

# VALLEY STREAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT THIRTY

Administrative Offices

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March 3, 2011

Dear Valley Stream 30 Community,

## **Budget Update**

To recap the budget development process....

As you know, if we were to continue all the programs we had this year in exactly the same way next year, due to increased retirement system pension costs, contractual benefits and cuts to our state aid, the tax levy increase would be over 10%. Since that would be an impossible tax burden, the Board and the District held the community budget forum and provided other avenues for feedback, such as the website and email to gain ideas from the public on how to proceed. To date, the consensus appears to be that the community appreciates and values all of the District's programs and would not want to see any one program cut. Instead, what they recommend is that the District primarily keeps all programs, but modifies them in some way so that they could cost less.

At subsequent Board of Education Work Sessions and Business meetings, the Board discussed a 3% budget-to-budget increase which would result in a tax levy increase of approximately 6.2%. This budget would support maintaining almost all programs in the District, but includes cost efficiencies and some reorganization, which would allow the district to continue to offer them at a more affordable cost. The Board also explored what a 2% budget-to-budget increase would look like with a tax levy increase of approximately 4.9%. That budget would not be in keeping with the community's present direction of trying to maintain programs with some cost-saving modifications. A 2% budget-to-budget increase would mean deep program cuts, such as cuts in the instrumental and band programs and/or going to half-day kindergarten.

Based on present assessed values and current proposed state aid proposed, the actual dollar cost to the taxpayer with a 3% budget-to-budget increase, which maintains programs, would be approximately \$90.00 a year while a 2% budget-to-budget increase, which deeply cuts into programs or eliminates them, would be approximately \$60.00 a year. Though the Board and the District recognize what challenging economic times these are for our community members, the \$30.00 differential (a little more than \$2.50 a month), allows the District to maintain our programs in a somewhat modified form. When compared to the amount of money that families individually may need to pay to replace some of the District programs at their own expense, the cost to do so would be much higher than \$30.00. For example, \$30.00 would buy, perhaps, three private instrumental lessons for a child when paid for by an individual family, but that \$30.00 paid to support a 3% budget-to-budget increase provides a year of music lessons. Similarly, \$30.00 would, perhaps, pay for less than a week of childcare for kindergarten children who would now only attend half-day, but pays for full-time supervision and educational program for a year when it supports a 3% budget-to-budget increase.

At the March 21<sup>st</sup> Work Session, the Board of Education will change its Work Session procedures to provide the opportunity for question and answer and public comments on the budget only. The Board and the District are interested in providing you with all the information you need and continuing to receive your feedback, as the budget is intended to reflect community priorities.

As a reminder, if you click on Budget Information on our website's homepage -- [www.valleystream30.com](http://www.valleystream30.com) -- there is a link to email your comments and/or questions regarding the budget. That email address is [budgetcomments@vs30.org](mailto:budgetcomments@vs30.org).

## **Upcoming Board of Education Work Sessions/Business Meetings Where the Budget will be Discussed**

**Monday, March 21, 2011, 8:00 p.m.** – Board of Education Work Session (*This Work Session will provide opportunity for public comment and questions on the budget.*)

**Monday, March 28, 2011, 8:00 p.m.** – Board of Education Business Meeting

As always, please contact me at 516-285-9881, x222 or email [ekanas@vs30.org](mailto:ekanas@vs30.org) with comments and suggestions on the topic of this newsletter or with suggestions or questions on other topics.

Sincerely,

*Elaine Kanas*

Elaine Kanas, Ed.D.

*The mission of Valley Stream District Thirty, through collaboration with parents and community partners, is to educate all students to their highest levels of performance in nurturing learning environments that are safe, inclusive and student centered.*