



Where students succeed and community cares

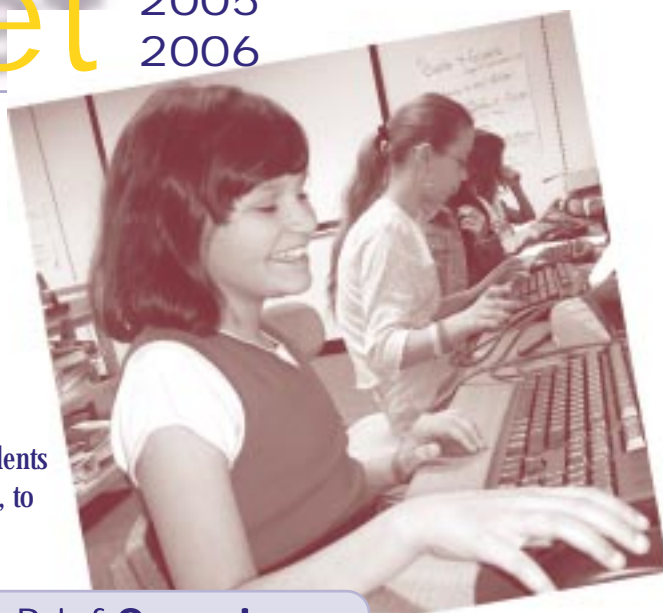
▶ Budget 2005 2006

Residents to vote on Tuesday, May 17
2005-06 budget represents 4.41% tax levy increase

Greater Amsterdam School District residents will go to the polls on Tuesday, May 17, to vote on a proposed \$42.8 million budget that represents a 6.75% increase in spending. Based on current revenue estimates, this budget will carry a tax levy increase of 4.41 percent.

Voters will also elect three board of education members. The three seats are currently held by Art Brumley and Herb Scialabba, who are retiring, and incumbent Gerald Cinquanti.

After no tax levy change last year, rising costs have forced an increase for 2005-06. "Increased retirement costs, rising utility costs and debt service placed the Board of Education in a position of requesting this increase or sacrificing critical education programs. This budget represents the board's efforts to control expenses and still provide a sound education for the district's children," says Superintendent Ronald Limoncelli.



▶ A Brief Overview

Proposed budget	\$42,828,247
Dollar increase	\$2,707,343
Percentage spending increase	+ 6.75%
Estimated tax levy increase	4.41%

A bright spot in this year's school budget process came as the governor signed New York State's first on-time budget in 21 years. The state plan provided the district with additional state aid, enabling the board to make last minute adjustments to the budget, further reducing the revenue the district would be required to raise through property taxes.

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GASD spends 16 percent less per student than similar districts, yet our student performance continues to improve each year.

Preserving quality education

The Board of Education’s primary budgetary goal is to balance the cost of a quality education with its impact on the tax burden.

On the plus side, the Greater Amsterdam School District is among the most efficient public schools in New York State. “According to the 2003-04 New York State School Report Card, GASD spends over 16 percent less per student than similar high-need rural schools and 25 percent less per student than the state average. Yet, our students continue to show marked improvement on state assessments every year,” explains Limoncelli.

Driving the budget

“It is a common misconception that instruction costs (teacher salaries, books, etc.) are the primary cause of an increased school budget. Although instruction accounts for 54.4 percent of the budget, instruction has only risen 1.1 percent. The biggest increases in our budget are items over which the school has little control,” says Limoncelli.

Included in those items are:

- Utilities—Gasoline for school buses, heating fuels and electricity.
- Debt Service—The district pays its capital project costs up front and then waits until the following year to be reimbured by the state.

- Employee benefits—Rising health care premiums combined with a soft investment market that has driven up the district’s employee retirement contribution together account for 57 percent of the 2005-06 budget increase.



▶ **POLLING PLACES: OPEN 12 NOON TO 9 P.M.**

SCHOOL ELECTION DISTRICT #1 MCNULTY SCHOOL
 Ward 1 - Districts 1,2,3
 Ward 2 - District 1,2
 (also former Common School District #11 residents, Town of Amsterdam)

SCHOOL ELECTION DISTRICT #2 ST. JOHN’S PARISH HALL
 Ward 2 - Districts 3,4

SCHOOL ELECTION DISTRICT #3 BACON SCHOOL
 Ward 3 - Districts 1,2,3,4

SCHOOL ELECTION DISTRICT #4 CURIE SCHOOL
 Ward 4 - Districts 1,2,3,4

SCHOOL ELECTION DISTRICT #5 BARKLEY SCHOOL
 Ward 5 - District 4

SCHOOL ELECTION DISTRICT #6 CENTRAL ADMIN. BLDG.
 Ward 5 - District 1,2,3

SCHOOL ELECTION DISTRICT #7 TECLER SCHOOL
 Ward 1 - District 4
 Town of Amsterdam, Dist. 2,4,5 (Hagaman, Perth, Harrowers)

SCHOOL ELECTION DISTRICT #8 MINAVILLE TOWN HALL
 Town of Florida

SCHOOL ELECTION DISTRICT #9 TRUAX SCHOOL
 Town of Amsterdam (Truax, Swart Hill, Glenville Dist. 3)

SCHOOL ELECTION DISTRICT #10 FT. JOHNSON MUNI. BLDG.
 Town of Amsterdam (including former Common School District #7)

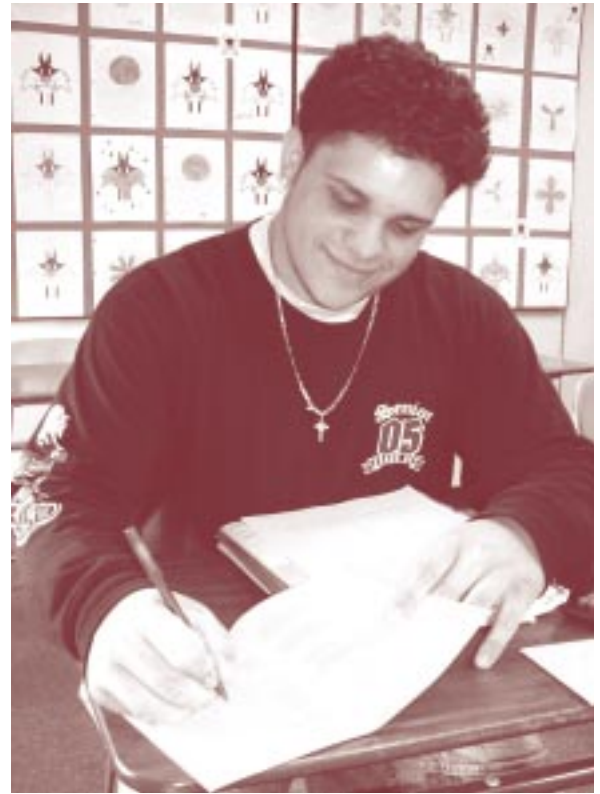
Grants: Improving education without increasing the tax burden

Approximately \$9.25 million in federal, state and private grants have been awarded to the Amsterdam schools. These grants, secured by teachers and administrators to provide students with extra academic support, include:

- ▲ **Magnet school grant:** A total of \$550,000 will be used to develop and operate the McNulty Academy for International Studies and Literacy.
- ▲ **School Improvement grant:** This \$40,000 grant will fund community outreach and teacher preparation to improve student achievement, especially “at-risk” students and students with disabilities.
- ▲ **Title VI Rural Education grant:** A total of \$113,034 will provide additional funding for existing programs in rural school districts.
- ▲ **21st Century Learning grant:** Approximately \$2.1 million will be shared between GASD, Gloversville and Fort Plain schools over 4.5 years, with Amsterdam receiving nearly 40 percent. Lynch Middle School students will be offered after-school programs that include academic assistance and community-sponsored activities.
- ▲ **Enhancing Education through Technology grant:** This \$1.6 million grant will be distributed over 3.5 years. The award will be shared between Amsterdam, Gloversville and Amsterdam parochial schools to enhance technology training, software and equipment.
- ▲ **Title IV – A Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Community grant:** Some \$31,118 has been secured to train peer leadership groups, who then educate their fellow students on how to be drug and alcohol free. The funds will also be used to create anti-bullying programs.
- ▲ **Least Restrictive Environment grant:** This one year, \$55,000 grant will be used to

facilitate programs and staff development for regular education and special education teachers in grades K-12.

- ▲ **Comprehensive School Reform Development grant:** Approximately \$300,000 will be spread out over three years to improve literacy skills of students at Lynch Middle School.
- ▲ **Committee on Preschool Special Education grant:** The \$10,614 grant will help pay for various supplies and materials, as well as salaries needed to support the preschool population.
- ▲ **619 Federal grant:** This \$65,756 grant will fund a portion of the salaries of some special education staff members and therapists, as well as the cost of supplies and conferences. It will also be used to reimburse private preschool providers who serve Amsterdam children.
- ▲ **School Accountability and Improvement grant:** A total of \$65,000 will be used to improve the achievement of middle school students.
- ▲ **Federal Individuals with Disabilities Educate Act of the Federal Funding 611 grant:** \$1,009,817 will fund professional and support staff salaries for music therapy, bilingual evaluations and other programs for students with disabilities.
- ▲ **Title I grant:** This \$1,377,038 grant, targeted at high poverty schools, will help to ensure that all children have the same opportunity to meet challenging state academic standards.
- ▲ **Title IIA - including Federal Early Class Size Reduction grant:** The \$354,022 award will help the district prepare and train



high quality teachers. It will also be used to reduce class sizes to improve student achievement.

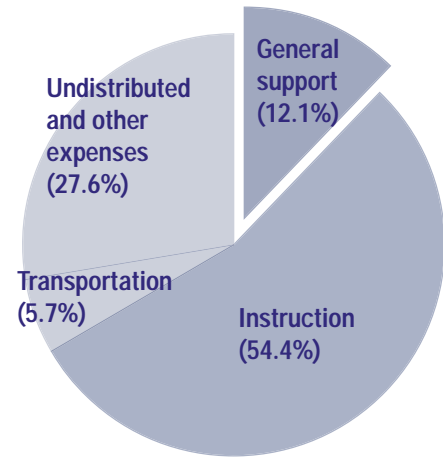
- ▲ **New York State Early Class Size Reduction grant:** An additional \$56,581 will go towards reducing class sizes and providing more one-on-one instruction, the goal being to improve students’ academic performance.
- ▲ **Reading First grant:** This \$1,150,000 grant will be spent over three years. The award will improve early literacy instruction primarily by educating teachers on the latest scientific-based reading research.
- ▲ **Charitable Leadership Foundation grant:** A grant worth \$300,000 will be distributed over four years. The funds will go towards teacher training to improve literacy in grades K-4.
- ▲ **Title IID grant:** This \$36,870 grant is used to improve academic achievement and technology literacy for students.

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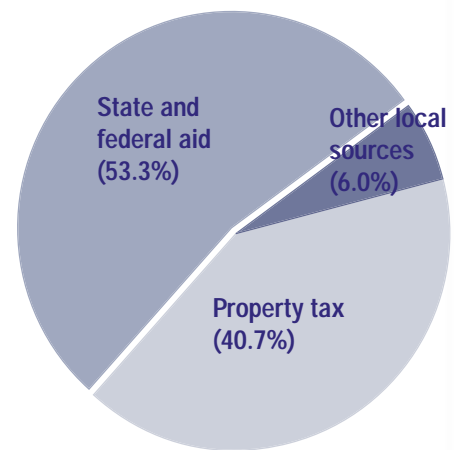
EXPENDITURES

	2004-2005	2005-2006	Increase (decrease)
General support			
Board of Education	\$51,210	\$41,115	\$(10,095)
Chief school administrator	147,786	155,864	8,078
Finance	391,834	431,379	39,545
Staff	197,896	186,048	(11,848)
Central Services	3,648,938	3,751,705	102,767
Special Items	484,835	643,965	159,130
Subtotal	\$4,922,499	5,210,077	\$287,578
Instruction			
Administration & Improvement	\$1,358,250	\$1,400,533	42,283
Regular school	13,254,297	13,383,546	129,249
Program for pupils with disabilities	5,210,734	5,344,473	133,739
Occupational education	956,795	853,421	(103,374)
Summer school	95,350	96,190	840
Instructional media	803,320	886,422	83,102
Pupil services	1,374,352	1,344,659	(29,693)
Subtotal	\$23,053,098	23,309,243	\$256,145
Pupil transportation			
District transportation services	\$471,815	\$518,245	\$46,430
Bus garage	31,872	33,875	2,003
Contract transportation services	1,783,300	1,922,800	139,500
Subtotal	\$2,286,987	2,474,920	\$187,933
Undistributed			
Employee benefits	\$7,811,555	\$9,357,146	\$1,545,591
Debt service	1,836,765	2,266,861	430,096
Transfer to Special Aid Fund	210,000	210,000	0
Subtotal	\$9,858,320	\$11,834,007	\$1,975,687
TOTAL GENERAL FUND	\$40,120,904	\$42,828,247	\$2,707,343

EXPENDITURES



REVENUES



▶▶ continued from page 3

- ▲ **Title III grant:** This \$37,202 grant funds teacher training and supplies used to work with students whose native language is other than English.
- ▲ **Title V grant:** This \$19,672 grant will provide computers and promote parent communication for middle school students experiencing academic difficulty.
- ▲ **CR Part 154 grant:** This \$125,000 funds teachers who work with students who speak English as a second language.

REVENUE ESTIMATE

	2004-2005	2005-2006	Increase (decrease)
Local sources	\$1,388,654	1,564,424	\$184,230
State sources	19,827,330	22,065,307	2,237,977
Federal sources	725,000	772,500	47,500
Interfund transfer	100,000	100,000	0
Fund balance	1,392,483	903,118	(489,365)
Reserve for encumbrances	0	0	0
Property taxes	16,687,437	17,422,898	735,461
*GRAND TOTAL	\$40,120,904	\$42,828,247	\$2,707,343

* Includes allowance for uncollected taxes

2005-2006 Budget

Tax levy increase averages less than annual inflation rate

After three years with only one tax levy increase, the Greater Amsterdam School District is looking at the prospect of 4.41 percent tax levy increase next year.

In recent years, the Board of Education avoided significant tax levy increases at the same time neighboring districts faced single-year increases in excess of 15 percent.

The average annual tax levy increase over the past four years averaged \$294,478 or 1.81 percent per year—less than the annual rate of inflation.

The chart at right shows the projected tax rates in all eight municipalities that comprise the Greater Amsterdam School District.

PROJECTED TAX RATES PER \$1,000 OF ASSESSED VALUE

	2004-05	2005-06	Change
City of Amsterdam	\$23.78	\$24.95	\$1.17
Town of Amsterdam	180.23	184.79	4.56
Florida	30.21	30.47	0.26
Mohawk	47.54	49.89	2.35
Perth	26.37	30.17	3.80
Duanesburg	55.29	58.02	2.73
Glennville	25.95	29.70	3.75
Charlton	23.78	24.95	1.17

Magnet school offers new opportunities

Fall of 2005 will mark the official opening of Amsterdam's first magnet school, The Raphael J. McNulty Academy of International Studies and Literacy.

Following last year's community interest in a charter school, the Board of Education, several former charter school trustees and other members of the community gathered together to explore the possibility of establishing a magnet school as an alternative. With financial support from Assemblyman Paul Tonko and State Senator Hugh Farley, that initial investigation became a reality.

In addition to providing a solid, basic curriculum, McNulty Academy will offer half-day pre-kindergarten, foreign language studies at all grades, an optional summer academy, and an optional extended day academic program.

Unlike a for-profit charter school that would have directed funds away from our public schools, as a public school, the magnet school has brought an additional \$550,000 in legislative grants to the district. Those funds will allow the district to offer additional programs and services at McNulty Academy without placing an additional financial burden on district taxpayers.



2005-2006 Budget

SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET NOTICE

Voter eligibility

You may vote if you are 18 years old, a U.S. citizen, a resident of the Greater Amsterdam School District for at least 30 days prior to May 17, and a registered voter.

Absentee ballots

Absentee ballots are available to anyone who will be out of the area for work, school or vacation; hospitalized; permanently disabled, or confined to home due to illness. For applications contact, Dorothy Phoenix, clerk of the board, at 843-5217. Absentee ballots will be counted only if they are returned to the clerk of the board no later than 5 p.m. on election day.

	Budget Adopted for the 2004-05 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2005-06 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2005-06 School Year*
Total budgeted amount	\$ 40,120,904	\$ 42,828,246	\$ 42,111,406
Increase (or decrease) for the 2004-05 school year		\$ 2,707,342	\$ 1,990,502
Percentage increase (or decrease) in each proposed budget		6.75%	4.96%
Change in the consumer price index		2.70%	
Resulting est. property tax levy for the 2004-05 school year		\$ 17,422,898	\$ 17,422,898
1. Administrative Component	\$ 3,983,156	\$ 4,059,283	\$ 3,790,026
2. Program Component	\$ 30,823,889	\$ 32,561,238	\$ 32,192,244
3. Capital Component	\$ 5,313,859	\$ 6,207,725	\$ 6,129,136

* Should the voters fail to approve the proposed 2005-06 budget, proposed appropriations would need to be reduced by \$716,840 to meet the requirement of a contingency budget. Personnel, equipment, supplies and materials, and purchase services would be reduced. The anticipated effects include larger class sizes at elementary and secondary schools; reduction in music and media instruction programs; loss of elective courses such as the Cisco program; and reduction or possible elimination of professional development, in-service programs and teachers' conferences.

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)

	Budget Adopted for the for the 2004-05 School Year	Budget Proposed for the for the 2005-06 School Year
Basic STAR tax savings	\$ 713	\$ 748
School tax increase/decrease	\$ (15)	\$ 117
Net Basic STAR tax savings	\$ 698	\$ 631

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2005-06 by the qualified voters of the Enlarged Amsterdam City School District, Montgomery County, New York, will be held at various polling site(s) in said district on Tuesday, May 17, 2005, between the hours of 12 noon and 9 p.m., prevailing time in the various polling site(s), at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

*The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

Board of Education

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THE GREATER AMSTERDAM SCHOOL DISTRICT

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