

Massena Central School Board of Education Update April 5, 2019

Arconic Donation



We are very grateful to Arconic for their generous donation of \$10,000 to replace our two gym scoreboards at the Junior High School. The old scoreboards are beyond their useful life and were no longer able to be used. Thanks also to Massena Youth Basketball President Shane Cameron for initiating this project. Pictured above from left to right are Arconic Plant Manager Steve Rombough, Arconic HR Manager Eowyn Hewey, MCS Athletic Director Gavin Regan, JW Leary Junior High Principal Alan Oliver, and MCS Superintendent of Schools Patrick Brady. We appreciate our partnership with Arconic and wish them all the best this year in the aluminum business.

State Budget News

With the state budget released on 3/31, we have spent the week in a final analysis before preparing a complete recommendation to the BOE for our District 2019-20 budget. As reported in the BOE Update last weekend, the District received an adequate level of state funding next year. Specifically, Massena realized an increase of \$831,048 in Foundation Aid which amounted to \$437,350 over the Governor's proposal of \$393,698.

With this funding, I would recommend reducing the originally proposed tax levy increase from 0.9% to 0%. Our actual tax cap is 3.35% so we are well below the maximum. We can also

reduce the designated fund balance from \$2.27M to \$1.57M and add \$159,700 in budget requests to improve student programming and operations.

Below are some of the key facts about the overall state budget and its particular impact on Massena. We will discuss further at the Board meeting on 4/22.

- The State Budget provides \$27.9 billion in aid to education which is a \$961 million or 3.8% increase over aid in 2018-19.
- Foundation Aid increased by \$618 million or 3.48%. Massena realized an increase of \$831,048 which amounted to \$437,350 over the Governor's proposal of \$393,698 in Foundation Aid.
- Our Community Schools aid will remain at the previous level of \$227,000.
- Full funding was provided for expense-based aids such as BOCES, Building, Special Education and Transportation at an increase of \$342 million. Expense based aids for Massena are projected to decrease by \$4,023 or 0.05%. The combining of 11 expense based aids into one aid category as proposed by the Governor was rejected by the legislature.
- The proposed MCS budget will increase by \$494,390 or 0.9% to \$54,936,721 from \$54,442,331 in 2018-19.
- As noted above, with the increase in Foundation Aid, we are recommending a 0% tax increase for 2019-20.
- The recommended designated fund balance is \$1,567,343 or \$701,426 less than the \$2,268,679 allocated in the 2018-19 budget. Lowering the designated fund balance increases the District's long-term financial stability.
- We are also recommending the creation of a \$4 million capital reserve for the ballot in May. Our goal would be to add \$2M in the reserve before the capital project referendum in December. Combined with the \$4M we have in the current reserve we may be able to complete the capital project with little to no impact on the local taxpayers.

Here is some further information from NYSSBA on the final budget:

The final budget modifies the Executive's Foundation Aid redistribution proposal (dubbed by the Governor an "**equity**" plan). Under the final agreement, school districts with similar-grade schools that are identified as "high need" and "underfunded" by the Division of the Budget will be required to submit a report to the State Education Department by September 1 of each year demonstrating how they plan to "effectuate" prioritizing funding equity in such schools. The state Division of Budget will be required to produce a list of impacted schools by May 1 of each year.

The final budget rejects the Executive's proposal to adjust and reduce **building aid reimbursement** rates for school districts' construction projects. The final budget also rejects the proposal to restrict the aidability of certain "incidental costs" as part of school district construction projects.

The final budget makes the **property tax cap** permanent while making no other changes to the cap. NYSSBA will continue to press for changes, including a minimum two percentage

allowable growth factor, counting BOCES capital expenses as part of the capital exclusion, factoring properties under PILOT agreements into the tax base growth factor and eliminating negative caps.

The final budget includes an increase in the **BOCES district superintendent salary** cap to 98% of the Commissioner of Education's salary in 2013-14. BOCES boards will be authorized to negotiate increases of up to 6% per year, over the previous year annually, beginning with the 2019-20 school year until the new cap (approximately \$208,000) is reached.

The final budget includes authorization for school districts and BOCES to establish **TRS reserve** funds. NYSSBA supported this initiative and its inclusion in the budget. This common sense adjustment will allow districts to set aside funds for pension contributions for the vast majority of their employees, including those who are generally the highest paid. For example, a portion of the savings that result when TRS contribution rates go down could now be set aside for use when the rate eventually increases in the future, smoothing costs for taxpayers.

The final budget eliminates the mandate to use 3-8 grade tests and other state exams as the measure of student growth in **APPR** while also eliminating the state growth model. The student growth measure will still be required as an assessment and the district will be required to collectively bargain the selection of the assessments. Additionally, the prohibition on state 3-8 exam scores appearing as a part of a student's permanent record was made permanent.

The final budget includes language designating a staggered schedule for **building condition surveys**, allowing the surveys to be conducted over 5 years. Currently, all school districts are mandated to conduct their building condition surveys in the same year every 5 years. Moving forward, approximately one fifth of all school districts will conduct their building condition surveys each year.

The final budget includes a provision requiring all employers to provide each employee three hours of paid leave on **election day(s)** for all non-district elections. Employees are required to take such leave at the beginning or end of the work day. The employee must notify their employer of their intent to use this leave at least two days prior to the election. Previously, employees were only entitled to this leave if they did not have four consecutive hours before or after work while the polls were open, and the leave was limited to two hours. While NYSSBA did not object to expanding this provision from two to three hours of paid leave, NYSSBA did oppose the expansion of eligibility to all employees. This paid leave, being offered outside the context of the collective bargaining process, should be available only to those employees who otherwise would not have adequate time to vote. By extending this entitlement to all employees, including classroom teachers, districts face the very real possibility of needing many substitute teachers on each Election Day. Since this is paid leave, this results in a financial cost to district taxpayers. Paid leave for public employees, including school districts, should be addressed in the context of collective bargaining.

The final budget rejected the proposal to require students to **wear seatbelts on school buses**. NYSSBA opposed this proposal, as most of the school buses in NYS are fitted with lap

belts and guidance from safety experts, including the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and New York Association for Pupil Transportation, continue to counsel against the use of lap belts on full-sized school buses, as it potentially increases the risk of injury in an accident.

The final budget requires school districts that contract with law enforcement (including **school resource officers**) and private security personnel, to establish written contracts or memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with the employing agencies. These MOUs must clearly delineate the role of security teams as limited to security and specify that student discipline is the sole purview of district administration.

Massena CSD In The News

Wednesday, April 3, 2019

“Massena Central officials anticipate tax levy increase less than 1% for 2019-20” – Andy Gardner, NC This Week

An interview with Superintendent Brady regarding the 2019-20 Budget is reported.

Link:

<http://www.northcountrynow.com/news/massena-central-officials-anticipate-tax-levy-increase-less-1-2019-2020-0255934>

District Upcoming Events

4/9—Nightengale Elementary Spring Choral Concert—7:00 pm—NG Cafeteria

4/10—HS Band Concert—7:30 pm—HS Auditorium

4/11—JH Spring Instrumental Concert—7:00 pm—HS Auditorium

4/12—Give Back Day—No School

4/15-19—Spring Break