

# Hamburg Central SCHOOL DISTRICT

THE FOCUS BUDGET NEWSLETTER

May 2021



## Elementary students back to full in-person learning

A change in state guidance on social distancing paved the way for Hamburg's PreK-Grade 5 students to return to five-day in-person learning in April. Due to the pandemic, these students had been in hybrid mode, learning in-school two days per week and at home the other three days. *Pictured:* Bethany Vay's first graders learn together at Boston Valley Elementary School while observing three-foot distancing, with masks.

At the secondary level, an extra in-person day every other week was added in May for Middle School and High School students, who remained in the hybrid learning model due to different guidelines dictated by community transmission rate.

### *In-person voting returns*

**Tuesday, May 18**

**7 a.m.-9 p.m.**

**Hamburg High School, 4111 Legion Dr.**

*COVID-19 safety protocols will be followed at this polling site.*

## Summer learning ahead

Planning is under way for Hamburg Central's four-week in-person summer program to run from 8:30-11:30 a.m., Mondays-Thursdays, July 12-Aug. 12. Details of the program are being worked out but its intent and direction are clear. The pandemic has presented many academic and mental health challenges as students have pivoted between fully remote, hybrid and in-person learning since March 2020. Through active participation, the summer program will address learning loss and support students' emotional wellness. It will be open by invitation to elementary and secondary students with transportation being provided.

An influx of federal COVID relief funds is making this opportunity possible. It has been more than 10 years since the district has been able to offer this type of summer program.

"We want to engage students academically, socially and physically through creative, hands-on experiences," said Colleen Kaney, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Curriculum & Instruction. "We want students to be up and moving, having fun with their peers. Students will be excited about creating, caring, solving and discovering as they embark on their learning journey during the summer."

## *Free school meals continue in 2021-22*

Free school meals will continue through 2021-22 for Hamburg Central students. This results from an extension of universal free school meals to children 18 and under that was announced in April by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The extension will allow schools nationwide to provide free meals to school families, regardless of income, through June 2022.

The action increases the reimbursement rate to

*(Please turn to page seven)*

# 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" (HCSD 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



## BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- Preserves all current programs
- Trims costs in non-instructional areas
- Adds summer program to address students' learning needs & social/emotional well-being
- Reflects savings from a retirement incentive
- Reduces (1) position due to retirement
- Funds an upgrade of High School gym partition & doors
- Falls within the allowable tax levy limit (tax cap)
- Budget total: \$77,650,250
- Budget-to-budget increase: 2.8%

*Detailed budget information available on district website*

Hamburg Central's line-by-line proposed 2021-22 budget and other budget details are available for the public to view on the district website: hamburgschools.org.

## On the ballot

### PROPOSITION #1 - BUDGET

Shall the Board of Education of the Hamburg Central School District be authorized to expend the sums set forth in the proposed 2021-22 budget in the total amount of \$77,650,250 and levy the necessary tax?

### PROPOSITION #2 - ELECT TWO SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

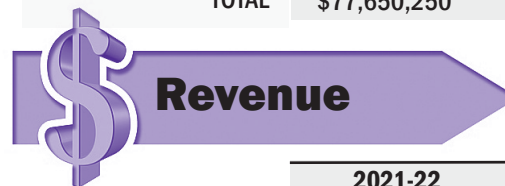
Michael F. McGarry

Robbin D. List



*How the money is spent*

	2021-22 Proposed Budget	2020-21 Adopted Budget	Change
Instructional Program	\$60,179,347	\$58,674,592	\$1,504,755
Capital	\$11,299,459	\$11,166,658	\$ 132,801
Administration	\$ 6,171,444	\$ 5,674,250	\$ 497,194
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$77,650,250</b>	<b>\$75,515,500</b>	<b>\$2,134,750</b>



*Where the money comes from*

	2021-22 Proposed Budget	2020-21 Adopted Budget	Change
Property Tax Levy	\$39,516,421	\$38,664,615	\$ 851,806
State Aid	\$28,569,832	\$27,303,285	\$ 1,266,547
Reserves	\$ 954,000	\$ 1,075,000	\$ (121,000)
County Sales Tax	\$ 3,975,000	\$ 3,775,000	\$ 200,000
Fund Balance	\$ 3,250,000	\$ 3,250,000	\$ 0
Other	\$ 1,384,997	\$ 1,447,600	\$ (62,603)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$77,650,250</b>	<b>\$75,515,500</b>	<b>\$ 2,134,750</b>

School tax rates will be established in August after the individual town assessors provide final assessment rolls and equalization rates to the district. Over the past several years, the tax levy has both increased and decreased, however the average rate of increase in the average tax bill since 2013-2014 has been less than 2%.



## What is the tax levy?

**T**he tax levy is the amount of the budget funded by local school taxes. The proposed 2021-22 budget carries a 2.2% increase in the tax levy, which is within the allowable levy limit (tax cap).

## Budget upgrades gym partition, doors

The 2021-22 budget includes \$100,000 earmarked for a Capital Outlay Project that would provide upgrades to gym doors at Hamburg High School, as well as replacement of certain interior classroom doors.

The gym work would include removal of the folding partition, installation of a new sports divider curtain with associated electrical and safety apparatus, and replacement of the gym doors.

## Qualifications to vote

To vote, you must be:

- At least 18 years of age
- A U.S. citizen
- A legal resident of the district for 30 days prior to May 18, 2021

To vote, you:

- Do not have to own property
- Do not have to be a parent or have children in school

Preregistration is not required to vote. Those who are voting for the first time with Hamburg Central will be asked to attest to their eligibility. A driver's license or other government issued picture identification will be required.

## Absentee ballot timeline

Absentee ballot applications for the May Budget Vote/School Board Election are available at the District Administration Building, 5305 Abbott Rd. Or, request an application by calling 646-3200, ext. 7220.

The completed application must be returned to the district on or before Tuesday, May 11 if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter. Or, the completed application must be received by the district no later than 4 p.m. on Monday, May 17 if the ballot will be handed personally to the voter.

New for this year: Those who prefer not to vote in-person due to COVID concerns are eligible to request an absentee ballot.

Absentee ballots are due in the District Office by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 18.

## In-person voting returns

**Tuesday, May 18**

**7 a.m.-9 p.m.**

**Hamburg High School, 4111 Legion Dr.**



## Program Component

The program component includes accounts for instruction and educational support services for district students. Transportation, instructional computers, supplies and textbooks, special education services, and salaries and benefits for instructional personnel are also reported in this category.

	2021-22 Proposed Budget	2020-21 Adopted Budget	Change
Educational Services	\$ 40,835,730	\$ 40,342,418	\$ 493,312
Benefits	\$ 13,666,091	\$ 12,967,354	\$ 698,737
Transportation	\$ 5,387,526	\$ 5,264,820	\$ 122,706
Inter-Fund Transfer	\$ 190,000	\$ 0	\$ 190,000
Legal	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 60,179,347</b>	<b>\$ 58,674,592</b>	<b>\$ 1,504,755</b>

## Administrative Component

The administrative component provides for overall general support and management activities, including the School Board, Superintendent's Office and Offices of Curriculum/Instruction, Human Resources and Business. Also included are expenses for legal services, liability and property insurance, and salaries/benefits for administrative staff.

	2021-22 Proposed Budget	2020-21 Adopted Budget	Change
School Board	\$ 41,015	\$ 40,975	\$ 40
Administrative Services	\$ 1,211,610	\$ 972,472	\$ 239,138
Human Resources	\$ 273,730	\$ 266,032	\$ 7,698
Special Items	\$ 1,042,742	\$ 600,969	\$ 441,773
Administration Improvement	\$ 2,127,412	\$ 2,388,803	\$ (261,391)
Benefits	\$ 1,474,935	\$ 1,404,999	\$ 69,936
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 6,171,444</b>	<b>\$ 5,674,250</b>	<b>\$ 497,194</b>

## Capital Component

The capital component of the budget covers maintenance and upkeep of the district's facilities and property including electric, gas, water, sewer and telephone services. It also includes principal and interest payments on capital projects, salaries and benefits for maintenance and custodial staff.

	2021-22 Proposed Budget	2020-21 Adopted Budget	Change
Debt Service	\$ 5,376,138	\$ 5,393,338	\$ (17,200)
Benefits	\$ 1,492,683	\$ 1,377,870	\$ 114,813
Central Services	\$ 4,404,888	\$ 4,369,700	\$ 35,188
Special Items	\$ 25,750	\$ 25,750	\$ 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 11,299,459</b>	<b>\$ 11,166,658</b>	<b>\$ 132,801</b>



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**Jillian Bender**



**Mara DeLucia**



**Sydney Grossman**



**Abigail Kane**



**Magdelyn Meyer**



**Ella Pascucci**



**Nevada Pohlman**



**Peyton Webb**



**Seanna Zona**

## **BOCES inducts students into National Technical Honor Society**

Nineteen seniors from Hamburg High School were included when 215 students from 27 Western New York high schools were recently inducted into the Erie 1 BOCES chapter of the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS).

The Hamburg inductees, and their career and technical education program, are: Brooke Andolino (Culinary Arts), Ryan Bacon (Aviation Technology), Tate Barber (Auto Tech Training), Jaiden Barnes (Cosmetology), Riley Branning (Auto Tech Training), Kaden Byrd (Cosmetology), Tyler Divine (Sports Science Careers), Devin Fokin (Auto Tech Training), Angelo Gangemi (Aviation Technology), Logan Gunderman (Electronics & Computer Tech), Gary Harkiewicz (Electronics & Computer Tech), Lillian Hart (Early Childhood Education), Victoria Kasprzak (Video Production and Recording Arts), Meghan Kazmierczak (Animal Science), Krystal Kuwik (Health Careers/Basic Nursing), Lucas Linhardt (Auto Tech Training), Dylan Miskell (Aviation Technology), Charissa Schultz (Aviation Technology) and Leah Sweeney (Health Careers/Basic Nursing).

In order to qualify for acceptance into NTHS, a student must be nominated by his or her teacher, have a 90 percent or higher average in their career and technical education course, and maintain an overall grade point average of 85. Furthermore, students must demonstrate skill development and leadership and hone their responsibility and good character.

In lieu of the traditional in-person induction ceremony, BOCES compiled three videos honoring inductees of the Harkness, Kenton, and Potter Career and Technical Centers. Each video includes remarks by administrators and a candlelight ceremony.

## **Southtowns Regional Chamber lauds Student Stars for good character**

The Hamburg High School seniors pictured above were recently recognized by the Southtowns Regional Chamber of Commerce as 2021 Student Stars for demonstrating good character and making an impact in school and community. This annual recognition celebrates students from six area high schools. This year, in lieu of a dinner gala, the honorees received gifts from local businesses.



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# Bulldogs clinch section basketball titles

There was a double dose of celebrating in March as the Hamburg High School Boys Varsity Basketball Team took the Section VI Class A-1 championship for the first time since 1953, while the Girls Varsity Basketball Team secured its second consecutive section title. Well done, Bulldogs!

### **Boys Varsity Basketball Team**

- Benjamin Bill
  - Evan Chaffee
  - Adam Chiacchia
  - Grady Ferrick
  - Ben Genzel
  - Ryan Gomolka
  - Bryce Hand
  - Jack Harper
  - Sincere Harzynski
  - Brady Kustra
  - Hayden Mumbach
  - Cameron Viavada
- Boys varsity coach: John Reinholz  
Boys JV coach: David Benningfield

Athletic trainer: Patrick Sparks  
Athletic director: Patrick Cauley

### **Girls Varsity Basketball Team**

- Lauren Beres
  - Alayna Godios
  - Melaina Gonzalez
  - Maddy Harrison
  - Maddie Hoak
  - Nora Hoak
  - Leah Khuu
  - Hannah Kruszka
  - Meghan Kruszka
  - Payton Lamb
  - Daucoda Ross
  - Brigid Snyder
  - Alexa Steffen
  - Clara Strack
- Girls varsity coach: Amy Steger  
Girls varsity assistant coach: Andy Steger  
Girls JV coach: Erin Ryan

# Middle School sets sights on Battle of the Books trophy

Hamburg Middle School is gearing up to win back the trophy in the fourth annual Battle of the Books in May.

In Battle of the Books, teams of students read five titles and then compete to see which group knows the most about the books. The students all read the same titles, which involve a diverse selection of genres and male/female protagonists. The competition includes two local rounds of 30 questions, with the top team then participating in a final battle against other middle schools.

This year, Hamburg has nine student teams and one staff team. The winner of the local rounds will advance to a virtual battle against six other middle schools on May 19.

To inspire the students, Jennifer Choldenko, author of "Al Capone Does My Shirts," sent a personal video message. Along with her title, the teams are reading "New Kid" by Jerry Craft, "Refugee" by Alan Gratz, "The Hunger Games" by Suzanne Collins and "The Girl Who Drank the Moon" by Kelly Barnhill.



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HHS DRAMA CLUB PRESENTS

# PRIDE & PREJUDICE

A PLAY BY KATE HAMILL FROM JANE AUSTEN'S NOVEL



ARTWORK BY MAISY PIPER DRUM

This isn't your grandmother's Austen. If you're familiar with the book first published in 1813 or the most recent movie from 2005, this stage adaptation is the same story but bolder and more timely, exploring the absurdities and thrills of finding your perfect (or imperfect) match in life.

The outspoken Lizzy Bennet is determined to never marry, despite mounting pressure from society (and her mother). But, can she resist love, especially when that vaguely handsome, mildly amusing, and impossibly aggravating Mr. Darcy keeps popping up at every turn?

Hamburg High School's production of "Pride and Prejudice" stars Reilly Thompson as Lizzy Bennet and Jacob Walters as Mr. Darcy.

"Pride and Prejudice" will be available for streaming on June 17, 18 & 19 at 7:30 p.m. Pre-order the show using a link on the district website ([hamburgschools.org](http://hamburgschools.org)) and enjoy from home. This link will be available as of May 17 and pre-ordering prior to the show dates is recommended. Questions? Email Director Marc Ruffino at [mruffino@hcsdk12.org](mailto:mruffino@hcsdk12.org).

## National Latin Exam awardees announced

Despite the many challenges of this school year, Hamburg High School can boast an impressive array of winners in the National Latin Exam, a competitive test covering topics pertaining to the Latin language, derivatives, Roman history, culture and mythology. It is taken by Latin students across the U.S. and in 20 foreign countries.

This year, 20 Hamburg students participated, with results including a gold medal, four silver medals, six magna cum laude ("with great praise") certificates and two cum laude ("with praise") certificates. Students awarded such honors scored above the national average for their respective levels.

**Latin II** — Logan Kaminski, gold medal; Liam Tillou, silver medal; Madeline Hoak, magna cum laude award

**Latin III** — Bradley Tobin, silver medal; Sydney Smith, magna cum laude award; Jillian McDonnell, magna cum laude award; Lillia Schaefer, magna cum laude award; Stella Pelkey, magna cum laude award; Luke Kirchberger, magna cum laude award

**Latin IV (Poetry)** — Jaden Troiano, silver medal; Leah Iwanitzki, silver medal; Leah Jarzynski, cum laude award; Chika Simon, cum laude award

## Free school meals *(Continued from page one)*

school meal operators to manage costs associated with the pandemic and provides flexibility in how the program is run. It also recognizes the hardship families have faced during this time. It will help Hamburg's Child Nutrition Services team continue to serve high quality, nutritious breakfasts and lunches to as many children as possible as they safely return to their routines next school year.

The team, led by Director Anne Rich, has provided meals to children even as schools were fully remote or in the hybrid model. This has included providing "to go" meals via curbside pickup in addition to in-school service.

"The last year has been an exceptionally challenging time for all of us, but we here are grateful to be able to serve our community through this pandemic by providing meals," said Mrs. Rich. "We are also thankful that the USDA has extended the program for another year while we work our way back to 'normal.' Parents can feel confident that their children will receive nutritious meals at school while saving time on home meal prep and stretching the grocery budget. Thank you for supporting our program!"

## Board member lauded for lifetime achievement

Hamburg School Board member Robbin List has received a Board Lifetime Achievement award from the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA). This is the highest level of recognition for participating in NYSSBA professional development opportunities on topics in governance and leadership, fiscal responsibility, student achievement and district operations.

At a board meeting in April, Superintendent Michael Cornell called Mr. List a "leader among leaders," while Board President Thomas Flynn expressed appreciation for the insight and experience his colleague brings to the role. Mr. List, a former teacher and Principal, has served on the board for 6 ½ years.



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Published by the Board of Education  
Thomas F. Flynn III, Board President  
Michael Cornell, Superintendent  
Michele Darstein, Editor

Armor Elementary ..... 646-3350  
Boston Valley Elementary..... 646-3240  
Charlotte Avenue Elementary ..... 646-3370  
Union Pleasant Elementary..... 646-3280  
Hamburg Middle School..... 646-3250  
Hamburg High School ..... 646-3300  
General Information..... 646-3200

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[www.hamburgschools.org](http://www.hamburgschools.org)

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## CANDIDATE PROFILES

Qualified voters of the district will elect two School Board members in the annual school election on Tuesday, May 18. Current board members Robbin D. List and Michael F. McGarry are running unopposed for re-election to three-year terms.

### **Robbin D. List**

**Address:** 6145 McKinley Pkwy., House # 7, Hamburg

**Family:** Wife, Eileen; son, Jonathan; daughter, Katherine Sullivan; 7 grandchildren



**Occupation:** Retired teacher, Orchard Park Central; retired Principal, Lake Shore Central

**Community Involvement:** Hamburg Central School Board (6.5 yrs.), District Strategic Planning Committee, Erie County Association of School Boards Executive Board, New York

State School Boards Association

**Reasons for seeking a board seat:** "This year has been a challenge, to say the least, for our school district. We have adapted and managed to provide a quality education program for all students despite the pandemic. It has been an honor to serve our community. Our board has been a cohesive governing body and has managed to update facilities, offer many cutting-edge opportunities for our students, and at the same time be fiscally responsible to our community. I anticipate further success for all of our students and in maintaining Hamburg Central as a district in the top echelon of schools in Western New York."

### **Michael F. McGarry**

**Address:** 210 Highland Ave., Hamburg

**Family:**

- Married 32 years to wife, Lauren
- Son, Thane (23) daughter, Jillian (21), both graduates of Hamburg High School
- Daughter, Kerith (17) in 11th Grade at Hamburg High School



**Occupation:** Senior Ecologist (Environmental Science) for David Miller & Associates

**Community Involvement:**

- Hamburg School Board Member since 2014
- Hamburg Junior Baseball Softball League (HJBSL) Head/Assistant Coach (2005-Present)
- 2016 Character Coach of the Year from the Town of Hamburg Recreation Department and the Character Council of Western New York
- 2015 Volunteer of the Year Award for the Western New York Land Conservancy
- 2012 Outstanding Sportsmanship Coach's Award from HJBSL
- Amateur Photographer for Hamburg Schools' Performance Arts and Sporting Events
- Attended Wesleyan Church of Hamburg since 1989
- Cornell University Class of 1989; Class Officer, 1994-Present

**Reasons for seeking a board seat:** "In 2014, I ran for a seat on the Hamburg School Board with a goal of helping return the focus of the Board's work to where it rightly belonged. I have had the pleasure of contributing to that goal alongside the other Board members. It has been my privilege to represent our community in this fashion and it is my desire to seek re-election in order to continue this important work for another three-year term."