



The Board of Education and Administration have been actively engaged in planning for the 2024-25 school year budget and projecting expenses for next school year. On January 16, the District received the preliminary state aid projections based on Governor Hochul's executive budget proposals. These projections are only an estimate until the New York State budget is finalized and enacted by the State Legislature. These initial projections include a reduction of \$1.1M from the amount of Foundation Aid that we received this year, with the elimination of the "save harmless" provision and instituting a "transition adjustment."

Historically, the State guaranteed school districts would receive at least the same operating aid as the previous year, irrespective of demographic changes. This assurance, especially in Foundation Aid, meant that districts like Southern Cayuga, experiencing declining enrollment, didn't face deductions. However, the executive budget removes the "save harmless" provision and introduces a "transition adjustment." Under this adjustment, districts receiving more Foundation Aid than the formula calculates will only receive a wealth-adjusted portion of the difference. For Southern Cayuga, the current formula overestimates by \$2.2M, and with the 50% "transition adjustment," our projected loss for the 2024-25 school year is \$1.1M. These figures will guide our understanding of the district's State Aid revenue.

As always, when building the school budget, we review ways to conserve and reduce, while staying dedicated to providing our students and community with an environment conducive to personal and academic excellence. We explore all revenue options and scrutinize spending to ensure financial responsibility. Meetings with principals and department heads are ongoing to discuss anticipated expenses for the next school year. The Board of Education and administration will continue assessing projected expenses and revenues for the 2024-2025 school year. SCCS has been fortunate over the years to keep the tax levy increases minimal and below the tax cap limit, which has in turn kept tax rates the lowest in Central New York. Planning next year's budget will definitely have its challenges; however, we will work to continue to be financially responsible while maintaining fiscal solvency.

The 2024-2025 school budget vote is scheduled for May 21. Now is an opportune time to familiarize yourself with the Southern Cayuga Central School budget-building process. We invite parents, students, staff, and community members to attend Board of Education meetings to gain insight into the decisions shaping the 2024-2025 budget. Understanding the process helps us collectively ensure the continued excellence of our educational environment.

We encourage all to attend Board of Education meetings to learn more about the budget for 2024-2025.

Regular Board Meetings: February 12, March 11 & 25, and April 17, 2024

Budget Hearing: May 13, 2024

Budget Vote: May 21, 2024