreds have already reached the 25-book goal set by the State Education Department.



### Capital project underway

The \$60.3 million capital project, approved by voters in February 2004, is currently underway.

As of April 15, here's where the project stands:

- Construction is ready to begin on the transportation and maintenance facility.
- Bids for the high school corridor abatement project are due by the end of the month.
- Plans for the high school and middle school projects have been submitted to the State Education Department for review.
- Construction documents for the Park Terrace and Boulevard Elementary projects are about half done.
- The design phases of the Meco, McNab and Kingsborough Elementary projects have just begun.

Over the summer, construction at the high school will begin with the corridor abatement project. For this reason, summer school will be held at the middle school. District officials are currently working on plans for the coming school year so that the project does not interrupt the learning process once the school year begins.

In order to shorten the project time by at least one year, district officials have decided to relocate ninth and tenth grade students to the middle school for the 2006-07 school year.

This way, Superintendent of Schools Daniel Connor said, the juniors and seniors can attend

classes in one half of the building while construction is completed on the other half.

By doing this, it will ensure that the incoming freshman class will not be surrounded by a construction project for their four years of high school.

In addition, the central administration office project, approved in March 2001 is 90 percent complete.

While these improvements are made to our district facilities, district Business Manager D. Paul Blowers said the cost of the projects will be paid for by state building aid and transfers from the debt service fund.

For updates and more information on the capital project, visit us online at <http://www.gloversvilleschools.org>.



**"The \$60.3 million capital project approved by voters in 2004 will have no impact on the 2005-2006 tax levy."**

**- D. Paul Blowers,  
District Business Manager**

■ **PO Box 593  
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12078-0005**

Daniel T. Connor, Superintendent

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