

Our Schools

May 2017 • The Community Newsletter of the Farmingdale Public Schools • Proposed Budget 2017-2018

ANNUAL BUDGET VOTE AND ELECTION

**Tuesday,
May 16, 2017
6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.**

**Weldon E. Howitt
Middle School
East Gymnasium**

**50 Van Cott Avenue
Farmingdale**

**Voter parking will be available
at the Van Cott Avenue parking
lot. All voters are asked to
enter through the Howitt Main
Entrance by the flag pole.**

The full budget is available in the public library, all District schools, and the Superintendent's and District Clerk's offices. It is also available on the District's website, farmingdaleschools.org.

A Message From Your Board of Education

Greetings! In this newsletter, you will find all the essential budget information you will need to make an informed decision when you go to the polls on **May 16 and vote on Farmingdale's proposed 2017-2018 school budget**. All relevant numbers, percentages and proposition information are located on these pages, and we urge you to read them carefully. What this newsletter won't tell you is the intrinsic value of public education. The reason for that is simple: You can't put a number on the intrinsic value of public education. It's priceless. Public education is a pillar of communities. It's woven into the fabric of towns, and it sets a foundation for our future. We cherish the opportunity to serve the community through public education, and we can't thank residents enough for their unwavering support over the years.

Each year, the Farmingdale School District designs and proposes its annual school budget while making sure program decisions aren't negatively affected by the outside influences of the economy or politics. Through diligent planning and a conservative budget approach, we have protected students from large-scale, budget-driven program changes. This year, the tax levy limit is set at **0.83 percent**. We can manage with such a low increase in our budget due to years of support from the community and a conscientious approach to budgeting by our District.

As we have done with our annual budgets since the inception of the tax cap several years ago, we worked to develop the 2017-2018 budget within the tax cap constraints set by Albany. We believe that, despite these constraints, we've been able to safeguard the academic excellence of the education you have come to expect your children will receive in the Farmingdale School District; year after year, our core values remain unchanged. Innovation, creativity and academic excellence are what characterize our District. The quality of our academic programs and excellence in sports, music and extracurricular activities is what sets us apart. The dedication of our exceptional faculty and staff is unparalleled, and our students will continue making our community proud with their accomplishments.

The participation of parents and community members played a vital role in developing the proposed budget, and we thank all of you who participated with us in this process. We urge all of you to stay actively involved with our schools and the education of your children. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Superintendent's office at 516-434-5100. Please review this newsletter carefully, visit the District's website for additional information, and come out and cast an informed vote on **Tuesday, May 16**. Your vote is your voice. We want to hear from all of you.

Sincerely,

The Farmingdale Board of Education

Ralph Vincent Morales, *President* • Kathy Lively, *Vice President*

John E. Capobianco, *Trustee* • Suzanne D'Amico, *Trustee* • Mario Espinosa, *Trustee*

Anthony Giordano, *Trustee* • Michael Goldberg, *Trustee*

'Robodalers' Triumph at VEX Robotics Tournament!

A celebration was in order as the Farmingdale School District congratulated the Farmingdale High School Robotics Team, "The Robodalers," for taking home the championship trophy at the VEX Robotics Competition at Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology. The Farmingdale Robotics Team won numerous awards at the competition, including two tourney championships, one build award, one programming skill award and one overall skills award.



Participating students included: Alex Burbano, Ashley Burbano, Joe Cangemi, Corey Casciano, Mitchell Grossman, Abby Grote, John Lowenhaupt, Jack Miller, Selina Nguyen, Esther Sherry and Cliff Yeung.

Students in the Farmingdale School District participate in this and other robotics and programming competitions throughout the country every year as part of the District's dedication to providing students with outstanding opportunities to explore the science, technology, engineering and math fields. Congratulations to our champion Robodalers!

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Farmingdale, New York 11735



REVENUE

The District plans to maintain appropriated fund balance for the 2017-2018 school year from the current school year. Appropriated fund balance is used to help reduce the tax impact on residents and to fulfill the Board of Education's commitment to the community to stay at the tax levy cap determined by the state.

	Approved Budget 2016-2017	Proposed Budget 2017-2018	Change
State Aid	\$ 29,585,159	\$ 31,860,542	\$ 2,275,383
Other Revenue	\$ 4,540,000	\$ 4,697,889	\$ 157,889
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$ 5,500,000	\$ 5,500,000	\$ 0
Tax Levy	\$ 119,255,708	\$ 120,240,900	\$ 985,192
Revenue Budget	\$ 158,880,867	\$ 162,299,331	\$ 3,418,464
Tax Levy % Increase	0.17%	0.83%	

The tax levy increase has been limited to 0.83%.

EXPENDITURES

Budget Increase Limited to 2.15%
Tax Levy Increase of 0.83%

Proposed Budget (2017-2018):	\$ 162,299,331
Approved Budget (2016-2017):	\$ 158,880,867
Increase:	\$ 3,418,464
Budget % Increase:	2.15%
Tax Levy % Increase:	0.83%

DID YOU KNOW

Farmingdale students established a food drive and collected food for a "Hunger Doesn't Vacation" food pantry.

The food drive was part of an ongoing District initiative intended to give students a platform to organize charitable activities and be involved in their community in a meaningful, productive way.

The largest group in Farmingdale Schools' history was selected to perform in the prestigious All-County Music Festival.

122 Farmingdale students were selected to perform in the festival, held at Tilles Center. This is the largest group of Farmingdale students ever selected to perform. Students were chosen based on their scores in the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) Adjudication Festival and by teacher recommendations.

Daler athletes continue to achieve great success with their teams and in the classroom.

For the 23rd consecutive season, all varsity teams achieved Scholar-Athlete Team status, meaning that every team had a cumulative GPA of 90 or over.

Farmingdale High School teacher Celia Blumm was recognized by the Harvard Club of Long Island as one of its 2017 Distinguished Teachers.

Ms. Blumm, who was presented with the award at the Harvard Club's Distinguished Teacher Award Ceremony on April 30, was one of only 12 teachers selected from hundreds of nominees throughout Long Island.

24 Farmingdale High School students won regional DECA competition.

DECA is an international, student-centered leadership organization comprising high school and college students, as well as marketing, management, entrepreneurship, finance, hospitality, and sales teachers.

PROPOSITION 2: RECONSTRUCTION OF BATHROOMS AT VARIOUS SCHOOLS



In 2015-2016, the Farmingdale School District received voter approval to establish a capital reserve fund. To utilize the reserves, the District must once again receive voter approval. The Board of Education has approved a resolution to include Proposition 2 on this year's ballot. The adoption of Proposition 2 would allow the District to utilize the reserve for the reconstruction of bathrooms at various schools. **There would be no cost to the taxpayer and no increase to the tax levy as a result of this proposition.**

2017-2018 BALLOT



PROPOSITION 1

Shall the following resolution be adopted: RESOLVED: to adopt the annual budget of the School District for the fiscal year 2017-2018 and to authorize the requisite portion thereof to be raised by taxation on the taxable property of the District.

PROPOSITION 2

Shall the following resolution be adopted: RESOLVED: that the Board of Education of the Farmingdale Union Free School District, Towns of Oyster Bay and Babylon, Nassau and Suffolk Counties, New York is hereby authorized to reconstruct bathrooms at various schools, including incidental improvements and expenses in connection therewith, at a maximum estimated cost of \$5,000,000, and that said amount, or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be expended from the Buildings and Facilities Capital Reserve Fund of the District therefor.

PROPOSITION 3

Shall the following resolution be adopted: RESOLVED: that the Farmingdale Youth Council Appropriation for the fiscal year 2017-2018, as submitted, shall be approved and the requisite amount thereof to be raised by taxation on the taxable property of the District.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The two candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be elected as members of the Board of Education for a three-year term commencing July 1, 2017, and expiring on June 30, 2020. You may vote a separate write-in candidate for each vacancy. You may not vote the same candidate for more than one vacancy.

VOTE FOR TWO (2):

JOHN CAPOBIANCO • RALPH MORALES • ARLENE SOETE

VOTER INFORMATION



A qualified voter is defined as:

- ❖ A citizen of the United States who is 18 years of age or over.
- ❖ A resident in the District for 30 days or more preceding the day of the vote.
- ❖ Those who are registered for either School District or general elections and have voted in a general or school election within the last four years may vote on this budget and in the Board trustee election.

Please note: If you have not voted in a general or School District election in the past four years, you must register to vote in this election.

Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots are available. If you will be away or unable to be at the polls on Tuesday, May 16, please request an application for an absentee ballot from the District Clerk. After receipt of the application, the ballot will be sent. Note that individuals who are designated as "permanently disabled" by the Nassau County or Suffolk County Boards of Election will be sent an absentee ballot automatically. All absentee ballots must be filed with the District Clerk by 5 p.m. on the day of the election. If you have any questions regarding registration, eligibility to vote or absentee ballots, you may call Ms. Mary E. Rogers, District Clerk, at 516-434-5170.

Electronic Voting Booths

The District is required by law to use electronic polling stations. Residents should be familiar with this system of voting, as it has been in use throughout Nassau County during the November general elections for many years. Qualified voters will be provided with ballots, and privacy screens will be set up for confidential completion of voting decisions. A handicap-accessible AutoMARK machine will also be available.

CONTINGENT BUDGET: WHAT HAPPENS IN THE EVENT OF A DEFEATED BUDGET?

If the budget does not pass, and the District must adopt a contingent budget, program and personnel cuts would be necessary. Reductions may include, but are not limited, to the following:

- ❖ Increased class size at the elementary level
- ❖ Reduced elective opportunities at the secondary level
- ❖ Reductions in athletic teams
- ❖ Reductions in musical performing groups
- ❖ Reductions in extracurricular activities
- ❖ Reductions in equipment
- ❖ Reductions in maintenance projects
- ❖ Reductions in support services

FARMINGDALE BUDGET Q&A

The state set the tax levy limit at 2%, yet our District has a tax levy limit of only 0.83%. How is this possible?

Although there are numerous factors that impact an individual District's tax levy limit, it is largely controlled by the current year's Consumer Price Index. This year's Consumer Price Index is less than 2%, therefore our **District's tax levy limit is 0.83%**. The District has provided a budget for the community's consideration that is within this year's tax levy limit.

Are there any program reductions in this year's budget?

No. As a result of sound financial planning, no program reductions are planned for 2017-2018.

Will Proposition 2 cost any additional money for taxpayers?

No. The public vote gives the District the authority to use the reserve established by the vote in 2015-2016. Approval of Proposition 2 will not increase taxes.

ENRICHMENT FOR ALL

Starting in September 2017, every student in 3rd and 6th grades will have enrichment classes in their schedules.

We in the Farmingdale School District are very excited to announce that, starting in September 2017, all incoming 3rd and 6th grade students will have access to enrichment classes built into their school day. Additionally, we're looking to expand the program in forthcoming years, with 4th and 5th grade access next up on the docket. This is a wonderful, exciting opportunity for our students.

You may ask: *What is an enrichment class?* Enrichment classes are ungraded, loosely structured classes that offer students an opportunity to explore the topics, subjects and projects that they are interested in. It puts the student in the driver's seat of his or her education. Whether it's a lesson in a STEM field, a deeper look at animal biology, lessons in a musical instrument/other performance arts, or a history project, the student in the enrichment classes can make that choice for him or herself. These opportunities encourage the student to take risks and embrace challenges without fear of failure; the class is ungraded.

The move to offer expanded enrichment comes in the wake of our Makerspace program—an afterschool club that lets students use state-of-the-art technology to explore topics that may have eluded them during the school day. The club was routinely over-enrolled, and it illustrated that there is a real, palpable urge around students to expand their education independently. For 6th graders, an enrichment class will be offered in their schedule once every other day, and 3rd graders will have between one and two hours per week dedicated to enrichment learning.

The District was able to offer this expansion by realigning our existing resources at no additional cost to our taxpayers.

