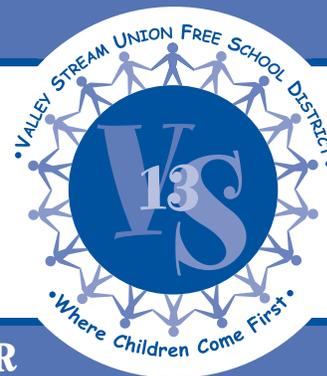


# It's *Elementary*



VALLEY STREAM DISTRICT THIRTEEN NEWSLETTER

## *Educationally Sound, Fiscally Responsible* PROPOSED BUDGET INCREASE IS LESS THAN 1%



### *A Message from Your Board of Education President*

Dear Residents,

On Tuesday, May 18, 2010, District Thirteen residents will cast their ballots on the proposed 2010-2011 school budget. This issue of *It's Elementary* contains a comprehensive overview of the proposed financial plan for the upcoming school year, as well as a highlight of our district's past achievements. It is our hope that you find the publication helpful as you prepare to make an informed decision on the future of the district's school learning environment and educational program.

The Board of Education and Leadership Team have worked diligently over the past several months to ensure that this proposed budget not only meets the educational needs of all students, but also reflects an understanding of the financial impact a school budget has on the district's community residents. The proposed budget preserves the high quality of education that our residents have come to expect while honoring our obligation to be fiscally responsible by minimizing the financial impact to the taxpayer. We are keenly aware of the tax burden that already exists in our community and in light of the State's current fiscal crisis we made every effort to manage our expenses as efficiently as possible. Many difficult decisions were made throughout the budget process and we believe that we have effectively spread the necessary expense reductions across many sections of the district's operations as to not overly impact one area.

The result of these efforts is a proposed budget that carries a 0.85% increase over the current year's spending plan and allows us to continue to support high rigorous standards for our students so that they may achieve success in a safe, nurturing environment. We have been able to wisely use our

funds to provide our students with a rich, diverse, and comprehensive educational program.

It is our strong school-community partnership that is largely responsible for the level of achievement we are experiencing today. Our students boast top scores on the New York State Math and English Language Arts assessments, are civic and community-minded through their participation in year-round community service projects, and are working to become the future leaders of our society by learning all of the necessary skills from our outstanding faculty and staff.

Given the Board of Education's and community's support for our educational programs and maintenance of facilities, we are well-positioned to weather the financial storms we are and will be facing. As we look toward 2010-2011 and beyond, we will remain committed to seeking cost-effective measures and preserving the educational excellence that our community values. We encourage you to continue to be a part of Valley Stream's future and vote on May 18<sup>th</sup>. We appreciate the community's on-going support of our district and our students.

Should you have any questions or concerns on the proposed budget, please do not hesitate to contact our Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Elizabeth Lison, at 568-6100.

Sincerely,

Joseph DiSibio  
Board of Education President

# VISION + ACHIEVEMENT = PRIDE

## FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DISTRICT'S FINE REPUTATION

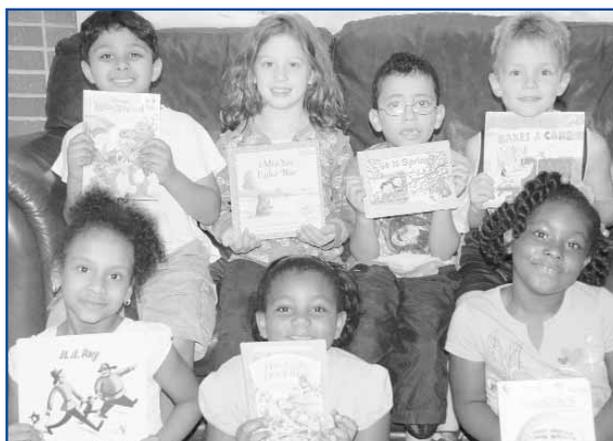
### ACADEMICS & PROGRAMS

- Literacy Program named an award-winning model for schools in New York State by the International Reading Association
- High percentage of students meet and exceed proficiency levels on New York State Assessments
- Appropriate student/teacher ratio based on enrollment
- Research-based and evidence-supported instructional programs, including Foundations, Making Meaning - Being a Writer (Grades K-4), ReadAbout
- Technology-integrated curriculum modeling 21st Century Skills technology tools
- Comprehensive character and wellness education programs
- Local and state recognition for outstanding musicians and artists
- Full spectrum of special services and programs responsive to diverse needs

- Effective academic intervention programs
- Early identification and services for at-risk students
- Expanded in-district special education services to reduce the need for out-of-district placements
- Outstanding program for youngsters with autism
- Continuation of expanded co-teaching models K-6
- Extensive Professional Development Opportunities
  - School/University Partnerships
  - Distance Learning through videoconferencing
  - On-going in-district staff development and mentoring
  - Content-Specific Professional Learning
- Nutritious Lunch Program

### OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

- Comprehensive after-school offerings
- Safe and secure playgrounds and fields to promote healthy lifestyle
- Strong Parent-Community Partnership
  - Parents as Reading Partners (PARP)
  - Intergenerational Reading Partners
  - Wellness Nights for parents and students
  - Meet the Principal Programs
  - Welcoming programs for new residents
  - Parent Connection website
- Year-round student community service
- Informative district website
- Districtwide Basketball Tournaments
- Exhibits, performances, and visitations to local nursing homes and hospitals



## Budget Ambassadors: *Your Friendly Neighbors in the Know*

In addition to obtaining information on the 2010-2011 proposed budget through this newsletter and the district's website, the community is also able to stay informed regarding the proposed school budget by speaking with one of the district's Budget Ambassadors. These volunteers are community members who serve as liaisons between the district and the community in an effort to help keep the lines of communication open while the district moves through this yearly budget process. These residents are kept up-to-date on the proposed budget and are available to answer any questions you might have. To find out who your local Budget Ambassador is, you may speak with your school principal, look for the Budget Ambassadors' identifying buttons, or locate their names on the school's front door.



# DRIVING FORCES BEHIND THE PROPOSED BUDGET

Preserve High-Quality Instructional Program  
Continue On-going Maintenance of Facilities  
Support Technology-Integrated Instruction  
Plan for Reduction of State Aid

## DEFINING A HIGH-VALUE SCHOOL DISTRICT

A high-value school district can be identified in a number of ways. Below are some of the qualities that define District Thirteen as a high-value school district:

- **Curriculum exceeding New York State Standards**
- **Environment conducive to success**
- **Award-winning music program**
- **Districtwide Health & Wellness Program**
- **Student, faculty, parent, and community partnerships**
- **Technology-integrated instruction**
- **Formidable financial oversight**



## *Efficiencies Through Shared Services*

Throughout the school year, the district engages in several cooperative agreements with other districts in order to control spending. Below is a brief description of the partnerships District Thirteen is involved in:

- **Transportation:** *founding member of the Southwest Quadrant Transportation Cooperative for private and parochial schools.*
- **Food Services:** *cooperates with Central High School District and District Thirty for school lunch services saving on clerical, accounting, and auditing costs.*
- **Insurance:** *founding member of Nassau County Cooperative for Workers' Compensation and the New York State Insurance Reciprocal.*
- **Residency:** *participates with Central High School District and District Twenty-Four to share residency advisory services, eliminating duplication of effort.*
- **Equipment and Supplies:** *participates in cooperative bidding, BOCES, and New York State Contracts.*
- **Local Government and Efficiencies:** *through Nassau BOCES, received local government efficiency grant to explore opportunities for shared services.*
- **Contract Services:** *uses Request for Proposal (RFP) process to seek service providers. Annually participates with Districts Twenty-Four and Thirty in soliciting Special Education Services through an RFP.*
- **Professional Development Services:** *joins with other districts to share consultant expenses.*
- **BOCES Services:** *joins with other Nassau districts to share services such as special education, textbooks, and health and safety support and technology.*
- **Technology Infrastructure:** *interconnectivity with Valley Stream districts for cooperative projects.*

# A DETAILED LOOK AT PROPOSED 2010-2011 BUDGET - \$41,341,000

## INSTRUCTION – 63.6% of Budget

	2009-2010	Proposed 2010-2011
Teaching - Regular School	\$15,112,654	\$14,597,712
Special Education	6,042,748	5,879,677
Curriculum Development	367,686	358,887
Supervision	1,210,405	1,239,110
Research & Development	6,250	6,250
Reading	1,348,209	1,346,277
Preschool	5,750	5,750
Gifted & Talented	238,072	241,241
Library	618,360	595,468
Computer-Assisted Instruction	588,924	760,633
Student Management System	49,500	49,500
Health Services	429,138	436,124
Psychological Services	569,648	576,493
Social Worker	193,147	184,975
<b>Total Instruction</b>	<b>\$26,780,491</b>	<b>\$26,278,097</b>
<b>% Change</b>		<b>-1.9%</b>

## DISTRICT SUPPORT – 4.8% of Budget

Board of Education
District Clerk
District Meeting
Central Administration
Business Administration
Auditing
Treasurer
Legal Services
Personnel
Records Management
Public Information
Central Mailing
Central Data Processing
Insurance
School Dues
BOCES Administration
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
<b>Total District Support</b>
<b>% Change</b>

## TRANSPORTATION – 5.4% of Budget

	2009-2010	Proposed 2010-2011
Transportation	\$89,455	90,032
Contracted Transportation	2,095,796	2,150,551
<b>Total Transportation</b>	<b>\$2,185,251</b>	<b>\$2,240,583</b>
<b>% Change</b>		<b>2.5%</b>

## OPERATION & MAINTENANCE - 5.6%

Operations
Maintenance
<b>Total Operations and Maintenance</b>
<b>% Change</b>

## SUMMARY OF 2010-2011 REVENUE

	2009-2010	Proposed 2010-2011
State Aid	\$10,050,000	\$9,425,000
Fund Balance Appropriations	1,175,000	1,175,000
Interest Earnings/Building Use	201,000	201,000
Summer Recreation	103,000	103,000
Tuition Other Districts	250,000	250,000
Refund of Prior Year Expenditures	15,000	15,000
Misc. Revenue	12,500	12,500
Property Tax Levy	29,184,886	30,160,180
<b>Revenue for Budget</b>	<b>\$40,991,386</b>	<b>\$41,341,680</b>

## TAX IMPACT ON THE AVERAGE HOMEOWNER

	2009-2010	Proposed 2010-11	% Changed
Elementary District	\$3,144.59	\$3,197.28	1.68%
High School District	\$3,350.88	\$3,308.95	-1.25%
Combined Tax	\$6,495.47	\$6,506.23	0.17%

According to the Nassau County Department of Assessment the average home in Valley Stream District Thirteen has a market value of \$380,400.

The Elementary School Tax will increase \$52.69 per year or \$0.14 per day!

# PROPOSED BUDGET EXPENDITURES

## \$680 • LESS THAN 1% INCREASE

### DEBT SERVICE/TRANSFERS – 1.6% of Budget

2009-2010	Proposed 2010-2011	2009-2010	Proposed 2010-2011
\$14,800	\$14,850	Construction	\$461,750
9,350	9,526	Interfund Transfer	60,000
17,800	21,900	TAN & Energy Performance Contract	75,959
357,983	370,595	<b>Total Debt Service/Transfers</b>	<b>\$597,709</b>
463,727	472,916	<b>% Change</b>	<b>12.3%</b>
92,000	92,000		
12,700	12,700		
120,500	132,000		
20,700	18,700		
9,242	9,242		
72,800	74,500		
13,100	13,570		
37,000	37,000		
298,500	298,500		
11,430	11,700		
257,398	273,195		
Property Tax --	100,000		
<b>\$1,809,030</b>	<b>\$1,962,894</b>		
	<b>8.5%</b>		

### EMPLOYEE BENEFITS – 18.8% of Budget

2009-2010	Proposed 2010-2011	2009-2010	Proposed 2010-2011
		Health Insurance	\$3,042,750
		Teachers' Retirement	1,680,340
		Employees' Retirement	307,000
		Social Security (FICA)	1,987,255
		Workers' Compensation	177,240
		Unemployment	41,500
		Life Insurance	1,500
		Disability Insurance	2,000
		<b>Total Employee Benefits</b>	<b>\$7,239,585</b>
		<b>% Change</b>	<b>7.4%</b>

### of Budget

2009-2010	Proposed 2010-2011
\$1,736,492	\$1,787,742
539,828	524,532
<b>\$2,276,320</b>	<b>\$2,312,274</b>
	<b>1.6%</b>

### SUMMER RECREATION – .2% of Budget

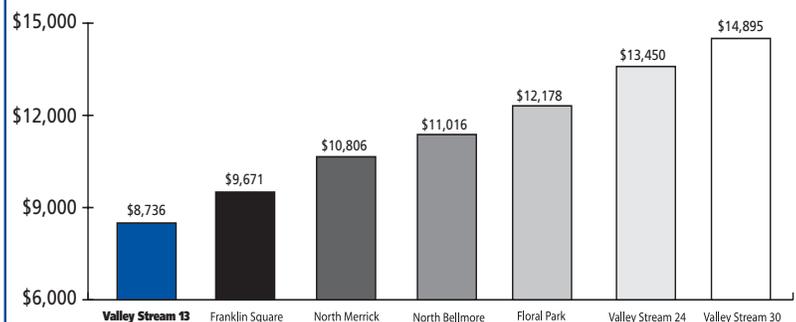
2009-2010	Proposed 2010-2011
Summer Recreation	\$103,000
<b>Total Summer Recreation</b>	<b>\$103,000</b>
<b>% Change</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

## Did You Know...

- More than 80% of the budget is allocated for salaries, benefits, and mandated services.
- Salaries are determined through contract negotiations, and benefit rates are mandated by the state or federal government.
- The contribution that teachers and other employees of the district make toward their health insurance is one of the highest in the County.
- In the absence of large-scale commercial property, over 90% of the taxes are paid by residential homeowners in District Thirteen.

## Comparing Per Pupil Expenditures

*Ongoing Efficiencies = Cost Savings*



Source: New York State Education Department (2009-2010)

## WHAT IS THE ESTIMATED TOTAL REVENUE FOR 2010-2011?

Based on current projections, Valley Stream Thirteen estimated 2010-2011 revenues are broken down in the following manner:

State Aid ..... \$9,425,000  
 Other revenues ..... \$581,500  
 Carryover from previous year. .... \$1,175,000

**TOTAL ..... \$11,181,500**

The remaining funds, \$30,160,180, needed to support the budget, will be obtained through the set tax levy.

## WHAT IS REVENUE?

The district receives revenue from four sources:

- State Aid
- Other miscellaneous sources, including interest earnings
- Carryover from prior year's operations
- Tax Levy (remaining monies needed to support the budget)

## USING RESERVES...

At the end of any fiscal year, districts have funds that were budgeted but not fully expended or revenues somewhat in excess of those planned. After returning significant portions of those funds to the taxpayers in the ensuing fiscal year, the Board of Education places any additional funds in reserve accounts. These reserves serve to protect the district against unanticipated needs and/or a severe economic downturn such as we are currently experiencing. Part of the 2010-2011 budget is funded from these reserve accounts, thereby reducing the tax levy. As the state's fiscal difficulties continue, the Board anticipates utilizing significantly more of these funds in order to control increases in property taxes. For the 2010-2011 proposed budget, the Board of Education has authorized the use of more than \$400,000 in reserve funds to offset the total tax levy.

## DETERMINING THE TAX RATE

Three factors determine how much a particular piece of property is taxed:

- Tax Levy
- Anticipated Adjusted Base Proportion for that Class or type of property (Class 1 are homeowners; Class 2 are apartment owners; Class 3 are utility companies; and Class 4 are business or commercial properties)
- Assessment for the property

Of the three factors, the district has no control over two – the adjusted base proportion of a particular class of property and the assessment of a particular property.

To determine what your taxes will be, visit:

[www.nassaucountyny.gov/mynassauproperty](http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/mynassauproperty)

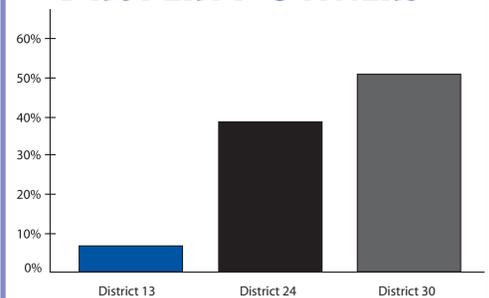
- Click on Property Search
- Click "I Accept..." at bottom of screen
- Enter your address
- Scroll to Assessed Value (School Year 10-11)
- Multiply the figure under 2010-2011 by \$684.147
- Divide by 100
- Subtract \$1,231
- This is your 2010-2011 school tax\*

\* This amount will change slightly when the final Adjusted Base Proportions are approved by the Nassau County Legislature

## What is a tax levy?

The tax levy is the amount of money determined by the Board of Education that needs to be raised in property taxes in order to balance the school budget. The district takes the total school budget and subtracts estimated revenues such as state aid, tuitions, and fees. The remaining amount is what needs to be raised in property taxes.

### PORTION OF TAX LEVY PAID BY COMMERCIAL PROPERTY OWNERS\*



\* Percentages based on current adjusted base proportion.

# Questions & Answers



## ***Q. What is a school budget?***

A. A school district's annual budget is the best estimate made by the Board of Education and administration of the funds needed to support a quality educational program for the upcoming school year.

## ***Q. Does this budget include services for residents who do not have children in public schools?***

A. Yes, as required by law, Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen offers transportation, textbooks, and special services such as speech and school health for all public and private school students. The district also makes its facilities available to community groups and organizations.

## ***Q: Will transportation for students be preserved under the proposed budget?***

A: Yes, current transportation guidelines will remain the same. Kindergarten through third-grade students residing one-half mile or greater and fourth- through sixth-grade students residing one mile or greater from the school they attend will still be provided transportation.

## ***Q. What happens if the budget fails on May 18?***

A. If the budget is defeated on May 18, state law allows the district to present either the same budget or a revised budget, which would include program cuts, for one more vote. If a second proposed budget is defeated, the district must, by law, adopt a Contingency Budget.

## ***Q. What is a Contingency Budget?***

A. A contingency budget is the maximum amount authorized by law that a district can impose on the community if the school budget is voted down. New York State imposes a cap on a Contingency Budget, which sets the expenditure increase at 0% for next year, plus an allowance for such excludable expenses as enrollment increases.

## ***Q. What are the restrictions under a contingency budget?***

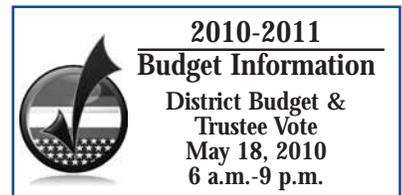
A. In addition to expenditure caps, the state imposes controls on certain district expenditures, including the elimination of all capital projects and severe restrictions on the use of school facilities by community members. Also, the Board of Education may choose to eliminate certain programs, such as summer recreation, field trips, and clubs, to allow for restructuring under the expenditure caps.

## ***Q. Does the district seek alternative funding sources?***

A. Yes. District personnel seek opportunities to secure funding from both public and private sources. The Grants Committee investigates funding opportunities offered by corporations and other private sector organizations. Committee members target specific grants and formulate highly focused applications aimed at the grant objectives. In cooperation with local legislators, the district seeks funding through special legislative grants for such projects as playground improvements and technology equipment.

## ***Q. Where can I get more information?***

A. Complete copies of the proposed 2010-2011 Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen budget are available in the district office at 585 North Corona Avenue. Reference copies are available for inspection at all district schools. Budget information is also available on the district's website at [www.valleystream13.com](http://www.valleystream13.com).



**Valley Stream Union Free School District Thirteen**  
585 North Corona Avenue, Valley Stream, New York 11580-2099  
(516) 568-6100  
[www.valleystream13.com](http://www.valleystream13.com)

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**REMEMBER TO VOTE**  
**TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2010 • 6:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M.**



**NEED AN  
ABSENTEE BALLOT?**

District residents who will be unavailable for the annual budget vote and election on Tuesday, May 18 may obtain absentee ballots. Applications for ballots may be obtained at the office of the District Clerk. All ballots must be received by the District Clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 18, 2010.

**VOTER REQUIREMENTS**

- In order to qualify to vote in the upcoming Budget Vote and Trustee Election:
- You must be a U.S. Citizen.
  - You must be 18 years of age or older.
  - You must be a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote.
  - You must have registered to vote in the general elections or have voted in a school election within the last four years (between 2006-2009).

**EVERY VOTE COUNTS!**  
**REMEMBER TO REGISTER AND VOTE**

**Public Budget Hearing - Wednesday, May 5 at 7:30 P.M.**  
**James A. Dever School Cafeteria**  
**Last Day to Register to Vote - Tuesday, May 11 from 5:00-9:00 p.m.**  
**At Each School Building**  
**BUDGET VOTE TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2010**  
**6:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M.**

**Voting will be in the District Thirteen school election district in which you live.**  
**(Usually in the public school your child or neighbor's child attends.)**



**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Joseph DiSibio, *President*      Frank Chiachiere, Ph.D., *Vice President*  
Debra Evans      Joan Gartner      Jeanne Greco Jacobs  
Thomas Speranza      William P. Stris

Elizabeth Lison, Ed.D., *Superintendent of Schools*