

Superintendent's Message

Budget reflects priorities, sets path for students to thrive

I hope this edition of *the Focus* finds you well. I want to start by saying how much we appreciate the partnership of every family member and community member as we've navigated the many and varied challenges associated with COVID-19. This school community has revealed itself as resilient and able to adapt, which is why we have been able to work together so well in the face of such adversity.

This year, as always, we approach the budget with the mindset that we must be respectful of the taxpayer's money. This approach requires that we plan with three key objectives in mind. First, we want to have a budget that preserves the great programs that we currently have in place. Second, it is important that we pass a budget that gives us the greatest amount of flexibility to adapt to the changes that we know will come throughout the fiscal year. Third, we need to pass a budget that is balanced.

The 2021-22 budget:

- Maintains all current programs at total budget cost of \$77,650,250
- Requires a levy increase of 2.2%, which falls within the allowable levy limit (tax cap)
- Adds no new positions and replaces all but one of our retiring positions
- We have trimmed costs in many non-instructional areas in an effort to put forward the most fiscally responsible budget possible

We feel fortunate to have received an increase in Foundation Aid of more than \$500,000, which helped us close a fairly substantial budget gap. State Sen. Sean Ryan, as well as Assembly Member Jon Rivera, were instrumental in advocating for us in Albany.

Also, nearly \$6 million in federal aid was allocated to the district through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) of 2020 and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021. These funds are required to be placed in a Special Aid Fund and cannot be placed in the district's General Fund. Once the final rules are published regarding exactly how and when we are re-

quired to spend these funds, we will develop a plan that spells out the details.

Despite the challenges that have been placed in our path due to COVID-19, the district continues to be focused on the academic and social-emotional needs of your children.

- *U.S. News and World Report* ranks Hamburg High School as the #4 high school in Western New York. This ranking is a credit to not only the great work at the high school, but to the entire educational program we offer PK-12.

- We continue to be careful stewards of the mental and emotional health of every child. By applying our Youth Mental Health First Aid training, we are able to identify the signs and symptoms of mental and emotional distress so that we can alert one of the great mental health professionals on our staff.

- We will use the end of this school year to carefully assess the learning needs of every child and ensure that they are met through our programming in 2021-22

The core of the Hamburg Central School District's commitment to educating your child to become a "modern thinker who creates, cares, solves and discovers" (HCS D Vision Statement) is formed by purposefully designed instruction, which requires:

- **Student Agency** — students making meaningful choices about their learning. As a result they are collaborating, creating, making and publishing in authentic ways.
- **Self-efficacy** — students experience failure as an opportunity to learn and build confidence through more information, time and resources
- **An emphasis on strong relationships** — students have productive, enduring and engaging relationships with their peers and their teachers

The budget of a school district reflects the priorities and values of the community, and allows our students to have the experiences they need at school to thrive in a world increasingly characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. Thank you for your continued partnership and support. We look forward to seeing everyone at the school budget vote on Tuesday, May 18, 2021.



Michael Cornell
Superintendent