



LINDY SPOTLIGHT

LINDENHURST PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Lindenhurst Union Free School District

SPECIAL BUDGET EDITION 2010

District Website: www.lindenhurstschools.org

Even With Reductions, PROPOSED BUDGET MAINTAINS CORE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

A JOINT MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT AND BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dear Community,

To say that planning for the proposed 2010-11 budget was difficult is an immense understatement. This year, we are presented with many challenges that have collided together to make for an "imperfect storm." The biggest hurdle confronting Lindenhurst is a loss of approximately \$3.5 million in state aid. This reduction, coupled with a rise in expenses that we are required to pay by law (such as employee benefits and unfunded state mandates), has forced the Board and administration to reevaluate the programs, services, and staffing levels currently in place.

Had the district decided to "roll over" the current year's budget (meaning that all programs and services in place for 2009-10 would be carried over to 2010-11), the district would be facing an expenditure increase of approximately \$7 million. This would have placed a huge burden on

the taxpayer. Given the current economic downturn, this is not something the Board and administration were willing to do. We recognize that there are many residents living on fixed incomes who cannot afford large increases in the tax levy.

Over the course of the past several months, the district held a number of budget workshops, during which community members offered their input on the proposed spending plan. We listened to what residents had to say and discussed all options before finalizing the proposed budget. Thank you to all who participated.

We are proud that the proposed spending plan maintains the core academic program that Lindenhurst students currently enjoy, while keeping the concerns of the local taxpayers in mind. The budget represents an expenditure increase of 0.49%, which equates to a tax rate increase of 3.87% for the average homeowner. We believe that the proposed budget preserves the essential programs that are needed for success, even with reductions in staff and select services.

As your fellow taxpayers, neighbors, and parents, it was a difficult process for the Board to make reductions; however, we believe this is the best course of action to lessen the impact on local

taxpayers. The proposed budget reflects the following reductions and eliminations which will enable our district to run more efficiently: 42.8 instructional, 3 non-instructional positions (some of which are due to declining enrollment), a freeze on hiring an administrative position, summer school, Project SAIL, AIM, and all intramurals. For a complete list of what will be reduced under the proposed budget, please visit the district's website at www.lindenhurstschools.org.

While the proposed budget does call for reductions, it also preserves many services and programs that will enable Lindenhurst students to continue their rise to success. It preserves full-day kindergarten, most AP courses, remediation services, junior varsity and varsity athletics, and most extra/cocurricular activities at the high school level. While our district is at a crossroads, we are able to minimize the impact on the students due to careful planning. As your Board and administration, we remain committed to preparing our students for life beyond high school. In the past several years, Lindenhurst students have realized great achievements. In the past year alone, we had 46 students who were named AP Scholars and more than 200 students enrolled in AP courses. This is just a small snapshot of our students' successes.

As always, we encourage all community residents to attend the upcoming Budget Hearing, which will be held on Wednesday, May 5, at 8 p.m. at the McKenna Administration Building. Please also remember to vote on Tuesday, May 18, during the hours of 6 am to 9 pm.



LINDENHURST PUBLIC SCHOOLS
350 Daniel Street,
Lindenhurst, New York 11757

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SAVE THE DATES

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5
Board of Education Business Meeting and Public
Budget Hearing
McKenna Administration Building, 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, MAY 18
Annual Budget Vote and Trustee Election
Polls Open from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK — AN INVESTMENT PAYING OFF!

ACADEMICS

- 46 students were designated as AP Scholars
- Lindenhurst students scored above the Town and County average on the NYS Math and ELA Assessments
- More than 200 students are enrolled in Advanced Placement classes
- Members of the Class of 2010 have been admitted to prestigious colleges
- Lindenhurst High School Robotics team received the Regional Engineering Inspiration Award

- cooperatively with MSG Varsity on content that will be delivered to the web, Channel 14, and Cable IO 614.
- 50 students from the Advanced Digital Photo and the Digital Photo Portfolio classes had works chosen for display in the "Youth Art Showcase"
- High School artwork was sent to exhibitions at C.W. Post University and Ward Melville Heritage Organization
- The High School Marching Band achieved its highest score in 20 years at the United States Scholastic Band Association finals
- The Color Guard placed first at the Northern State Championships

ARTS

- High School Media Students have been selected to work

ATHLETICS

- Numerous high school teams received a Section XI Sportsmanship Award
- Several teams received scholar-athlete awards
- Lindenhurst High School's Steven Skon won the Boomer Esiason Award as Most Outstanding Quarterback in Suffolk County
- Lindenhurst High School's James Briggs won the Silver Slugger Award, given to the best offensive baseball player in Suffolk County
- The Lindenhurst High School 200-yard freestyle relay team established a new school swimming record

- were recognized with the prestigious Presidential Service Award, given to students who complete a minimum of 50 hours of community service.
- More than 300 students participated in the Lindenhurst High School Character in Action program
- *Business Week* ranked Lindenhurst among the top districts in the country that offers "Good Schools and Affordable Homes"
- William Rall students donated almost \$600 to St. Jude's Children's Hospital this past year
- High School students participated in Suffolk County's first annual "Compassion without Borders" summit

COMMUNITY

- 56 students from the district

DRIVING FORCES BEHIND THE BUDGET

- **Preserve Orion, the District's Gifted and Talented Program**
Preserve core academic programs
- **Provide a tax levy affordable to the community**
- **Meet State curriculum and assessment requirements**
- **Exercise cost-efficiency**
- **Preserve quality athletic program**
- **Preserve extra/cocurricular activities**
- **Preserve full-day kindergarten**

WHAT THE DISTRICT IS DOING TO \$AVE MONEY

The Lindenhurst School District continues to explore ways to control costs, where possible. The district has little control over contractual increases and contributions to teacher retirement and health insurance. There are measures the district has taken to save money, such as:

- **All department/building budgets throughout the district were frozen as of December 2009, including all supplies and materials.**
- **Through voter approval last school year, the transportation guidelines were changed, resulting in a savings of more than \$700,000.**
- **The district has negotiated with four out of six of the bargaining units. Three units took a 0% increase and one unit took only a 1% increase, which has helped to offset costs.**
- **The district is currently researching energy performance contracts to further save money on energy consumption. Current energy-saving practices include automatic shutdown of computers at night and the use of solar panels at all elementary schools.**
- **Increasing use of RFPs (Request for Proposals), bids, and shared services to secure the most cost-effective prices**

Lindenhurst Union Free School District
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Lindy Spotlight is the school district's community newsletter, containing pertinent information on the activities and issues of the district, published 8-10 times annually, and mailed free of charge to all district residents. The district reserves the right to publish information pertaining to students regarding school activities, academic honors, sports programs, scholarships, etc.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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The Lindenhurst School District hereby advises students, parents, employees, and the general public that it offers employment and educational opportunities, including vocational educational opportunities, without regard to gender, race, color, national origin or disability. Inquiries regarding this nondiscrimination policy may be directed to: Title IX Coordinator Ms. C. Clifton (867-3075) and/or Section 504 Coordinator David J. Cenerelli (867-3100) at the Central Administration Building, 350 Daniel Street, Lindenhurst, New York 11757.

PROPOSED 2010-2011 BUDGET

Chapter 436 of the Laws of 1997 requires all school districts to divide their budget into three components: Administrative, Program, and Capital.

Function	Total	Admin.	Program	Capital
Central Administration	322,550	322,550		
Finance	810,616	810,616		
Legal Services	440,000	352,000	88,000	
Personnel	323,047	323,047		
Public Information	130,400	130,400		
Operation of Plant	7,529,823	114,330		7,415,493
Maintenance of Plant	3,185,102			3,185,102
Technology, Central Printing & Insurance	2,213,424	2,213,424		
Curriculum Development & Supervision	319,283	319,283		
Instruction	76,946,342	5,978,930	70,967,412	
Transportation	7,901,140	93,600	7,807,540	
Board of Education	56,625	56,625		
Community Service	92,620	46,500	46,120	
Employee Benefits	31,260,505	3,619,394	24,603,292	3,037,819
Debt Service	5,273,734			5,273,734
Interfund Transfers	286,426		186,426	100,000
Totals	\$137,091,637	\$14,380,699	\$103,698,790	\$19,012,148

WHAT WOULD A CONTINGENCY BUDGET MEAN TO LINDENHURST?

The proposed 2010-2011 budget represents a 0.49% expenditure increase. Should the proposed budget be defeated on May 18, the Board of Education has the option of seeking voter approval for a second time. The Board also has the option of adopting a contingency budget in order to operate during the 2010-2011 school year. If the Board decides to hold a second vote and the budget does not pass, the district must adopt a contingency budget, by law.

This year, the district has an added challenge should it be forced to adopt a contingency spending plan. As of this writing, Governor Paterson's State budget has proposed that districts will be forced to maintain a -0.4% expenditure increase for 2010-2011 (unlike years past, when State law allowed districts to modestly increase spending under a contingency plan). This means that Lindenhurst would not be allowed to increase spending from the current year's budget – even with the rise in costs the district is required to pay.

The Board of Education and administration have already made prudent reductions to propose an expenditure increase of only 0.49%, which preserves a solid academic and extracurricular program for students. Should the proposed budget be defeated, the Board would be required to cut an additional \$1,287,362 from the proposed budget to keep expenditures consistent with the current school year. The consequences of this would be devastating and the following areas would be examined for elimination and/or reduction:

- Further reductions in staff
- No use of district facilities by outside organizations without payment (required by state law)
- Fewer electives at the high school
- Fewer sports teams
- No purchase of new equipment, including computers (required by state law)
- Reduced instructional support

The difference between a passed budget and a failed budget in Lindenhurst is \$1,287,362. This is a difference of approximately \$114 per year (or \$9.50 per month) for the average homeowner.

The Impact of STATE MANDATES

Lindenhurst School District is required (mandated) by the New York State government to provide certain programs and services. Many of these mandates are either unfunded or underfunded by the state, leaving the district to shoulder the burden of the cost. Unfunded/underfunded state mandates include:

- **Cost of scoring, administering and analyzing New York State Assessment exams**
- **Audit requirements**
- **Requirements for graphing calculators for high school math**
- **Increased district costs for Teachers' Retirement System and Employees' Retirement System**
- **The Metropolitan Commuter Transportation Mobility Tax (MCTMT), commonly known as the MTA tax, is costing the district \$250,000 per year**



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What is the proposed budget increase?

A. The proposed 2010-2011 school budget carries an expenditure increase of 0.49% over the current year's budget. This translates to a tax rate increase of approximately 3.87%.

Q. What outside factors have influenced this year's budget development process?

A. The current economic crisis has affected everyone in one way or another. The state is experiencing enormous shortfalls in revenue and, as a result, Governor Paterson has proposed a reduction of \$1.3 billion in state aid for districts across the state as of this writing. For Lindenhurst, this means a loss of \$3.5 million. In addition, the district is facing mandatory increases to the teachers' and employees' retirement systems, as well as a steep rise in healthcare costs.

Q. What is the district doing to control expenditures?

A. The district is focused on maintaining the core academic program for Lindenhurst students. In order to address the current economic crisis and keep the tax increase to an absolute minimum, the Board has carefully examined every area of the budget to ensure that we only budget for what is needed to run the schools and maintain a quality program for students. The proposed 2010-2011 budget reflects reductions in staffing, enrichment programs, and some course offerings, to name a few. Several of these reductions are due to declining enrollment. For a complete list of reductions, please visit the district's website at www.lindenhurstschools.org.

Q. Will my taxes still go up even if the budget does not pass?

A. Yes. If the budget does not pass, your tax rate will still increase.

Even if the district is forced to operate under a contingency budget, the district must still make up for lost revenue in state aid and an increase in mandatory expenditures. The difference between a passed budget and a failed budget is \$1,287,362. For the average homeowner, this represents a difference of approximately \$9.50 per month.

Q. If the budget does not pass, what programs are likely to be affected?

A. If the budget does not pass and the Board must adopt a contingency budget, approximately \$1,287,362 would have to be cut from the proposed budget. Some possible consequences include further reductions in staff, fewer athletic teams, and no use of district facilities by outside organizations without payment, to name a few.



VOTING LOCATIONS

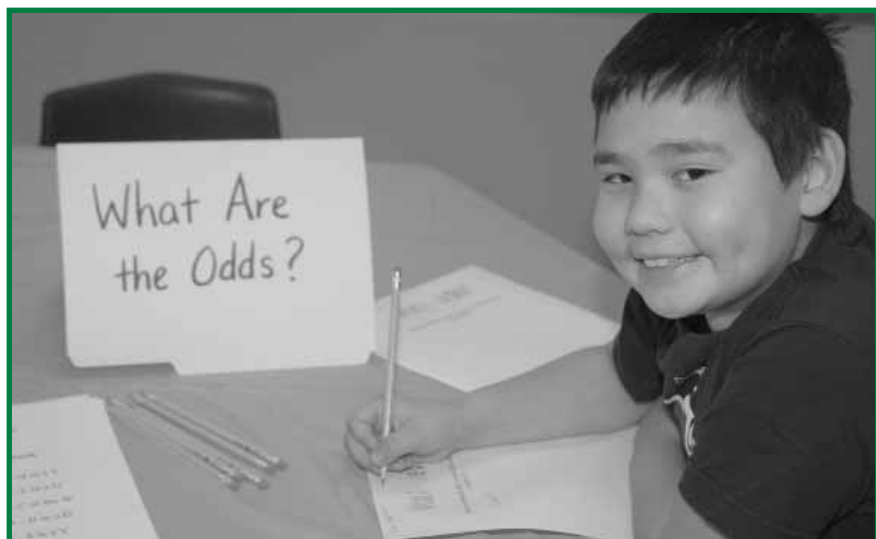
District 1: Lindenhurst Middle School, 350 SOUTH WELLWOOD AVENUE. (Area of school district south of the tracks of the Montauk Branch of the LIRR and north of Montauk Highway.)

District 2: Albany Avenue Elementary School, 180 ALBANY AVENUE. (Area of the school district north of the tracks of the Montauk Branch of the LIRR, south of Sunrise Highway, and west of North Wellwood Avenue.)

District 3: William Rall Elementary School, 761 NORTH WELLWOOD AVENUE. (Area of the school district north of Sunrise Highway.)

District 4: E.W. Bower Elementary School, 315 W. MONTAUK HIGHWAY. (Area of the school district south of Montauk Highway.)

District 5: Daniel Street Elementary School, 289 DANIEL STREET. (Area of the school district north of the tracks of the Montauk Branch of the LIRR, south of Sunrise Highway, and east of North Wellwood Avenue.)



RESIDENT VOTING INFORMATION

You may vote in the School Budget Election if you meet the following criteria:

- Have been a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote
- Are at least 18 years of age
- Are a citizen of the United States

Note: If you are registered with the Suffolk County Board of Elections or have voted in a general, special, or primary election within the last four years, you do not need to register. However, to ensure your eligibility, we encourage registration. District residents may register to vote weekdays from 9-4 p.m. at the district clerk's office, located at the McKenna Administration Building, 350 Daniel Street.

Absentee Ballot Applications and Ballots can be obtained from the district clerk's office at the McKenna Administration Building, located at 350 Daniel Street. Absentee ballot applications must be received by the district clerk's office at least seven (7) days before the election if ballot is to be mailed, or the day before the election if picked up in person. All absentee ballots must be returned by 5 p.m. on the day of the vote. For further information please call the district clerk at 867-3070.