

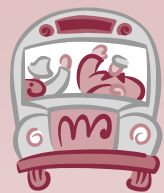
in

south
colonie
central
schools

focus

Preparing World Class Citizens

May, 2006



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4 run for 3 seats on school board ... pgs 4-5

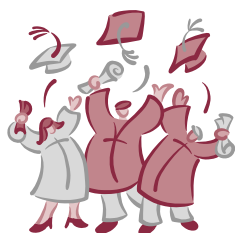


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The 2006-2007 budget

South Colonie residents to vote May 16th on proposed \$79.9 million school spending plan

South Colonie Central School District residents will go to the polls on Tuesday, May 16, to vote on a proposed \$79.9 million budget for the 2006-07 school year. The budget continues to provide a strong educational program for all students during difficult financial times for schools.

The polls will be open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the district's five elementary schools (see *voting locations on page 2*).

Next year's proposed budget totals \$79,915,565 and represents a 6.98 percent spending increase over the current school year (see complete figures on page 3). Though equalization rates will not be set until July, the district expects about a 3.9 percent property tax increase next year based on the budget submitted to voters. This means that the average homeowner whose property is assessed at \$150,000 would pay an additional \$112.50 in school property taxes next year or about \$9.38 more per month to finance education.

"Costs continue to rise each year but this administration and Board of Education have worked hard to provide the funding necessary to continue this district's tradition of educational excellence," said Superintendent Michael Marcelle. "And, as always, we do so realizing the financial impact our budget has on our local taxpayers."

Increased costs

Several factors are driving up the cost of education here and in most school districts across the state. Employee health insurance continues to escalate at double-digit rates from one year to the next and legally-required district contributions to New York State retirement systems are increasing as well. Employee benefits alone account for a \$1,281,528 or 8.5 percent increase in the

Continued on pages 2-3 ... budget

NEW BUDGET AT A GLANCE

- **Total 2006-07 budget: \$79,915,565**
- **Budget-to-budget increase: 6.98%**
- **Projected property tax increase of 3.9%**
- **Maintains facilities and existing educational programs**
- **Continues wide range of academic intervention services**



CCHS graduate PFC Richard Fischer is welcomed home by friends and family from a tour in Iraq.

A hero's welcome

Colonie Central High School graduate PFC Richard Fisher, Class of 2004, returned home from Iraq this spring to a hero's welcome at The Crossings park in Colonie.

Friends and family lined the entrance to the park to cheer on the 19-year-old Fisher, who entered riding in a vintage fire truck and surrounded by a pipe band, town police motorcycles and fire trucks

Continued on page 5 ... Hero

Who can vote on Tuesday, May 16?

You are eligible to vote if you are a U.S. citizen, 18 years or older, and a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote. Residents may vote at any location listed below.

Voting Sites

FOREST PARK ELEMENTARY

100 Forest Drive (869-3006)

ROESSLEVILLE ELEMENTARY

100 California Ave. (459-2157)

SADDLEWOOD ELEMENTARY

100 Lorelee Drive (456-2608)

SHAKER ROAD ELEMENTARY

512 Shaker Road (458-1440)

VEEDER ELEMENTARY

25 Veeder Drive (869-4661)

PLEASE NOTE:

All of the voting will take place in the elementary school gymnasiums.

Also, there is NO voting at the high school or either middle school.

... Budget

Continued from page 1

2006-07 budget.

Making up the rest of the projected increase are instruction (+762,000), special education costs (+\$598,975), student transportation (+\$343,807), operations and maintenance (+\$516,772), library & media instruction (+\$91,872) and debt service (+1,318,098) borrowing for the capital project approved by voters in 2003.

A lengthy process

The South Colonie Board of Education has been working since January to put together a district budget for the 2006-2007 school year that continues to support a strong educational program for all students while remaining fiscally responsible to local taxpayers. This included revisions to the first draft of the budget in March that reduced spending by \$742,125. Those reductions lowered the original proposed budget figure for next school year from \$80,657,690 to \$79,915,565, and included:

- The elimination of 3.5 teaching positions due to decreasing elementary school enrollments;
- Savings due to a variety of retirements in the areas of administration, teaching and support staff;
- Various cuts in equipment and supply budgets;
- Other miscellaneous reductions across the district.

In spite of these proposed reductions, next year's budget continues to maintain all current educational programs and favorable

Major budget increases

Debt Service ..+ \$1,318,098 ... +29.5%

Benefits+ \$1,281,528 +8.5%

Instruction + \$762,000 +2.8%

Special Ed + \$598,975 +7.0%

Operation & Maintenance + \$516,772 ... +10.9%

Transportation . + \$343,807 +9.8%

Library/Media Instruction + \$91,872 +4.8%

Additional Revenues

General State Aid & Construction Aid for Capital Project+ \$2,172,281 +13%

Interest on Investments + \$150,000 +33%

class sizes as well as enhancements in two key areas — kindergarten and alternative education (see accompanying story on page 7). It also includes debt service payments on the district's ongoing capital improvement project.

"It's been a lengthy process but we've all worked hard to put together a budget that will not be too burdensome to our taxpayers, while at the same time addressing the needs of all South Colonie students," said Board of Education President James "Tim" Ryan. "It's a budget we can all be proud of."

Behind the spending increase

What's driving next year's projected 6.98 percent spending increase? It breaks down as follows:

- 1.99 percent or an additional \$1,486,686 is being budgeted for new construction bonds for the district's \$22.8 million capital improvement project approved by voters in December, 2003. The work has been ongoing at every district building including the bus garage. The district is expecting about \$1 million in additional state

Continued on page 3 ... budget

... Budget

Continued from page 2

building aid next year to help offset these costs;

- 1.97 percent or \$1,473,597 more for contracted employee salaries;
- 0.93 percent or an additional \$694,464 for higher employee health insurance premiums;
- 0.69 percent or \$515,304 more for contributions to the teacher and employee retirement systems;
- 1.4 percent or an additional \$1,043,936 for all other budget categories. This includes another \$343,807 or a 9.8 percent hike in the transportation budget — much of which is being set aside to pay for surging fuel prices — and an additional \$404,202 in the operation and maintenance budget for higher utility and fuel costs.

Helping to offset next year's spending increase

A few factors are helping to balance these spending increases.

- The New York State Legislature allotted the district about \$800,000 in additional state aid over what Gov. George Pataki's proposed in his executive budget in January.
- With the moderate resurgence of the stock market, the district is budgeting about \$150,000 more in interest returns on investments next school year.
- An aggressive energy management program has saved the district more than \$1.2 million over the last four years — \$78,500 more than the initial savings projections. It is expected to generate more than \$4.5 million in total energy savings by 2011.

Estimated revenues

	2005-06	2006-07	Dollar Change
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$ 671,500	\$ 650,000	- 21,500
Continuing Education	85,000	91,500	+ 6,500
Interest on Investments	450,000	600,000	+ 150,000
Miscellaneous	845,200	821,200	- 24,000
Rental-BOCES	26,000	26,000	0
State Aid*	16,677,398	19,657,786	+ 2,980,388
Local Taxes	55,406,480	57,597,098	+ 2,190,618
Youth Detention Center	340,000	296,981	- 43,019
Medicaid Reimbursement	200,000	175,000	- 25,000
TOTAL	\$74,701,578	\$79,915,565	+ 5,213,987

* As required by Education Laws 1608 and 1716, the district estimates its 2006 - 2007 State Aid to be \$19,657,786 or 24.6 percent of total expenditures.

Proposed expenditures

	2005-06	2006-07	Dollar Change
Board of Education	\$ 101,501	\$ 105,276	+ 3,775
Chief School Administrator	196,709	205,048	+ 8,339
Finance	633,256	650,637	+ 17,381
Legal/Personnel/Public Information	404,914	454,459	+ 49,545
Operation & Maintenance	4,736,875	5,253,647	+ 516,772
Information Technology	382,083	393,604	+ 11,521
Special Items	1,081,798	1,137,432	+ 55,634
Instructional Improvement/Admin	2,388,838	2,439,658	+ 50,820
Regular Instruction	27,599,655	28,361,655	+ 762,000
Special Education	8,488,176	9,087,151	+ 598,975
Occupational Education	177,276	125,655	- 51,621
Summer School	262,139	260,573	- 1,566
Library/Technology Instruction	1,901,486	1,993,358	+ 91,872
Pupil Personnel Services	2,171,778	2,280,574	+ 108,796
Interscholastic Athletics/Co-Curricular	734,724	763,461	+ 28,737
Transportation	3,505,776	3,849,583	+ 343,807
Community Services	369,764	388,481	+ 18,717
Employee Benefits	15,009,792	16,291,320	+ 1,281,528
Debt Service	4,461,760	5,779,858	+ 1,318,098
Interfund Transfers	93,278	94,135	+ 857
TOTAL	\$74,701,578	\$79,915,565	+ 5,213,987

Four candidates running for three open seats on the South Colonie Board of Education ballot

South Colonie voters will be asked to fill three open seats on the nine-member South Colonie Board of Education. The four candidates appearing on the May 16 election ballot are featured below & on page 5.

School Board Seat No. 1

Incumbent **Paul Gordon**, of 11 Ethel Drive, is running unopposed for the board seat he has held for the past 20 years. Gordon is seeking his fifth, five-year term on the Board of Education.



Paul Gordon

Paul Gordon has lived in South Colonie since 1966 and is a life member of both the PTA and Friends of Music and served as its treasurer for six years. He chaired the committee that developed the district's summer music program. In 1978, he founded the Regional Spelling Bee that has grown to include the entire Capital District and sends its winner to the National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C.

Gordon has been an educator in both New York State schools and in Department of Defense schools in Europe. He received the Teacher of the Year Award in South Colonie and completed 34 years in education before retiring. He is certified as a principal and school administrator and holds elementary and secondary teaching certifications. He is a U.S. Army veteran, a graduate of the Army Counter Intelligence School and belongs to its retired veterans organization, as well as many community organizations such as 4-H and the Mendelssohn Club of Albany.

His two grandchildren and other family members are now enrolled in South Colonie Schools.

School Board Seat No. 2

Neil Johanning, of 4 Wellesley Court, Loudonville, is running unopposed for the seat currently held by R. Thomas Faughnan. Faughnan is not seeking re-election after 10 years of service to the district. Johanning was appointed to the board in October to fill the unexpired term of the late Joan Ricciardi. He is seeking a new five-year term.



Neil Johanning

Neil Johanning has lived in South Colonie for 21 years and is employed as Director of IT Services for the New York State Department of Health. He has been involved with the school district through the PTAs at Shaker Road Elementary, Sand Creek Middle School, Colonie Central High School and at the PTA Council. He has held many positions including Council Representative, Secretary, Treasurer and President. He has served on many district-wide committees for South Colonie and, as a member of the school board, is serving on the Policy Committee, the Information Systems Committee, and the Curriculum Review Board.

He is also a past Director for the Capital District PTA supporting more than 60 PTA units. As a member of the NYS PTA State Board of Managers, he represented the PTA on the New York State Education Department's statewide committee on Time and Attendance. He has been involved with lobbying efforts on behalf of education at the New York State Legislature.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Mathematics from Siena College and a master's degree in Computer Science from Union College. He and his wife, Maryann, have a daughter in college and a son and daughter attending the Colonie Central High School.

School Board Seat No. 3

Two new candidates — **Leonard Motto and Rick Dunn** — are running against one another for the one year remaining on the five-year term of the late Joan Ricciardi, who died while in office.

Leonard Motto

Leonard Motto, of 20 Hackett Ave., is a lifelong resident of South Colonie and a 1978 graduate of Colonie Central High School. He has been employed for the past eight years as Director of Operations for Camelot Legal Copy overseeing the daily operations of the copying production staff.



Motto has used his position to develop unique activities to motivate his staff and he continues to work with local businesses and schools as a motivational speaker — encouraging children and adults to work hard to achieve their goals. After graduating from CCHS he attended classes at Hudson Valley Community College before opening up a local craft store with his family in the South Colonie Central School District. He has also served as past President of the St. Francis De Sales Church Social Activity Committee.

He and his wife Sheryl, a special education teacher and Colonie Central High School graduate, have two teenage daughters, Tara and Rachel, both students at CCHS.

Rick Dunn

Rick Dunn, of 19 Campagna Drive, has lived in the South Colonie Central School District for more than 20 years and is a 1978 graduate of Colonie Central High School. He is employed as a Senior Benefits Consultant with the Ayco Co.



Dunn earned a bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts from the State University at Albany and received his Certified Employee Benefits Specialist (CEBS) designation from the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. He is also a social member of the Fuller Road Fire Co.

He and his wife, LeeAnn, a South Colonie native, have a two-year-old son.

Textbook Return Schedule for South Colonie Private and Parochial Students

Textbooks loans to private and parochial school students for the 2005-06 school year must be returned to the textbook depository located at Veeder Elementary School, 25 Veeder Drive, Colonie, no later than June 30, according to the following schedule:

- June 16 (Friday), 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- June 19-22 (Monday - Thursday), 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- June 26-29 (Monday - Thursday), 12:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- June 30 (Friday), 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Questions should be directed to Textbook Coordinator Madonna Katsares at 869-3576, Ext. 2454 or 464-1009.

... Hero

Continued from page 1

from all 12 of the town's volunteer departments. Ten select singers from the Colonie Central High School's Chamber Singers helped welcome him home — opening the ceremony with the "Star Spangled Banner" and closing it with "America the Beautiful." He was then saluted by various alumni, faculty and current CCHS students.

Wounded during a February mortar attack, Fisher will be awarded the Purple Heart in May in Gulfport, Miss., where his unit, the 133rd Naval Mobile Construction Battalion is based. Fisher was deployed in Iraq for five months as a Navy builder. He enlisted as a Navy Seabee — as members of construction battalions are called — when he was 17, two months before graduation.

Town Supervisor Mary Brizzell declared April 12 "Richard Fisher Day" in Colonie, and U.S. Congressman Michael McNulty presented him with a U.S. flag that had flown over the Capitol in Washington, D. C. Assemblyman Bob Reilly gave him a New York State flag that had flown over the Capitol in Albany.

The budget by Administration, Program and Capital Expenses

ADMINISTRATION: 9.11 percent (\$7,284,698)

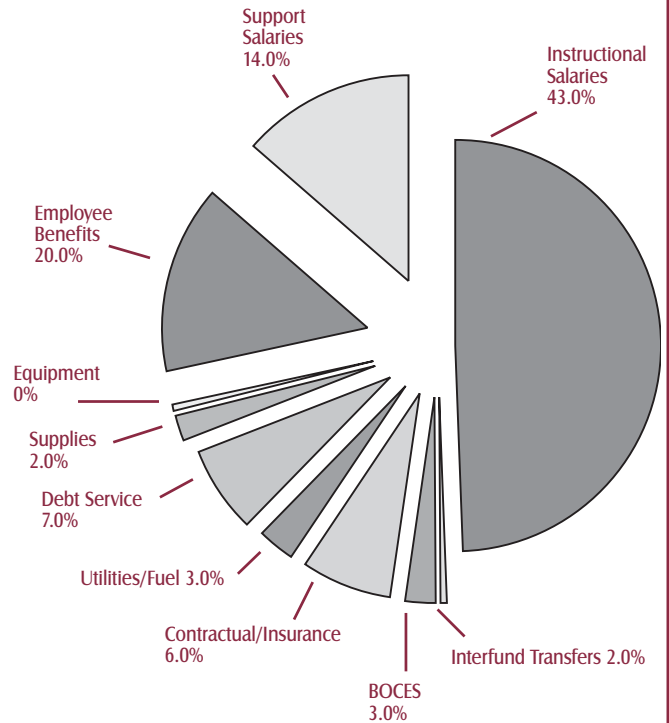
Administration includes: Board of Education, central administration, finance, legal services, personnel, records management, public information, central services, special items, curriculum development and supplies, regular school supplies, instruction supervision and employee benefits.

PROGRAM: 76.08 percent (\$60,797,232)

Program includes: instruction, transportation and garage, contract transportation, community service, employee benefits and transfers.

CAPITAL: 14.81 percent (\$11,833,635)

Capital includes: Operation of buildings, maintenance of buildings, judgments and claims, employee benefits and debt service.



2006-2007 Proposed Budget
by Percentages

Middle schoolers excel in science

South Colonie middle school students captured first and third place this year at the Science and Technology Challenge sponsored by U.S. Congressman John Sweeney and the Nanotech Center at the State University at Albany.

A Sand Creek team of Kori Macdonald, Zemira Malovcic and Cicily Vachaparambil earned top honors, a free trip to Washington, D.C., and a \$250 savings bond for their report on alternative energy sources. Their idea was to produce solar cars with wind energy used to charge their batteries.

A Lisha Kill team of Melissa Spitzer, Mariah Pena and Aly Ira placed third for their "remote phone locator buzzer" idea. They took a remote phone locator buzzer and attached it to a TV remote control – enabling the user to easily find the remote if it became lost.



Sand Creek Middle School held its fourth annual sixth grade science fair this spring with more than 200 students exhibiting their comprehensive research project.

New educational enhancements for 2006-2007

Next year's budget calls for funding two new enhancements to the district's educational program:

Transitional Kindergarten

In response to the New York State Education Department's proposal that all districts offer full day kindergarten by the year 2010, Transitional Kindergarten is a concept designed to ease youngsters into that full day setting.

In September, South Colonie kindergarten children will be divided into AM and PM classes of 10-12 students. Those students will attend school on a traditional half day schedule (2.5 hours per day) as they do now. In January, each class will begin an extended day schedule and transition into a full day program by the end of the month.

This transition will help teachers get to know students better, determine their learning tendencies and address the specific skill needs of each child. The full day schedule in the second half of the year accommodates longer periods to devote to concept development, reading comprehension, skills development and socialization time. It also offers more time for students to become active participants in their learning and become better prepared for a full day program in first grade.

Alternative Education

The district will expand its Alternative Education program at the Central Avenue Learning Center (CALC) next year to include ninth graders. CALC was established in 1997 to meet the needs of seventh and eighth graders who were not academically successful. Before CALC, these students would be required to repeat the same courses in the same environment. CALC provides a personal educational environment that limits distractions and increases the potential for school success. This program will now be offered to high school freshman with the goal of transitioning these students to Colonie Central for their sophomore year better prepared to meet the Regents challenge.



Sand Creek Middle School students enjoy the fourth edition of Girls Night Out. The program, sponsored by the PTA, gives the girls a glimpse into positive habits used to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Girls have been introduced to skin care, cooking, nutrition, yoga, Nia, kickboxing, Pilates and step aerobics.

CCHS fall sports health info due by June 22

Colonie Central High School students wanting to participate in fall sports must be cleared through the Health Office. All necessary information is due no later than June 22. Due to construction, the high school will be closed over the summer. For more information and requirements, contact the Health Office before June 23 at 459-1220, Ext. 3500 or visit the district web site at www.southcolonieschools.org.

Summer Music Program

Looking for summer music? Check out the South Colonie Friends of Music Summer Music Program!

July 10 - July 27

Monday - Thursday Mornings

At Sand Creek Middle School in Colonie

This program is open to students from all school districts. Enjoy band, chorus, orchestra, jazz, composition, theater, keyboard, small ensembles, percussion and more. Or enroll in four private lessons.

For more information contact:

Phone: 459-1220, Ext. 3453 or Email: scfomsma2006@yahoo.com

South Colonie Central School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2005-06 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2006-07 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2006-07 School Year*
Total Budget amount	\$ 74,701,578	\$ 79,915,565	\$ 79,047,132
Increase/decrease for the 2006-07 school year		\$ 5,213,987	\$ 4,345,554
Percentage increase (decrease) in each proposed budget		6.98%	5.81%
Change in the consumer price index		3.4%	
Resulting est. property tax levy for the 2005-06 school year		\$ 57,597,098	\$ 56,728,665
Administrative component	\$ 7,034,998	\$ 7,284,698	\$ 7,208,754
Program component	\$ 57,695,114	\$ 60,797,232	\$ 60,104,943
Capital component	\$ 9,971,466	\$ 11,833,635	\$ 11,733,435

* Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2006-07 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated.
 Elimination of all equipment and computer purchases, maintenance repair reductions and staff reductions.

Basic STAR Exemption Impact — Estimated Basic STAR² 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 2005-06 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2006-07 School Year
Basic STAR tax savings	\$ 517	\$ 536
School tax increase/decrease	\$ 38	\$ 66
Net Basic STAR tax savings	\$ 479	\$ 470

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2006-07 by the qualified voters of the South Colonie Central School District, Albany County, New York, will be held at Forest Park, Roessleville, Saddlewood, Shaker Road, and Veeder Elementary Schools in said district on Tuesday, May 16, 2006 between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time in the above listed schools, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

Michael Marcelle
 Superintendent of Schools

Anthony DeBlois
 Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

Peter Haessig
 Assistant Superintendent/
 Management Services

Beverly Miller
 School Business Administrator

David Seaver
 Director of Human Resources

Board of Education
 James (Tim) Ryan, President
 Paul Gordon, Vice President
 Brian Casey
 Robert Domenici
 R. Thomas Faughnan
 Vernon Fonda
 Shelle Jaquish
 Neil Johanning
 John Monteiro

In Focus Editor: John K. Noetzel

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