

Budget proposal adds 66 positions, increases programming and reduces tax levy

The Schenectady City School District Board of Education unanimously approved a \$186 million spending plan for the 2017-2018 School Year that includes staffing and support for a general education continuum of programs and services and a social development redesign, support and professional development for teachers, tools, resources and training for the curriculum and instruction program and increased staffing to improve school climate while reducing the tax levy by \$1.1 million or 2.04 percent.

The proposal, which reflects a 5.1% general fund increase over the current year, includes the addition of 66 positions, of which 47.6 are teachers and clinicians. A budget hearing will be held on May 3. Residents will vote on the proposal, as well as a capital project referendum, on May 16.

“This is an exciting night for us,” said Superintendent Larry Spring as he referred to the improved financial state of the district. He noted that reserves are where they should be, fiscal stress points no longer exist and while the budget proposal offers supports and services for struggling students, it also brings relief to Schenectady taxpayers. “This is a nice moment. It’s our time. We get to add programs and help our taxpayers.”

Since budget development began, months ago, Spring has held meetings and workshops that were open to all stakeholders. He accepted proposals from school administrators and held many collaborative budget

meetings and discussions to prioritize a long list of possible programs and services that would best serve the needs of students and the community.

"This budget gives us the opportunity to take steps forward to close the opportunity gap and still offer tax relief," said Spring. "We are investing heavily in general education students and are putting things in place to help our struggling students."

Many of the positions in the proposal support a General Education Continuum that is designed to identify and provide a systemic pattern of additional supports and interventions to general education students. It will mirror the supports provided to students with disabilities, offering a broad range of interventions best designed to meet the needs of each student.

Respite, integrated and targeted programs at elementary, middle and high school levels are interventions on the continuum.

According to Spring, respite rooms provide a place for children who are really struggling. Students would be pulled out of their regular classroom and offered intensive supports which would include behavior management and therapy. After ten weeks, the student would cycle out of the program and back into the classroom.

The elementary plan includes two rooms that would serve eighty students over the course of the school year.

Transportation is also built into the budget proposal as students would need to be transported to the location of the respite program.

Mont Pleasant Middle School currently has a respite room. A special education teacher, social worker and common branch teacher, will be added to support a second respite room at the middle school level.

Schenectady High School, which has also had success with an existing respite program, called Operation Graduation, will add a second room to be staffed with a special education teacher, social worker and four .2 content area teachers.

The continuum budget also provides for nine teachers at the middle school level, three at each middle school, to provide integrated and targeted support.

Other additions to the budget include the establishment of a mobile crisis response team and a social development redesign to address the needs of the youngest students with severe emotional needs.

A number of positions, including three assistant principals at the middle school level and the addition of cultural brokers will help with behavior management and improve safety and school climate.

Cultural brokers, who help with student supervision, generally have status and trust in the community so they bring street intelligence and are able to help defuse conflict. The budget proposal calls for funding for additional cultural brokers at the secondary level.

Mentor training, embedded coaching, instructional coaching, curriculum writing and professional development are also addressed in the proposal.

Overall, the proposal includes staffing additions as follows:

- Teachers and Clinicians: 47.6
- Paraprofessionals: 7.0
- Administrators: 6.4
- Operations & Maintenance: 1.0
- Clerical: 2.4

- Other: 2.0

	SFT Teacher	SFT Para	SAA	O&M	Clerical	Other
Elementary	11.0	2.0	0	0	0	0
Middle	18.0	0	3.0	0	0	0
Secondary	8.1	1.0	1.4	0	0.4	0
District-wide	10.5	4.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
Total	47.6	7.0	6.4	1.0	2.4	2.0

Click on the links below to view a list of the additions and changes.

Elementary Program Changes \$ 990,000

Middle School Program Changes \$1,699,000

High School Program Changes \$ 941,000

District Support Staffing Changes \$1,721,654

District Support Service Changes \$ 414,756

District Support Service Changes \$ 166,500

2017-2018 Budget Proposal

	2016-2017	Proposal 2017-2018	Change
General Fund	\$177,180,990	\$186,289,260	\$9,108,270
Food Service Fund	\$ 6,217,000	\$ 6,217,000	\$0
Special Aid Fund (Grants)	\$ 21,449,208	\$ 21,072,260	\$(376,948)
Total	\$204,847,198	\$213,578,520	\$8,731,322

District Budget: Increase \$8.7 million 4.26%

Programs and Services: Increase \$5.7 million

Tax Levy: Decrease \$1.1 million - 2.04%

You can download the [Budget Presentation with charts and highlights here.](#)

Taxpayers will vote on the spending on May 16 as well as a [\\$64.5 million capital project referendum.](#)

Three members will also be elected to the board of education.

Polls are open from noon - 9 pm.

Polling locations include:

Former Elmer Avenue School (Howe School)

Fulton School

Schenectady High School

King Elementary School

Mont Pleasant Middle School

Paige Elementary School

Woodlawn Elementary School

Yates Elementary School

King is new to the list of polling sites this year. Therefore, if you live in Hamilton Hill or Mont Pleasant, you should confirm your polling place as it may have changed.

If you have questions, comments, suggestions or concerns, [please click here.](#)