

# NISKAYUNA

Central School District



## 2010-11 BUDGET INFORMATION SHEET

### Proposed 2010-11 School District Budget

Budget total ..... \$76,453,731

Proposed spending increase ..... 2.64%

Estimated tax levy increase ..... 2.4%

*Please note: Tax rates are dependent on several variables including assessment practices and equalization rates that vary among the four towns within the district.*

### An overview

► The proposed 2010-11 budget for the Niskayuna Central School District totals \$76,453,731, which reflects an increase in spending of 2.64 percent. The plan would yield an estimated tax levy increase of 2.4 percent.

► This budget proposal was developed based on the governor's Executive Budget, which calls for a reduction in state aid to schools of \$1.1 billion. For Niskayuna schools, this represents a nearly 14 percent decrease in aid—and creates a \$2.1 million revenue shortfall.

### Impact of state's fiscal crisis on Niskayuna schools

► To offset this substantial decrease in operating aid, district officials worked to reduce nearly \$2.4 million in expenditures from the baseline budget.

► While the 2010-11 proposed budget preserves core classroom instruction to the extent possible, a net reduction in staffing of 24.5 full-time equivalent positions was necessary to help close the gap between revenues and expenditures.

► This represents a 3.2 percent across-the-board reduction in the district's workforce and includes approximately four teaching positions and 13 teaching assistants. A careful review of enrollment projections for next year and current staffing levels in both general and special education classrooms suggests that these reductions will not significantly affect the district's ability to continue meeting the needs of students.

► Other positions to be reduced or eliminated include three clerical staff, one computer technician and the aquatics director.

► In addition, two administrator/supervisory positions will remain vacant, increasing the total reduction by 4.5 positions over the past two years. This represents a 12 percent reduction in district administrators/supervisors. Eliminated or reduced positions include the director of guidance, manager of technical services, network server manager, administrator for continuing education (reduced to half-time), and assistant middle school principal.

► Other budget reductions include materials and supplies, after-school bus runs, professional development, legal consulting services, summer school programming, field trips, and overtime.

### Moving forward

► Despite diminishing resources, the Niskayuna school district remains committed to providing students with a high-quality, world-class education.

► Reallocating staff and resources in 2010-11 will enable the district to provide new high school electives in Science, Mathematics, English, and Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS). It will also expand Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) to grade 3, and provides opportunities for academic enrichment to learners in all elementary grade levels.

► The Board of Education and district officials have worked to maintain class size guidelines. Next year, elementary class sizes will average less than 22 students, while middle and high school class sizes will remain relatively unchanged from the current year.

### Planning for the fiscal future

► New York State's continued fiscal woes and a slower-than-expected national recovery indicate that the economy could actually worsen before gradually improving. With that in mind, district officials are taking a long-term approach to fiscal planning, which includes the incremental and strategic use of reserve funds.

► Financial projections show that for at least the next three to four years, Niskayuna may need to continue making reductions in programs and services to balance its budgets. The district will explore additional ways to reduce

costs while continuing to offer core academic programs.

- ▶ To offset the combination of declining state aid and rising costs associated with educational mandates and contractual obligations, the district will apply 25 percent, or approximately \$1 million, of reserve funds to help stabilize the tax levy and mitigate further reductions in staffing or programs and services for children next year.
- ▶ Should the State Legislature decide to restore some portion of the proposed reduction in aid to school districts, Niskayuna would use part of the restoration to further reduce the tax levy increase, while the remainder would be set aside to help lessen the need to make further program reductions in future years.

### Curtailing costs

- ▶ To help contain costs this year, the district moved to a self-funded health insurance plan that will provide long-term annual savings of \$400-500,000. Most recently, the district enacted an option for employees to purchase prescriptions through CanaRx, which is expected to provide additional savings.
- ▶ The new geothermal heating/cooling system installed in the high school through the capital project will save \$120,000 in energy costs annually. Niskayuna also participates in a purchasing consortium of over 250 school districts that buys natural gas and electricity at the source, saving thousands of dollars annually.
- ▶ A hiring freeze, in effect through June 30, 2011, requires that only staff positions considered essential to providing program or vital to the safe operation of our schools will be filled.

### Contingency budget

- ▶ If the proposed 2010-11 school budget is defeated in May, the district can hold a revote with either the same or a revised budget, or adopt a contingency budget. Should the budget be defeated a second time, the Board of Education would then be required to adopt a contingency budget that places a state-mandated cap on spending.
- ▶ Under a contingency budget, state law mandates that district officials would need to make *another \$1.7 million* in cuts to the budget proposal in addition to the \$2.4 million already made. Cumulatively, this would total \$4.1 million in reductions.
- ▶ A contingency budget would result in substantial *increases* in class sizes at all grade levels; *reduced* high school course offerings; reducing or *eliminating* entire levels of some athletic programs, extracurricular clubs, and all after-school bus transportation; and potentially *limiting* after-hours public use of district facilities.



### In summary

- ▶ The Board of Education and school district officials have presented a balanced budget proposal that moves the district forward while remaining cognizant of looming fiscal challenges.
- ▶ The proposed 2010-11 school budget preserves academic program and learning opportunities for students, while making adjustments to address the state's decreasing financial support.

### Next steps

- ▶ We encourage you to read the budget edition of the *Your Schools* newsletter, mailed to all residents in early May. Additional information about the budget proposal and Board of Education election is available on the district's Web site at [www.niskayunaschools.org](http://www.niskayunaschools.org).
- ▶ If you have questions about the proposed budget, call Superintendent of Schools Kevin Baughman at 377-4666, ext. 50706, or e-mail: [kbaughman@niskayschools.org](mailto:kbaughman@niskayschools.org).
- ▶ All district residents are strongly encouraged to VOTE on **Tuesday, May 18** from **7 a.m. to 9 p.m.** at Niskayuna High School.



***School Budget Vote and  
Board of Education  
election  
Tuesday, May 18  
7 a.m.–9 p.m.  
Niskayuna High  
School***

