



Freeport

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Pride

Special Budget Edition 2020

www.freeportschools.org

PROPOSED 2020-21 BUDGET

SUPPORTING SUCCESS THROUGH PROGRAMS, WELLNESS AND SERVICES

2020-21 Budget Highlights

- Maintains all current programs, services and staffing.
- Supports programs to prepare students for college, career and life readiness.
- Maintains instructional technology and enhanced digital library (e-books and apps).
- Includes continued focus on STEAM initiatives.
- Includes continued support for health and safety of students and staff.
- Maintains support services for ENL students and students with special needs, including BOCES services.
- Includes after-school programs and clubs, including robotics.
- Supports capital improvement projects.

A Message From Your Board of Education

Dear Neighbor,

The Board of Education and administration have worked hard during these challenging times to develop a 2020-21 annual budget that will support the needs of our students while maintaining fiscal responsibility to our community. Given the fiscal impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the steep cuts to state aid, this has been an especially trying year to formulate a budget.

For the past five consecutive years, the district has been able to decrease the tax levy. This year, we are able to present a 2020-2021 budget that maintains our current programs and services while carrying a tax levy increase of 2.92%, which is well within the allowable tax levy cap. Due to COVID-19, there have been many changes to our budget vote and Board trustee election process this year. With the closure of schools and businesses, the original budget vote and trustee election timelines were suspended. Prior to this, Gov. Cuomo had already announced there would be cuts to education aid for the 2020-2021 school year. As you know, the fiscal impact of COVID-19 has been enormous and the governor has been forced to reduce state aid, with potential future reductions later in the school year.

Freeport has lost \$2.62 million in state aid for this year. Without Federal Cares Restoration money, the actual loss is \$4.3 million from the governor's original proposal. The proposed expenditures from the March 2020 budget presentation have been reduced by \$2.85 million. The budget-to-budget increase was reduced from 3.39% to 1.85%. A careful analysis of our expenditures and revenues was made to create a budget that will maintain our programs and facilities while accounting for this loss.

Although we made cuts to the proposed budget and cannot enhance our programs, Freeport Public Schools is grateful to be able to maintain our programs and continue to provide excellent educational opportunities

to our students. Our focus remains on our amazing students, who continue to impress us with their award-winning performances in academics, athletics and the arts. We will maintain our focus on the whole child and enhance our services for the physical and mental well-being of our students, staff and families, especially given the amount of trauma and stress we are facing with the current pandemic.

We have numerous plans for capital improvement and special maintenance projects. Complete details of the proposed budget and proposition to approve capital spending from the Capital Reserve Fund, which would be done at no additional cost to taxpayers, are available on the district's website at www.freeportschools.org.

We are pleased to present a fiscally responsible budget, within the tax levy cap, with a 2.92% tax levy increase and a budget-to-budget increase of 1.85%. Please learn more about the proposed budget and the proposition to approve spending from the Capital Reserve Fund. Thank you for your support. Please remember to submit your absentee ballot by 5 p.m. on June 9.

Sincerely,

The Freeport Board of Education
Ernest J. Kight, Jr., President
Wilma I. Lancaster, Vice President
Ronald J. Ellerbe, Trustee
Maria Jordan Awalom, Trustee
Gabriela Castillo, Trustee



Freeport Public Schools
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Absentee Ballot Only
Due by 5:00 P.M. on June 9
Budget Vote and Trustee Election



2020-21 PROPOSED BUDGET



New York State law provides that all school district budgets must be identified in three components: Administrative Component, Program Component and Capital Component.

Expenditures

	2019-20 BUDGET	2020-21 BUDGET	VARIANCE
ADMINISTRATIVE COMPONENT			
Board of Education	73,441	73,441	-
Central Administration	511,080	529,879	18,799
Finance – Business Administration	947,839	976,934	29,095
Staff (Personnel, Legal and Public Information)	785,637	795,795	10,158
Central Services	1,440,600	1,455,013	14,413
Special Items	1,771,482	1,801,522	30,040
Curriculum Development and Supervision of Schools	465,841	482,799	16,958
Supervision – Regular School	9,089,007	9,319,272	230,265
Research Evaluation and Planning	112,254	129,092	16,838
Employee Benefits	4,477,269	4,623,222	145,953
Total Administrative Budget	19,674,450	20,186,969	512,519
PROGRAM COMPONENT			
Legal	21,632	21,632	-
In-service Training	330,000	330,000	-
Teaching – Regular School	62,092,297	62,699,600	607,303
Children with Disabilities and Special Needs	30,129,390	30,861,195	731,805
Teaching – Special Schools	1,017,119	1,005,047	(12,072)
Instructional Media	3,388,779	3,343,426	(45,353)
Pupil Personnel Services	8,599,170	8,509,543	(89,627)
Pupil Transportation	9,775,767	10,622,911	847,144
Employee Benefits	30,603,898	31,766,829	1,162,931
Total Program Component	145,958,052	149,160,183	3,202,131
CAPITAL COMPONENT			
Operations and Maintenance	9,409,963	9,531,469	121,506
Employee Benefits	3,035,086	3,139,404	104,318
Interfund Transfers (Including Transfer to Capital Projects)	6,770,081	6,245,081	(525,000)
Total Capital Component	19,215,130	18,915,954	(299,176)
Grand Total	184,847,632	188,263,107	3,415,475

Revenues

State Aid (Including Building Aid)	81,861,256	81,861,256	-
Charges for Services	450,000	450,000	-
Use of Money and Property	875,000	754,798	(120,202)
Sale of Property/Compensation for Loss	125,000	125,000	-
PILOTS (Including LIPA)	771,065	771,065	-
Miscellaneous	647,071	647,071	-
Transfer From Reserves and Capital Fund	4,000,000	4,500,000	500,000
Fund Balance Usage	9,000,000	9,500,000	500,000
NYS Schools for the Deaf and Blind	280,000	280,000	-
Total Non-Tax Revenue	98,009,392	98,889,190	879,798
Tax Levy Revenue	86,838,240	89,373,917	2,535,677
Total Revenues	184,847,632	188,263,107	3,415,475

Budget Message From the Freeport Memorial Library

The Freeport Memorial Library Board asks you to vote. The proposed budget, a modest increase below the tax cap, will assure that the library can continue to provide books, magazines, e-books, audiobooks, DVDs, CDs, Nooks, Roku Streaming Sticks, concerts, lectures, tutoring, workshops, children's programs, computers, multifunction color copiers, mobile hotspots and much more.

Programs presented this past year included the first Winter Festival, Summer Reading Clubs for adults, teens, and children, and FML on the Mile. We continue to participate in New York Heritage, a digitization project, which allows online access to historical materials, and co-sponsored a concert on the Nautical Mile Esplanade.

We converted many of our programs to an online format during this COVID-19 shelter-in-place pandemic, so that you could continue to enjoy the fine programs we offer from the safe environment of your homes.

Our facility is normally open 70 hours a week. Many of our services are available online 24/7, including databases such as Overdrive, a source to download e-books and audiobooks; Lynda.com, which provides comprehensive courses covering technical skills and business strategies; and RB Digital, which provides digital

access to magazines. We are proud to be able to continue to bring you these services. We are here for you.

2020-21 Library Proposal

	2019-20 Current Budget	2020-21 Proposed Budget	Increase/ (Decrease)
Non-Tax Revenue	\$104,623	\$116,308	\$11,685
Taxes	\$6,269,597	\$6,382,833	\$113,236
TOTAL BUDGET	\$6,374,220	\$6,499,141	\$124,921
Copies of the proposed library budget are available at the library.			

FINANCIAL INTEGRITY – YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

Our Financial Integrity

- The tax levy has been decreased for **five consecutive years**.
 - The district's Standard & Poor's bond rating of AA is a rating earned by only a few of the 300 districts in New York State.
 - Freeport spends approximately \$5,500 less per pupil and collects approximately \$10,700 less in tax levy per student than the average school district in Nassau County.
- By refinancing outstanding bond payments, the district saved taxpayers \$6.5 million in interest costs and also shortened the payback period by three years for one of the outstanding bond issuances.
 - Through the first capital reserve fund established in 2009, as well as the second capital reserve fund established in 2017, the district has completed \$14.3 million in
- capital reserve projects at no additional cost to taxpayers.

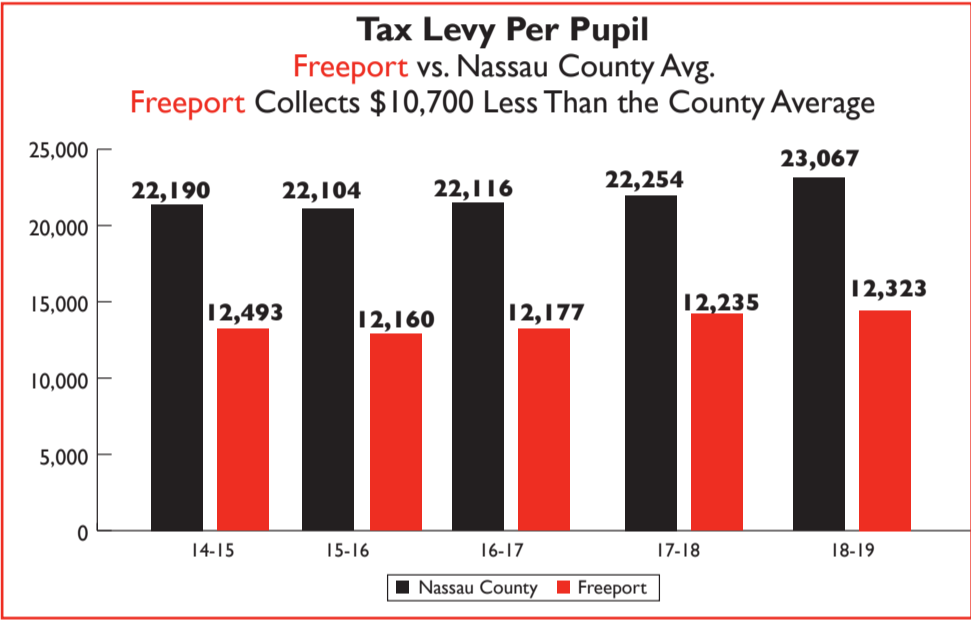
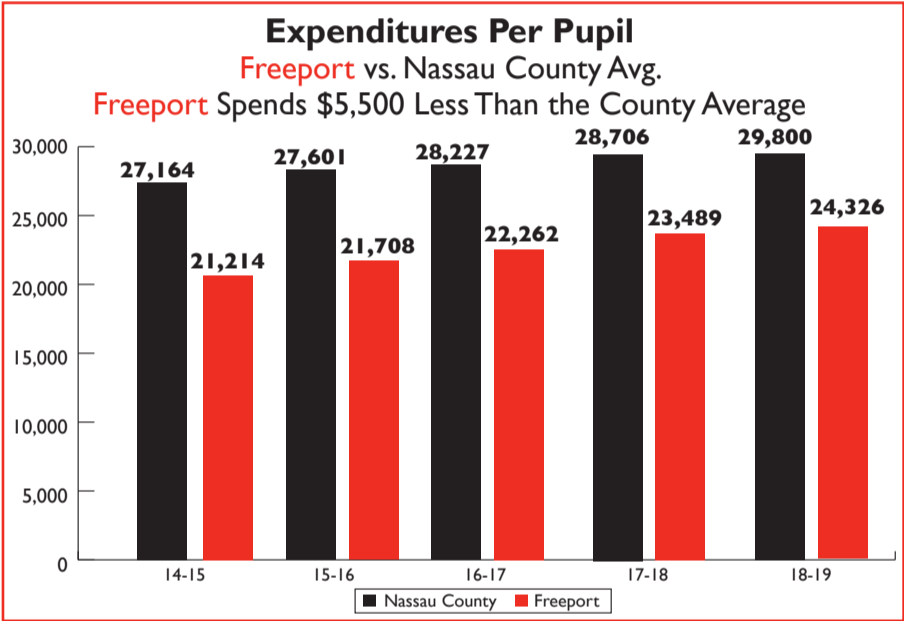
 - Using the interest-free Quality School Construction Bond program, the district completed \$5 million in additional capital improvement projects, saving taxpayers approximately \$1.4 million in interest costs.

Grant Funding: More Than \$8.2 Million

To date, during the 2019-2020 school year, the district has been awarded more than \$8.2 million in competitive and allocated grant funding. These grants enable the district to provide additional essential programs and services at no cost to taxpayers.

Tax Levy History

- **The Tax Levy Was Decreased for the Last Five Consecutive Years.**
- **Average Tax Levy Increase for the Past 13 Years Is Only 1.39%.**



Points of Pride

VALUABLE PARTNERSHIPS
Advanced academic and research opportunities are available to students through partnerships the district has established with Adelphi University, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Cradle of Aviation Museum, CUNY, Farmingdale State College, the Graduate Center, Hofstra University, the International Association of Human Values, the Long Island Children's Museum, Molloy College, Nassau Community College, St. Louis College of Pharmacy, SUNY Old Westbury and Stony Brook University.

OUR ACADEMICS

- Students are designing a prototype using a three-dimensional printer to construct a CubeSat that will carry an experiment NASA will launch into outer space. Freeport is the first and only school district on Long Island to be awarded the prestigious NASA/ New York Space Grant.
- Freeport High School was honored to welcome NASA chief technologist and Cornell University professor Dr. Mason Peck, who provided feedback to students for their research projects and presented his keynote address on the CubeSat project.
- 53 past and present students from Freeport High School earned the designation of Advanced Placement

Scholars for excelling on the 2019 AP exams.

- The Freeport High School's National Honor Society inducted 85 students during the annual candle lighting ceremony.
- J.W. Dodd Middle School inducted 93 students into the National Junior Honor Society.
- Freeport High School DECA Club members have a lot to celebrate, as several students were named winners and other students received honorable mention during the Nassau County DECA Regional Competition.

OUR SPORTS PROGRAMS

- The Red Devils varsity football team won their second consecutive Long Island Conference I championship and the Nassau County Conference I title. For the second year, the team is ranked #1 in New York State This is Freeport's seventh Long Island championship win. They continued their undefeated winning streak this season, with 24 consecutive victories since 2018. Seven members of the varsity football team were selected to the All-State Team.
- The varsity cheerleaders claimed the Nassau County championship title in the Co-Ed Division. They also took third place in the Co-Ed Division at the NYSPHSAA Cheerleading championship and finished in

seventh place at the UCA national championships in the Co-Ed Game Day Division.

- Seven fall season varsity teams qualified as a New York State Scholar-Athlete Team: cheerleading, girls cross-country, girls soccer, girls swimming, girls tennis, girls volleyball and golf. Five winter season varsity teams qualified for the same distinction: boys swimming, cheerleading, girls bowling, girls indoor track and the rifle team.

OUR MUSIC AND ARTS PROGRAMS

- The district has once again been named Best Community for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation for 2020.
- Five talented student-musicians were selected to perform at this year's New York State School Music Association All-State Festival in Rochester, New York.
- Freeport High School's Select Choral continued its exciting tour by performing at the New York State School Boards Association 100th annual Convention and Education Expo in Rochester, New York; the world-famous Radio City Music Hall in New York City; MetLife Stadium

during the New York Jets vs. Miami Dolphins football game and at the Empire State Building in New York City.

CLASS OF 2019

- 483 graduates.
- More than \$8 million in scholarships and financial aid were offered by colleges and universities.
- More than \$96,000 in community scholarships were earned by graduates.
- Nearly 800 college acceptances were offered to graduates.
- 436 Regents Diplomas were awarded, including Regents with Honors and Regents with Advanced Designation Diplomas.
- 63 graduates achieved a diploma endorsed with the New York State Seal of Biliteracy.
- 357 college credits were earned by graduates through Dual-Enrollment courses, P-Tech and Smart Scholars.



Q & A

Q. What is the capital reserve proposition, and why won't it impact my school taxes?

A. The capital reserve proposition will have no effect on your taxes. In 2017, Freeport voters approved the creation of a capital reserve fund, which allows the district to set aside money in a reserve account specifically allocated for capital projects. It is important to note that with voter approval, at no additional cost to taxpayers, the district will expend \$2.5 million from the 2017 capital reserve fund.

Q. What is the budget increase and what are the major factors impacting the proposed budget?

A. The district has proposed a budget with a tax levy increase of 2.92%, **which is within the allowable tax levy cap**. The proposed budget represents a budget-to-budget increase of 1.85%, which will maintain programs and services including current staffing needs, contractual salary increases, safety and security, special education/BOCES tuition costs, transportation, technology

upgrades and other mandated costs. The final proposed budget was based on the \$2.62 million loss in state aid based on the governor's budget. Due to COVID-19 impacting state finances, the governor is expected to make further cuts to state aid for the 2020-21 school year and future school years.

Q. How will the COVID-19 pandemic impact the budget for the 2020-21 school year?

A. One of the major impacts has been the drastic cut to state aid. The budget that was first presented in March had to be cut by \$2.85 million. The district will not enhance or expand any programs, but we are able to maintain the existing programs and services. There is a serious concern that the governor will make more cuts to state aid prior to the end of 2020. The impact of COVID-19 will have unanticipated expenditures for the district this summer and fall based upon the governor's guidelines for the re-opening of schools.

Q. How will my school taxes be affected by this budget?

A. For the 2020-21 school budget, the tax levy will increase by 2.92%, **which is within the allowable tax levy cap**. Any additional increase in the school tax levy is not attributable to the school district budget. Factors outside the school district's control could impact tax bills, including changes in home market values, assessed valuations and shifts in the tax distribution from one class of taxpayer to another.

Q. What happens if the proposed budget is not approved?

A. The proposed budget represents a 2.92% increase in the tax levy, **which is within the allowable tax levy cap**. If the budget is not approved by voters, the Board of Education has the option of proposing the same budget or a revised budget for a revote. If the budget is defeated following the revote, the Board is required by law to adopt a contingency budget, which cannot increase the tax levy above the current year's amount.

What's on the Ballot?

PROPOSITION ONE: SCHOOL BUDGET

RESOLVED, that the School Expenditure Budget of \$188,263,107 be adopted and the necessary amount be raised by tax upon the taxable property located in Freeport Union Free School District, Town of Hempstead, Freeport, New York, for the year 2020-2021.

PROPOSITION TWO: FREEPORT MEMORIAL LIBRARY BUDGET

RESOLVED, that the Freeport Memorial Library Expenditure Budget amount of \$6,499,141 be adopted and the necessary amount be raised by tax upon the taxable property located in Freeport Union Free School District, Town

of Hempstead, Freeport, New York, for the Freeport Memorial Library for the year 2020-2021.

PROPOSITION THREE: CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

SHALL the Board of Education of the Freeport Union Free School District be authorized to expend: \$2,500,000 from the capital reserve fund established on May 16, 2017, for the purpose of performing the following projects: masonry restoration, exterior brick repointing and replacement and waterproofing – Columbus Avenue School; security upgrades/interior and exterior doors and hardware – Freeport High School, districtwide; window replacement – Leo F. Giblyn Elementary School,

districtwide; locker room, replace HVAC and drainage (basement level) – Freeport High School; renovation to distance learning center/multipurpose room – Freeport High School; air conditioning – districtwide; classroom/flooring/lighting renovations/casework – districtwide; replace cupola – Archer Street Elementary School; science room renovations – Freeport High School and Caroline G. Atkinson Intermediate School; bathroom and health office renovations – districtwide; ceiling tile and lighting replacements – districtwide; grounds, steps, foundations, sidewalks, playgrounds, parking lots – districtwide; exterior improvements, field renovations – districtwide.

Who Can Vote?

Only registered voters can participate in the Freeport School District budget vote. A qualified voter must be:

- At least 18 years of age.
- A United States citizen.
- A resident of the Freeport School District for 30 days prior to the election.
- A duly registered voter.

Who Will Receive an Absentee Ballot

All registered voters will receive an absentee ballot in the mail. Please return by mail promptly.

Prospective voters can register to vote with the local county board of elections by completing an online application with the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles at <https://dmv.ny.gov/more-info/electronic-voter-registration-application>.

VOTING BY ABSENTEE BALLOT ONLY
Absentee ballots must be received by
5 p.m. Tuesday, June 9.

For more information visit the district's website at www.freeportschools.org.



MAIL EARLY – ALL ABSENTEE BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5 P.M. TUESDAY, JUNE 9.

This information is provided in Spanish in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965.



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