



Residents to vote on 2013-14 proposed budget May 21

Southern Cayuga Central School District residents will vote on a \$16,403,438 budget proposal for the 2013-14 school year on Tuesday, May 21, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Voters will also select from among four candidates for three open seats on the SCCS Board of Education and consider three additional propositions: to purchase four buses; to restore funds to the district's repair reserve; and to increase local funding for the Aurora Free Library and Hazard Library.

"The SCCS Board of Education has worked for several months and solicited input from our taxpayers through a number of public meetings in the development of our school budget," said board President Larry VanDeValk.

"We feel we're presenting to voters a budget that takes into account both the positive effect of a partial restoration of state aid and the negative effect of significant mandated cost increases," he added.

The district's contributions to teacher and employee pensions, health insurance, salaries, benefits, and workers' compensation are expected to go up by \$506,866. To help offset this increase, and to keep SCCS's tax levy

increase below its tax levy limit, the district is proposing the elimination of two full-time-equivalent teaching positions for a total \$152,545 in savings.

Additional efficiencies also were gained by the reduction of a maintenance employee and food service employee during the 2012-13 school year.

The proposed budget calls for a projected tax levy increase of 2 percent. This increase is below the district's maximum allowable tax levy increase of 2.44 percent, which will allow the district to secure budget approval with a simple majority vote of 50 percent plus one (see page 2). Next year, this would mean an estimated \$33 increase in the school tax bill for a property assessed at \$100,000.

District administrators and BOE officials based Southern Cayuga's proposed 2013-14 budget in part on a projected \$8,351,997 in state aid next year, including an increase in building aid of \$276,320, which will offset recent capital improvements; an estimated \$388,574 in Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) restoration aid; and an additional \$296,710 in aid for instruction and transportation.

"Even with the small GEA restoration, the district will sustain a \$1.13 million loss in aid during 2013-14 due to the continuation of the GEA," said Superintendent Patrick Jensen.

Since the GEA was introduced in 2011, Southern Cayuga schools have lost a total of \$4.3 million in state aid. (See related story on page 5.)

"We look forward to presenting our full budget to the community during a public hearing May 13 and hope residents will continue to be engaged in the budget development process," Mr. VanDeValk said.

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2013-14 Budget

Proposed Budget

\$16,403,438

Budget Change

+\$607,430
+3.8%

Tax Levy Change

+\$146,564
+2.0%

Vote Day Details

Tuesday, May 21
6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

SCCS Planetarium Classroom



Q&A

What is a 'tax levy limit,' and is SCCS below its limit?

The tax levy limit is the highest allowable tax levy that a school district can propose for which only the approval of a simple majority of voters (50 percent plus one) is required. The limit is calculated using a multi-step formula that takes into account any allowable exclusions (such as pension costs and capital expenditures).

Any proposed tax levy above this limit requires budget approval by a super majority of voters (60 percent).

The SCCS Board of Education has proposed a budget that includes a tax levy *below* its limit, partly in response to concerns shared by community members at public meetings. This would required passage by a simple majority of voters.

How is the tax levy different from a tax rate?

The tax levy is the total amount of money that the district raises from local taxpayers, while the tax rate is the amount of tax residents pay per \$1,000 of property value. In 2013-14, the school tax levy would increase by \$146,564 or 2.0 percent. The impact on school tax bills is projected to be an additional \$33 next year for a property assessed at \$100,000.

With the tax levy limit, does the public still vote on a school budget?

Yes, residents will still vote on a proposed school budget on May 21.

What happens if the budget is defeated?

If the proposed budget is defeated in May, the SCCS Board of Education can

Proposition II: Bus Purchases

On May 21, voters will consider a proposition for \$415,000 to purchase two 66-passenger buses, one 57-passenger bus and one 29-passenger bus.

If the proposition is approved, the district would have to borrow \$310,000 for the purchase due to trade-in discounts for older, heavily used buses. The bus purchases also are eligible for about \$217,000 in state aid reimbursement.

The cost of the proposition is already included in the debt service calculation for 2013-14, so it would not increase the proposed budget.

The proposed bus purchases are part of an ongoing five-year bus



replacement plan designed to ensure students are transported on buses that meet the latest safety standards. The plan also:

- Preserves the resale value of any buses to be traded in.
- Provides coverage of all buses under a five-year warranty for parts and service, reducing parts purchases and expenses.

Proposition III: Repair Reserve

The third proposition up for a vote May 21 is to replenish the repair reserve fund.

During the past year, the district has spent more than \$135,000 for domestic water infrastructure repairs. The project included the installation of two new pumps, repairs to the 10,000-gallon water storage tank, and replacement of the water softener system.

As a result, the district's repair reserve fund — which district officials

draw from to pay for necessary repairs — has been diminished. The Board of Education, recognizing the aging infrastructure of Southern Cayuga school facilities and the need to have money set aside for emergencies, is proposing to replenish the repair reserve fund by \$130,000.

The cost of the proposition is already included in the 2012-13 budget, to be paid from fund balance or other legally available funds, so it would not increase the proposed budget.



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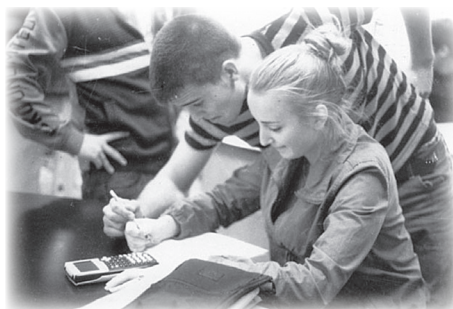
Proposition IV: Aurora Free Library and Hazard Library Budgets

The fourth proposition up for a vote May 21 is a request from the Aurora Free Library and Hazard Library, each of which is seeking a \$6,000 budget increase, for a combined total of \$12,000.

This request would allow the libraries to balance revenue losses due to changes in county funding and would secure funds for maintaining library property, providing up-to-date technology and purchasing materials.

If approved, the annual budgets of the Aurora Free Library and Hazard Library would increase to \$58,650. Approval of Proposition IV would mean an estimated \$2.32 increase in library taxes for a property assessed at \$100,000.

Both libraries provide free access to books for the whole family, DVDs, audio books, computers and high-speed Internet access, pre-school story



times, summer reading programs, cultural programs and staff with expertise in finding the materials and information you need.

"Our library boards and volunteers are tireless in raising money for the library, but we also need taxpayer support to keep the doors open and basic services guaranteed. We value our community and want to provide exceptional library services," said Elaine Meyers, president of the Aurora Free Library Board.

Q&A

put another budget – revised or not – up for a vote in June or immediately adopt a contingent budget. If the budget is defeated twice, SCCS would have to adopt a contingent budget, with a 0 percent tax levy increase, which could mean an additional \$146,564 in reductions to programs and services (see page 5).

What is a STAR exemption, and how does it reduce my school taxes?

Community members who own a home can significantly reduce their school property taxes through a School Tax Relief (STAR) exemption, which is paid for through state taxes. Homeowners must apply through their town assessor's office to be eligible for this tax break. Learn more at www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/star/index.htm.

Students Find Success in SCCS

- 85 percent of the graduating Class of 2012 enrolled in a two- or four-year college or technical/trade school.
- In 2012, more than \$350,000 in academic scholarships was awarded to SCCS juniors, seniors and alumni.
- In 2012, an SCCS student was named a National Merit Scholarship semi-finalist.
- More than 80 percent of Southern Cayuga High School students are involved in sponsored after-school activities.
- SCCS FFA annually competes and places in state and national competitions.
- Southern Cayuga High School supports the "Sources of Strength" student mentoring program.
- In 2012, 90 percent of SCCS students passed June Regents exams.
- The SCCS cross-country team advanced to the state competition in Buffalo.
- SCCS was awarded the sportsmanship award by the IAC.
- The SCCS boys' varsity basketball team won the CCC Holiday Tournament.
- Five sport teams made it to sectional play.

How is my tax bill calculated?

Individual tax bills are calculated using:

- The assessed value of each property.
- Any applicable exemptions (e.g., STAR).
- The current school tax rate.





REVENUE

	Approved Budget 2012-13 (\$)	Proposed Budget 2013-14 (\$)	Percent Change
State and Federal Aid	\$7,752,367	\$8,416,262	8.56%
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$540,397	\$357,368	-33.87%
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$175,000	\$155,000	-11.43%
Property Tax Levy	\$7,328,244	\$7,474,808	2.00%
Total Revenue	\$15,796,008	\$16,403,438	3.85%

Where does the money come from?

Where does the money go?

INSTRUCTION: 45.15% of proposed budget

	2012-13	2013-14
Teaching - Regular School	\$3,832,487	\$3,828,460
Occupational Education	\$554,539	\$451,926
Special Education	\$1,470,062	\$1,462,220
Staff Development	\$12,000	\$12,000
Teaching-Administration	\$312,243	\$346,018
Library	\$142,059	\$132,371
Technology	\$494,553	\$593,040
Guidance	\$237,410	\$240,220
Health Services	\$86,140	\$91,723
Psychological Services	\$29,707	\$30,870
Co-curricular Activities	\$56,660	\$65,000
Athletics	\$126,500	\$136,500
Community	\$15,200	\$15,200
Total	\$7,369,560	\$7,405,548
Percent Change		0.49%

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS: 24.03% of proposed budget

	2012-13	2013-14
Health Insurance	\$2,057,128	\$2,008,801
Teachers' Retirement	\$444,000	\$614,250
Employees' Retirement	\$240,000	\$285,586
Social Security	\$502,700	\$502,700
Workers' Compensation	\$130,000	\$180,652
Unemployment	\$100,000	\$112,479
Dental and Vision	\$18,400	\$14,400
Other Benefits	\$100,000	\$222,991
Total	\$3,592,228	\$3,941,859
Percent Change		9.73%

DEBT SERVICE/TRANSFERS: 14.86% of proposed budget

	2012-13	2013-14
Construction Borrowing	\$1,711,584	\$1,966,246
Buses	\$382,074	\$363,342
Interfund Transfer	\$108,000	\$108,000
Total	\$2,201,658	\$2,437,588
Percent Change		10.72%

OPERATIONS/MAINTENANCE: 5.73% of proposed budget

	2012-13	2013-14
Custodial Services	\$774,848	\$740,192
Maintenance	\$197,500	\$199,750
Total	\$972,348	\$939,942
Percent Change		-3.33%

TRANSPORTATION: 5.55% of proposed budget

	2012-13	2013-14
Transportation	\$865,447	\$876,256
Garage	\$34,500	\$34,700
Total	\$899,947	\$910,956
Percent Change		1.22%

DISTRICT SUPPORT: 4.68% of proposed budget

	2012-13	2013-14
Board of Education	\$22,864	\$23,241
Central Administration	\$170,080	\$170,769
Business Administration	\$247,516	\$246,482
Auditing	\$25,300	\$25,300
Treasurer	\$47,062	\$47,425
Tax Collection	\$8,935	\$8,935
Legal Services	\$56,600	\$60,000
Personnel	\$30,650	\$30,650
Insurance	\$62,150	\$63,851
BOCES Administration	\$89,110	\$90,892
Total	\$760,267	\$767,545
Percent Change		0.96%

GEA continues to impact SCCS

Southern Cayuga Central School District — like school districts throughout New York — continues to face a fiscal crisis. The downturn of the national economy, compounded by new mandates, shrinking state aid and New York's tax levy limit law, has challenged public schools to continue to provide a high-quality education to all students with significantly fewer resources.

"The budget process has been challenging, partly because of significant increases in state-mandated costs and the adverse impact of the Gap Elimination Adjustment," said Patrick Jensen, superintendent of schools. "The partial restoration of aid is appreciated, but the district's projected loss for 2013-14 is approximately \$1.13 million."

The Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) law was first introduced for the 2010-11 fiscal year by state leaders as a way to help close New York's then \$10 billion budget deficit. Under the legislation, a portion of the funding shortfall at the state level is divided among all school districts throughout the state and reflected as a reduction in school district state aid.

The GEA has left holes in many school district budgets ever since. And since the GEA continues in the 2013-14 state budget, those holes are expected to widen. In 2011-12 and 2012-13, the district lost more than \$3.2 million in education aid. That figure will grow to \$4.3 million under the 2013-14 state budget.

Personnel Reductions

- 0.5 FTE science teacher
- 0.5 FTE technology teacher
- 1.0 FTE business teacher

Additional Reductions (positions not filled)

- 1.0 FTE building maintenance mechanic
- 1.0 FTE cafeteria worker

Other Reductions

- Materials, supplies, equipment
- Utility costs

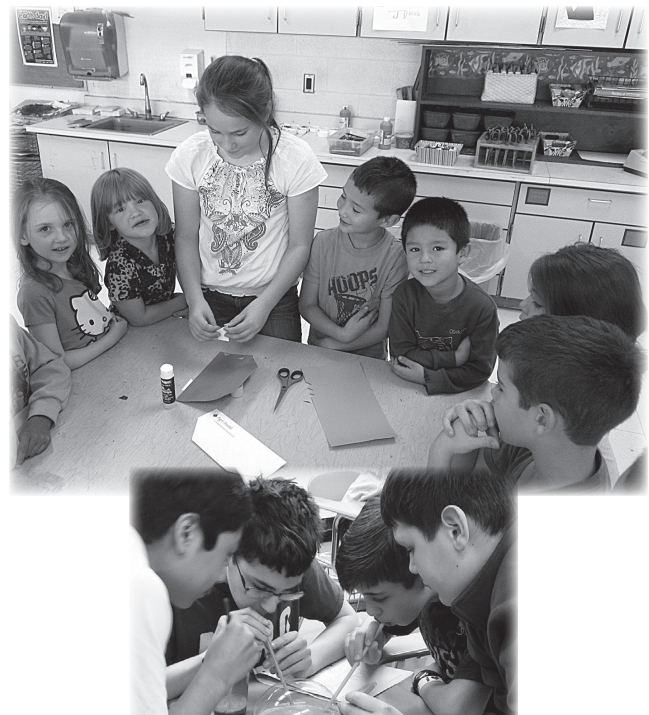
Under contingency, \$146,000 more reductions in programs, services

If the proposed budget is defeated by voters, the SCCS Board of Education — as in the past — will have the option of putting the same or a revised budget up for a revote, or adopting a contingent budget. If voters reject the budget twice, the district must adopt a contingent budget.

More significantly, under the law, if SCCS adopts a contingent budget, the district would have to keep its 2013-14 tax levy the same as or less than its 2012-13 tax levy — in effect a 0 percent tax levy increase.

In other words, the district would have to levy the same amount of taxes as in 2012-13 — or less — without any adjustments for state pension rate increases, contractual obligations or any other costs, whether or not they are mandated.

Adopting a contingent budget would prohibit SCCS from spending any money in certain areas, including community use of school facilities (unless all costs are reimbursed to the district); new equipment purchases; non-essential maintenance; capital expenditures (except in emergencies); salary increases for non-instructional, non-unionized employees; and certain field trips and student supplies. Contingency rules also cap the growth of the administrative component of the budget.



Q&A

What exactly will I see on the ballot May 21?

• Proposition I - School Budget

Shall the following resolution be adopted, to wit: RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Southern Cayuga Central School District, Counties of Cayuga and Tompkins, New York, be and hereby is authorized to expend the sum of \$16,403,438 and levy the necessary tax therefore.

• Proposition II - Bus Purchases

Shall the following resolution be adopted, to wit: RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Southern Cayuga Central School District is hereby authorized to pay the cost of the purchase of school buses, including incidental expenses in connection therewith, at a maximum estimated cost of not exceeding \$415,000, and that said amount or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be raised by the levy of a tax upon the taxable property of said School District and collected in annual installments as provided by Section 416 of the Education Law; and, in anticipation of such tax, obligations of said School District shall be issued.

• Proposition III - Repair Reserve

Shall the following resolution be adopted, to wit: RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Southern Cayuga Central School District is hereby authorized to pay the sum of \$130,000 into the district's Repair Reserve Fund in the 2012-13 school year, to be paid from fund balance or other legally available funds.

• Proposition IV - Library Proposition

RESOLVED that the Board of Education for the Southern Cayuga Central School District is hereby authorized to raise the tax levy from \$46,650 to \$58,650 for the support and operation of the Aurora Free Library and the Hazard Library.

Board of Education Candidates

On May 21, voters will select from among four candidates for three open seats on the Southern Cayuga Central School District Board of Education. The candidates are Ann LaFave, Larry Van DeValk, David Harvatine and Susan Gloss.

The school board is made up of seven non-paid citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of three years each. Together, they:

- Establish district policies;
- Develop an annual budget proposal;
- Approve or disapprove the superintendent's recommendations on personnel matters and contracts; and
- Act as a communication link between residents and the superintendent.

To learn more about the school board, visit www.southerncayuga.org, click on "District" in the menu at the left, and then click on "Board of Education" in the drop-down menu.

ANN LAFAVE is seeking a second term on the Board. A district resident for 20 years, she holds an associate's degree from State University College at Cobleskill, as well as bachelor's and master's degrees from Cornell University. She works as director of student services for the College of Agriculture & Life Sciences at Cornell University. She and husband Doug have two children and live in Locke.



LARRY VANDEVALK is seeking a second term on the Board. A district resident for 10 years, he holds an associate's degree from Paul Smith's College and bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from Cornell University. He works as a senior extension associate at Cornell University. He has served as Board president, on the district Ag Advisory Committee and as a soccer and baseball coach. He and wife Beth have two children and live in Genoa.



DAVID HARVATINE is seeking a first term on the Board. A district resident for 11 years, he holds a bachelor's degree from Cornell University and works for Aurora Ridge Dairy as a dairy herd manager. He is seeking election because, "education is very important to the future of our community," he said.



He and wife Leigh-Ann have two children and live in King Ferry.

SUSAN GLOSS is seeking a second term on the Board. A district resident for 11 years, she holds a bachelor's degree from State University College at Geneseo and a master's degree from the University of Buffalo. She has served twice as BOE vice president and volunteers at King Ferry Food Pantry, the Cayuga Lake Watershed effort and for the Hazard Library book sale. She and husband John have three children and live in King Ferry.



School districts are required by state law to mail this information to all households within the district. For more budget information, call the District Office at 315-364-7211.

DEFINITIONS

The state requires school districts to present their annual budgets in three parts: program, administrative and capital.

1. ADMINISTRATIVE: The administrative portion of the budget provides for the majority of the instructional support services in the District. It includes salaries and benefits of all professional staff members who spend 50 percent or more of their time in administration and supervision; salaries and benefits of clerical staff for administrators; curriculum development and supervision; research, planning and evaluation; central data processing; tax collection; most legal services; and school board costs.

2. PROGRAM: The program portion of the budget is associated with providing instruction and support services to 747 SCCSD students. It includes salaries and benefits of all teachers, guidance counselors, nurses, social workers, aides, monitors. It also includes costs for transportation, co-curricular and interscholastic athletics, in-service training, library and health.

SCHOOL BUDGET NOTICE

	Budget Adopted for the 2012-13 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2013-14 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2013-14 School Year*
Total budgeted amount	\$15,796,008	\$16,403,438	\$16,256,874
Increase or decrease for 2013-14 school year		+\$607,430	+\$460,866
Percentage increase or decrease in proposed budget		+3.84%	+2.92%
Change in the consumer price index		2.1%	
Total proposed school year tax levy, including levy to support library debt, if applicable	\$7,328,244	\$7,474,809	\$7,328,244
Total permissible exclusions	\$738,122	\$748,420	
A. Proposed school year tax levy, not including levy for permissible exclusions or levy to support library debt	\$6,590,122	\$6,726,389	
B. School tax levy limit, not including levy for permissible exclusions	\$7,048,722	\$6,758,739	
Difference: A-B (positive value requires 60% voter approval -- see note below regarding separate propositions)	-\$458,600	-\$32,350	
1. Administrative Component	\$ 1,261,461	\$ 1,316,588	\$ 1,314,488
2. Program Component	\$11,110,378	\$11,521,074	\$11,472,479
3. Capital Component	\$ 3,424,169	\$ 3,565,776	\$ 3,469,907

*Pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law, if the proposed budget is defeated in May, the SCCS Board of Education can put another budget — the same or revised — up for a vote in June or immediately adopt a contingent budget. After two unsuccessful votes, the district must adopt a contingent budget. Contingency would mean further reducing the proposed budget by \$146,564, resulting in additional reductions to programs and services..

Separate propositions that are not included in the total budget amount: (Tax levy associated with propositions not eligible for exclusion may affect property tax levy limit and voter approval requirements.)

Description	Amount
Bus purchases	\$ 415,000
Repair reserve	\$ 130,000
Library proposition	\$ 58,650

Under the budget proposed for the 2013-14 school year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings	\$433
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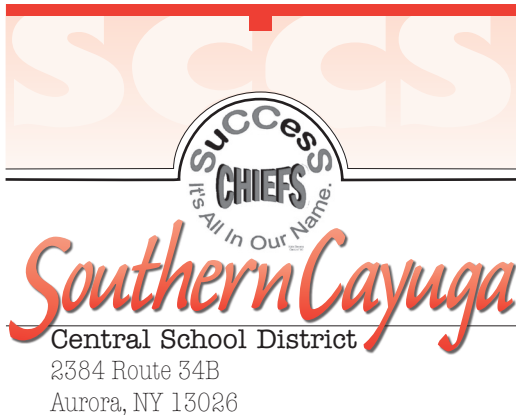
¹ The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

3. CAPITAL: The capital portion of the budget is associated with operating and maintaining the district's 252,400 square feet of buildings and 124 acres of grounds. It includes debt service

on buildings; leases; school bus purchases; tax certiorari and court-ordered costs; and salaries and benefits of all custodial staff.



The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2013-2014 by the qualified voters of the Southern Cayuga Central School District, Cayuga and Tompkins Counties, New York, will be held Tuesday, May 21, 2013, between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9 p.m., prevailing time in the Planetarium classroom, 2384 State Route 34B, Aurora, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting machine.



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Rambling Reporter

Vote Day Details

What exactly will I be voting on?

- **Proposition I:** A school budget proposal of \$16,403,438, which is \$607,430 more than the current budget.
- **Proposition II:** The purchase of two large buses and two smaller buses. This proposition does not increase the proposed school budget.
- **Proposition III:** A proposition to replenish the district's repair reserve fund.
- **Proposition IV:** A proposition to increase the budgets for the Aurora Free and Hazard libraries.
- Three open seats on the Board of Education.

When and where is the vote?

Tuesday, May 21, 2013, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the SCCS Planetarium Classroom.

Who is eligible to vote?

Those at least 18 years old by May 21 who have lived in the district for at least 30 days prior to the vote.

Do I need to pre-register to vote?

No, pre-registration is not required.

How do I vote by absentee ballot?

Obtain an application at the district office or by calling 315-364-7211. It must be returned by May 14 if the absentee ballot is to be mailed to the voter or by May 20 if it will be picked up by the voter. Absentee ballots must be returned no later than 5 p.m. on May 21.

Sale of Emily Howland Elementary

The district has accepted a purchase offer for the former Emily Howland Elementary School. The proceeds from the sale of the building will be used to offset any potential remaining debt on the building. The remaining net proceeds are mandated by the state to be placed in reserve for tax reduction, which must be utilized over a period of no more than 10 years to reduce the tax levy.



Make a Date for Dinner

When you vote on May 21, stop by the annual dinner fundraiser hosted by the Aurora Rotary Club, with the Tri-M Music Honor Society, beginning at 2:30 p.m. in the Southern Cayuga High School cafeteria. For \$9, you can enjoy a meal with a Dinosaur BBQ pulled-pork sandwich, shipwrecked beans and applesauce.