



DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Excellence and Success for All Students

BUDGET EDITION

Meeting the Challenge for Our Future

Quality Education Programs and Financial Responsibility

In response to the bleak economic conditions threatening communities statewide, the Island Trees Board of Education and administrative staff were challenged with an enormous task during the 2010-11 budget preparations. The Board’s goal was to develop a budget to support and maintain the high quality educational program for the children in Island Trees, but at the same time be mindful of our community’s concerns of affordability. After all, the economic difficulties endured by so many across the nation have also been experienced by a growing portion of our community. In the end, we crafted a budget that supports our educational programs while meeting our goal of fiscal responsibility for our school community.

At the outset of the budgetary process, we knew this was not going to be an easy task. New York State had reduced our state aid by over \$520,000, as well as increased our mandated contributions to the employee retirement systems (TRS/ERS) by over \$700,000 and employee healthcare by \$250,000, respectively. Given these challenges, our initial “rollover” budget was by no means “taxpayer sensitive.” To reduce our expenditure budget to a more realistic level for our community, many difficult budget decisions would need to be made. As a team, we assessed all programs, services, and initiatives, and reviewed every budget line for cost effectiveness and with a clear focus on academic achievement. We surgically pared back expenses in many areas, including a reduction of close to twenty professional positions in a manner which would minimally impact our school programs and extracurricular opportunities for students. In short, we were mindful of economic conditions facing many residents, as well as our mission of “Excellence and Success for All Students,” and we accomplished our goal.

We hope this budget newsletter provides you with a clear picture of the balance we have been able to achieve with fiscal soundness and program excellence for Island Trees. If you have any questions on the budget or the information presented, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Charles Murphy, Superintendent of Schools (cmurphy@islandtrees.org or 520-2100).

Sincerely,

The Island Trees Board of Education



We look forward to your support and invite you to a Budget Hearing on Tuesday, May 4, 2010, at 8:00 PM in the Geneva N. Gallow School. Voting on this proposal will take place on Tuesday, May 18, 2010, from 12 Noon to 9:00 PM at the Michael F. Stokes School

## If Proposed Budget is Passed...

### *At the Elementary Level...*

- ⇒ *Class sizes maintained near current levels*

### *At the Secondary Level...*

- ⇒ *Class sizes at appropriate levels*
- ⇒ *Remedial summer school program for at-risk high school students*
- ⇒ *Clubs maintained at current levels*
- ⇒ *Athletic teams at current levels*

### *District-wide...*

- ⇒ *Addition of 35 new computers for obsolete equipment*
- ⇒ *Replacement of aging facility vehicle*
- ⇒ *New Textbooks*

## If Proposed Budget is Defeated...

- ⇒ *Two (2) additional Teaching positions reduced K-6, resulting in larger class sizes in two of these grade levels*
- ⇒ *Four (4) additional Teaching positions reduced, resulting in larger class sizes in grades 7-12—Science, Math, English and Social Studies*
- ⇒ *An additional reduction of two elective/special area classes. This will limit the number of offerings and increase class sizes in these subjects.*
- ⇒ *Clubs and co-curricular activities reduced by 33%*
- ⇒ *Reduction of six middle school athletic teams*
- ⇒ *Loss of a custodial/maintenance position*
- ⇒ *New York State law does not allow school equipment to be purchased under a contingency budget.*
- ⇒ *Incurring costly vehicle repairs*
- ⇒ *20% reduction of textbook supplies*

## Your Questions Answered...

### ***What exactly am I voting on?***

The community votes—yes or no—on the bottom line total budget amount proposed. This is the financial basis for the authority for all educational programs and services.

### ***What will happen if the budget does not pass?***

When the community does not approve a proposed budget, New York State requires that the district adopt a “contingency” budget. The state forbids certain expenditures under a contingency budget, including new capital projects and school equipment over \$31,398. Under contingency, school boards must still honor employee contracts and follow state mandates. All reductions must come from non-mandated items.

### ***Does this budget contain federal stimulus aid?***

Yes. This is the last year for the use of federal stimulus money for Island Trees. Without the stimulus funds, it would have been difficult to maintain our commitment to a quality education without an additional burden to the taxpayer.

### ***Did the school district seek concessions from their labor groups?***

Yes. The school district asked each of the four bargaining units for concessions during the budgetary process. The Administrators Association, as well as the Superintendent of Schools, have opted to forgo any contractual raise for this school year. The CSEA Custodial/Maintenance group is currently working without a contract, and have indicated they would accept no raise for the 2010-11 school year as part of their final settlement.

### ***What accounts for this year’s major budget increases?***

Just as the cost of living goes up almost every year, so does the cost of operating a school district. Among the largest increases in this year’s budget are contractual obligations, approximately \$1.6 million; mandatory contributions to the Teachers’/Employees’ Retirement (TRS/ERS) System \$759,931; Employee Health \$247,839; and new MTA payroll tax \$111,000.

## Cost-Saving Measures in 2010-11 Proposed

To help limit the budget increase for 2010-11, all aspects of the district's operations were reviewed for cost-saving opportunities. Almost \$2.5 million was eliminated from the budget prior to its final adoption by the Board of Education. Areas where cost savings were taken include:

Transportation	\$130,000	Utilities	\$83,500
Legal Services	\$98,000	Overtime	\$76,294
Teacher Salaries	\$1,255,000	Staff Salaries	\$172,897
Occupational Therapist	\$51,115	Athletic Budget (Asst. Coaches)	\$50,000
Supplies/Materials (20%)	\$250,000	Princeton Plan	\$450,000

### \$2.9 Million in Fund Balance Will Offset Taxes

In developing this proposed budget, we have applied \$2,965,000 in appropriated fund balance. This money will be used as a revenue to stabilize taxes for the 2010-11 school year.

#### Island Trees Continues to Keep Per-Student Costs Down While Enhancing Educational Opportunities

The Island Trees school budget drives the educational machine in our community. While it is important to keep cost increases to a minimum, the district is committed to providing our children with the best education possible. The proposed 2010-11 budget accomplishes both objectives. Although we have tailored our costs, we still have been able to maintain appropriate class sizes; we still provide academic intervention programs for at-risk learners; our high school has expanded Advanced Placement opportunities; and we still have comprehensive elective choices for our students. This has been accomplished with one of the lower per pupil spending costs on Long Island. *Newsday's* website lists Island Trees as 85th out of 120 districts.

<http://longisland.newsday.com/schools/rankings.php?id=spending>

#### BOCES Lease/District Office Move

In response to the economic crisis in New York State, BOCES initiated a number of cost savings measures in their budget. Unfortunately, this involved not renewing their lease of the Karopczyc school building. This has created a \$192,000 revenue loss for Island Trees. At the same time, BOCES indicated they were planning to move other pre-school classes from Gallow as well. In order to accommodate BOCES and keep them as a tenant in Island Trees with a \$320,000 lease, we plan to move our district offices to Karopczyc this summer.

#### New York State Assessment 2009 Passing Percentages

##### English Language Arts

3rd grade	- 91%
4th grade	- 92%
5th grade	- 91%
6th grade	- 91%
7th grade	- 91%
8th grade	- 85%

##### Mathematics

3rd grade	- 98%
4th grade	- 95%
5th grade	- 94%
6th grade	- 94%
7th grade	- 96%
8th grade	- 98%

##### Science

4th grade	- 95%
8th grade	- 98%

##### Social Studies

5th grade	- 97%
8th grade	- 96%

*Our investment in education is paying dividends!*

# Proposed 2010-2011 Budget

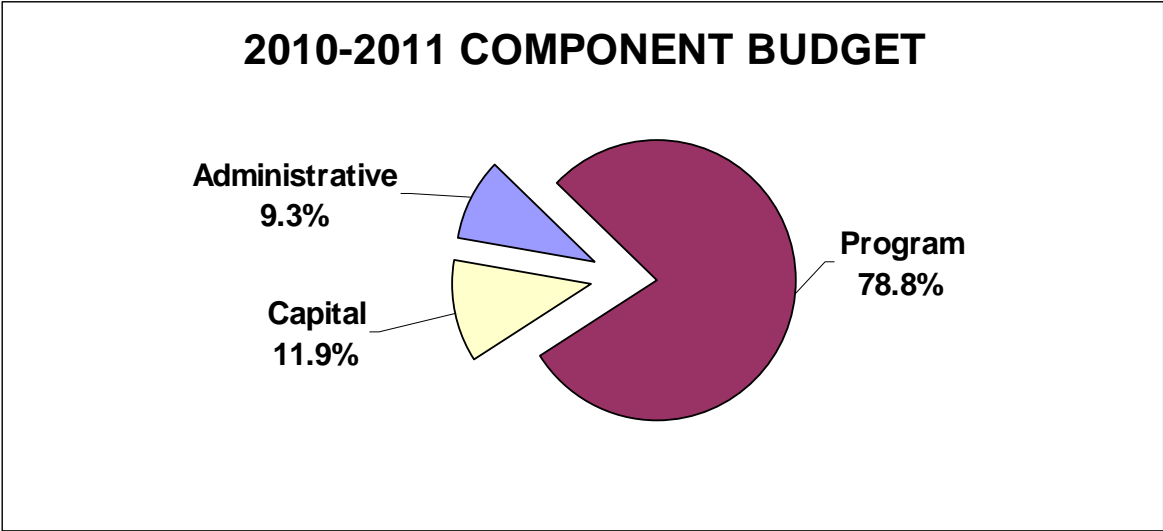
## Expenditures

	2009-2010 Budget	Proposed 2010-2011 Budget
General Support	\$ 6,116,110	\$ 6,166,616
Instruction	35,611,214	34,978,731
Pupil Transportation	3,016,939	2,907,171
Undistributed Expenses	11,575,728	12,967,566
	\$ 56,319,991	\$ 57,020,084

## 3-Part Budget Comparison

Chapter 436 of the Laws of 1997 now require school districts to divide their annual budget into three components . Therefore, for your review, we have divided our budget into three components as prescribed by the Uniform System of Accounts for school districts.

	2009-10		2010-11	
Administrative	\$ 5,132,005	9.11%	\$ 5,308,646	9.31%
Program	44,751,965	79.46%	44,905,310	78.75%
Capital	6,436,021	11.43%	6,806,128	11.94%
	\$ 56,319,991		\$ 57,020,084	



## Proposed 2010-2011 Budget

### Revenues

	2009-2010 Budget	Proposed 2010-2011 Budget	% Increase
State Aid	\$ 14,983,341	\$ 14,463,804	
Charges for Services	79,500	79,500	
Real Property Rental	632,973	440,973	
Interest Earnings	275,000	275,000	
Other Revenues	228,000	339,442	
Appropriated Reserves	265,000	-	
Appropriated Fund Balance	2,700,000	2,965,000	
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 19,163,814</b>	<b>\$ 18,563,719</b>	
Total Budgeted Exp	\$ 56,319,991	\$ 57,020,084	1.2%
<b>Tax Levy</b>	<b>\$ 37,156,177</b>	<b>\$ 38,456,365</b>	<b>3.5%</b>



### Tax Impact on Average Home\*

	2009-10	2010-11
Average Assessed Value of Residence	\$ 1,039.00	\$ 869.00
Annual School Taxes	\$ 5,526.00	\$ 5,742.00
Annual Increase		\$ 217.00
Monthly Increase		\$ 18.08
Daily Increase		\$ 0.59

\*Calculations based on the 2010-11 assessed values as of April 1, 2010 and 2009-10 adjusted base proportions. Average home values provided by the Nassau County Assessor's Office.

### **How does my home compare to the average home in the district?**

The assessed value is calculated at one quarter of one percent of the total value of the home as determined by the Nassau County Assessor's Office. In the example above, the 2010-2011 full value of the "average" home is \$347,600.

**You can find out how your property compares by visiting [www.mynassauproperty.com](http://www.mynassauproperty.com). Then, visit our website, [www.islandtrees.org](http://www.islandtrees.org), and use our tax calculator to estimate your school tax bill.**



## Princeton Plan

Island Trees has included the “Princeton Plan” as a cost savings measure in the 2010-11 budget. Over a half century ago, Princeton, New Jersey, developed a plan to create diversity in their school district by modifying the neighborhood school model into schools grouped by grade levels. With this plan, the elementary schools are organized by grade level, not by geographic location. Since that time, many school districts have adopted “Princeton” for economic and educational reasons rather than for societal ones.

In today’s economic climate, the decision to reorganize our schools into a “Princeton” model is clearly an economic one. We have calculated that the district could gain approximately \$450,000 in staffing savings each year by reconfiguring the current K-4 neighborhood model. Sparke would serve kindergarten–grade 1, and Stokes would serve grades 2-4. The economic stewardship would grow exponentially each year, and in ten years a \$4.5 million savings could materialize. Quite significant indeed.

One of the biggest complaints in districts adopting the “Princeton” configuration is the loss of neighborhood schools. However, Island Trees would still be able to retain the neighborhood schools since both district schools are located on the same campus. This is very different from other “Princeton” districts where students in the neighborhood are bused to the other side of town to attend schools.

During the budgetary process, an elementary reorganization committee of parents, staff, and community members explored this option with our school administration and Board of Education. All in all, the committee was very positive about the “Princeton” plan and saw little downside for students if the district decided to pursue this option.

## Princeton Plan Frequently Asked Questions

***Would the current playground equipment be age appropriate under the “Princeton Plan” model?***

At present, we have all of our youngsters, K-4, using our new playground equipment. Therefore, our playground equipment is appropriate for children of all elementary ages.

***Student transitions from school to school can be challenging. How would we prepare students for a possible transition this year, as well as in future years?***

There are many things that we can do to ease the transition this year. The principals could arrange for the students to visit their new school, giving the children a tour of the buildings. In addition, each principal could read to the students in the grades that will be transitioning into the respective schools. To further ease the transition, we could arrange for the children to have a book buddy or pen pal from their grade level. We could also combine the already-established common recess time for both Stokes and Sparke, so that the students could play together for the remainder of the year. With the help of the PTA, special events and orientations could be planned to help make the transition a positive experience for the students, staff, and families. In future years, we would plan ways to ease the transition from one school to the next (although this transition would be less challenging for our students, who will be making the move with their cohort of friends from the entire grade). The intermediate principal could come and read to the first grade classes. Primary students could have intermediate grade book buddies or pen pals. We could plan more cross-building activities such as cultural arts programs, holiday celebrations, concerts, field day activities, etc. Toward the end of each year, we could plan an orientation program for the first grade students to prepare them for their years in the intermediate school.

***Would students still be eligible for transportation under the “Princeton” model?***

Yes. The Island Trees School District provides transportation for all students who live at least a .5 mile from the school. This will not change for next year.

***I heard at a Board meeting that dismissal time may be an issue. Is this true? My children are walkers. How will I pick up my children if one attends Stokes and the other Sparke?***

At this time, it seems that the best option is to establish a central meeting location for walker dismissal. Students from each school could be escorted out of each building to a central location where they would meet their parents. We are working to pinpoint a common pick-up

area between both schools on the shared campus. This would alleviate any parent concern about picking up one student at one school and then traveling to the other school to pick up another child.

***Would the Sparke and Stokes PTA remain intact or merge?***

This question would be decided by our local PTA. Please note that our middle and high school buildings have one “merged” PTA rather than two separate units.

***Will the Stokes and Sparke teachers remain in their current buildings or move as well?***

Of course, we would staff our buildings in order to optimize our teachers’ talent and skills and to best serve the children of Island Trees. There are teachers who work well with children at any age, while others are particularly talented at working with primary or intermediate students. Prior to assigning our professional staff, we would survey the staff and look for volunteers before moving teachers from their current grade levels or buildings.

***How will the schools handle the cultural arts and assembly programs? From what I understand, the elementary schools have different programs.***

The cultural arts programs would be tailored to the grade level of the student population in the school. The schools would continue to work collaboratively to plan age-appropriate cultural arts programs.

***How will student support and AIS programs work under the K-1 & 2-4 model?***

Children who qualify for AIS services will continue to receive these services. Both schools would continue to have remedial reading and math support staff.

***School activities and events, and holiday traditions make our schools truly special in Island Trees. How will these be impacted?***

Of course, both schools would continue to have school activities, events and holiday celebrations. As the administration, faculty, staff and parents of each newly-configured building come together, they would collaborate to continue those long-cherished traditions while developing new, age-specific traditions together. One concern that may arise for parents who have children in the two schools is scheduling for those events. The principals would make every effort to schedule the celebrations at different times to allow parents who have children in both buildings to participate in these special activities and events.

# ISLAND TREES UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

## 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR

Jul 2010						
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Apr 2011						
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May 2011						
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Jun 2011						
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**July**

5 Independence Day Observed

**September**

2 Conference Day  
6 Labor Day  
7 First Day of School  
9-10 Rosh Hashanah

**October**

11 Columbus Day

**November**

2 Conference Day  
11 Veterans' Day  
25 Thanksgiving Recess  
26 Thanksgiving Recess

**December**

24 First Day of Holiday Recess  
31 Last Day of Holiday Recess

**January**

17 Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**February**

21 First Day of Winter Recess  
25 Last Day of Winter Recess

**April**

18 First Day of Spring Recess  
26 Last Day of Spring Recess\*

**May**

27 Memorial Day Recess\*  
30 Memorial Day  
31 Snow Day\*

**June**

24 Last Day of School – Regents  
Rating Day  
26 Graduation

This calendar has 180 instructional days & 2 Conference Days. \*If there are no inclement weather days, school will be closed on Tuesday, May 31. If there is one inclement weather day, school will be in session on May 31. If there are two inclement weather days, school will be in session on Friday, May 27; three inclement weather days, school will be in session **Tuesday, April 26**, as well.

**BOE APPROVED 2/24/2010**

## ISLAND TREES UFSD

Administrative Offices  
74 Farnedge Road  
Levittown, NY 11756-5202

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Public Schools

### Board of Education

Peter Ray, President  
Carl Bonsignore, Vice President  
Robert M. Condela  
Christine Holt  
Patricia Mahon  
Kim McDonough  
Kenneth Rochon

## Nominating Petitions

Nominations of candidates for the office of member of the Board of Education take place by petition. Petition forms may be obtained from the District Clerk during normal school office hours. Each petition for the nomination of a candidate must be signed by at least 25 qualified district voters or 2% of the number of voters who voted in the previous election, whichever is greater.

Candidates must be residents of the district for at least one year prior to election.

Petitions are due in the District Clerk's office no later than 5 PM on April 19, 2010.

### Budget Hearing

Tuesday, May 4, 2010  
8 PM—Geneva N. Gallow School

### Voter Registration

Tuesday, May 4, 2010  
4 PM to 8 PM  
District Clerk's Office, Gallow School

*(Open registration on all school days—9 AM to 3 PM in the office of the District Clerk, up to and including Thursday, May 13, 2010)*

Only registered voters can participate in the Island Trees UFSD budget vote. Anyone who has voted in one of the last four district elections or general elections is already registered. A voter must be:

- A U.S. Citizen
- 18 years of age by the day of the election
- A resident of the Island Trees School District for at least 30 days prior to the election

## Absentee Ballots

Qualified voters of the Island Trees UFSD who are unable to appear in person on Tuesday, May 18, 2010, may pick up an application for an absentee ballot through the office of the District Clerk, Geneva N. Gallow School, 74 Farnedge Road, Levittown, between the hours of 9 AM and 3 PM any school day. Such application must be received by the District Clerk at least seven days before the election if the ballot is to be returned by mail. Applications may also be picked up through Monday, May 17, 2010, if the voter intends to hand-deliver the ballot to the District Clerk. **ALL BALLOTS** must be received **no later than 5:00 PM on the day of the election**. The district is not responsible for postal delays, and ballots received after this time cannot be included in the election.

Persons designated "Permanently Disabled" by the Nassau County Board of Elections will automatically receive an absentee ballot.

A copy of the statement of the amount of money which will be required to fund the School District's budget for 2010-2011, exclusive of public monies, may be obtained by a resident of the District during business hours beginning April 27, 2010, except Saturday, Sunday or holidays, at the Administration Office, 74 Farnedge Road, Levittown, NY, and at each of the following schools:

Island Trees High School, 59 Straight Lane, Levittown, NY  
Island Trees Memorial Middle School, 45 Wantagh Avenue S., Levittown, NY  
Michael F. Stokes School, 101 Owl Place, Levittown, NY  
J. Fred Sparke School, 100 Robin Place, Levittown, NY