

# Sag Harbor Union Free School District

## 2013/2014 Proposed Budget – Questions from the Public

Q. What is the current enrollment? What is the 5 year enrollment trend? Please break out Pre-K.

### A. *Sag Harbor UFSD Enrollment Trends*

Grade	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Pre-K	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41	39
K	69	64	67	63	63	73	62	76	90
1	78	65	56	76	69	72	86	64	84
2	67	82	62	57	74	72	72	86	68
3	76	66	79	63	63	77	77	79	89
4	68	73	65	72	66	62	76	78	83
5	81	63	76	66	74	61	62	79	85
6	66	75	61	72	70	72	60	61	82
7	75	70	75	66	72	69	78	66	61
8	61	72	65	76	70	75	70	82	66
9	65	63	72	66	80	79	82	70	80
10	81	68	62	68	67	78	81	87	70
11	78	80	66	57	69	69	79	75	88
12	56	74	80	66	59	69	69	73	75
Ungraded - K-6		6			1	1	1	1	
Ungraded - 7-12		1				2	2	4	5
<b>Total</b>	921	922	886	868	897	931	957	1022	1065

### Western Suffolk BOCES, Office of School Planning and Research, Projections for Sag Harbor UFSD

Grade	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
KINDERGARTEN	59	60	76	67	67	66	66	65	65
FIRST	80	67	68	86	76	76	75	75	74
SECOND	104	83	69	70	89	79	79	78	78
THIRD	90	109	87	72	73	93	83	83	82
FOURTH	72	92	112	89	74	75	95	85	85
FIFTH	94	74	95	116	92	76	77	98	88
SIXTH	85	94	74	95	116	92	76	77	98
SEVENTH	86	86	96	75	97	118	94	77	78
EIGHTH	85	89	89	99	78	100	122	97	80
NINTH	66	88	92	92	103	81	104	126	101
TENTH	71	68	91	95	95	106	84	107	130
ELEVENTH	86	72	69	92	96	96	107	85	108
TWELFTH	73	87	73	70	93	97	97	108	86
UNGRADED	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
<b>Total</b>	1057	1075	1097	1124	1155	1161	1165	1167	1159

**Q. What is the current number of Special Education students and what is the 5 year trend for Special Education?**

**A. *Sag Harbor UFSD Special Education Enrollment Trends***

<b>Placement</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>
Out of District	29	29	29	35	28	12	12
In District	153	138	129	130	136	125	127
<b>Total</b>	182	167	158	165	164	137	139
Classification Rates	20.54%	19.24%	17.61%	17.72%	17.14%	13.41%	13.05%

**Q. What are the staffing projections for next year?**

*A. The District staffing for 2013/2014 is for a total of 225 full and part-time employees. One teacher assistant recently left the District for a teaching position and will not be replaced. The proposed 2013/2014 budget requires no elimination or reduction of staff.*

**Q. What is the projected budget for next year (2014/2015)? You must have some idea with the current contracts how much the District will need. Yes, I realize that state mandates could change and affect programs and staffing.**

*A. Historically, the District’s initial roll-over budget contains a budget-to-budget increase of approximately 6%. A roll-over budget takes all of the programs currently run by the District, at current staffing levels, and increases the projected expenditures to account for contractual or mandated increases. In this example, this would equate to \$37,639,139. Just as with this year, this would be our starting point in budget preparation. As you mentioned, we then need to identify program needs and mandates to determine where savings could be realized, or additional expenses are unavoidable. A revenue budget is built, including a tax levy cap calculation, and the administration then develops a budget for Board consideration that satisfies the needs of the program while remaining fiscally responsible to the taxpayers. The constraints of the tax cap no longer support typical roll-over budgets without considering piercing the cap. In fact, the Board of Education remains committed to fiscal prudence and not only developed a budget within the 4.06% maximum tax cap, but has projected to come in below it at 3.78%.*

**Q. What were the additional items added at the last BOE meeting? (Ex. Summer School \$10,000) Why were they added?**

*A. The Special Education budget is always difficult to exactly pinpoint, and from the initial presentation in early February there were additional potential expenses identified for IEP mandated related services in the Summer School Program that needed to be budgeted for. Additionally, \$20,000 was budgeted for dedicated student alcohol/drug awareness and prevention curriculum, and an additional \$70,000 for security upgrades. Decisions on the security improvements will be decided upon after review of reports being prepared by a consultant the District solicited through BOCES, as well as recommendations from local law enforcement. It should also be noted that money was also directed towards tax relief, bringing the initial levy percentage increase of 3.83% down to 3.78%. The remaining funds were used to lower the tuition revenue projections to a more conservative number. If additional tuition revenues are indeed recognized during the year this will have a positive effect on year end fund balance totals, which can then be directed to reserves or to reduce the tax levy in the 2014/2015 school year; both fiscally responsible choices.*

**Q. How many i-Pads will be purchased?**

*A. The District has budgeted \$143,733 for hardware replacement District-wide. This would include desktop computers, laptops, monitors, printers, lab computers, projectors, Smart Boards, and potentially i-Pads. No specific number has yet to be identified, but the District is on a continuing four year cycle of computer replacement. The specific number of devices will be identified through a needs assessment conducted by building administrators before any orders are created.*

**Q. Can we revisit student accident insurance? I do feel it is important to have this type of insurance but can we explore other options for coverage?**

*A. The District has already directed the broker to shop the policy around the marketplace and bring back options for the BoE to consider before we renew the policy for the 2013/14 SY.*

**Q. #A2705.1 - Revenue projection YARD. What this is?**

*A. These are the anticipated revenues provided by annual grants from Southampton, East Hampton, Sag Harbor, and North Haven. The YARD program has been operated in the district for many years now with no additional burden to the taxpayer. The program receives annual municipal grants, in addition to donations that cover its operating expenses. For example, in the current school year (2012/2013) the Sag Harbor UFSD has received \$15,000 from Southampton, \$12,000 from East Hampton, \$6,000 from North Haven, and \$5,000 from Sag Harbor specifically for the purpose of supporting the YARD program.*

**Q. Where can I view a long range financial plan for the district?**

*A. The most recently prepared analysis, which was developed during the planning stages of the 2011/2012 SY budget, is not publically posted, but was presented to the Board of Education for review in late 2010 by the Director of Business Operations. Although, great effort was put into its preparation it was quickly obsolete because of factors that could not be controlled or accurately predicted by the District. With careful analysis of staffing levels and enrollments the District can reasonably predict salary expenditures, which total approximately 54% of the total budget, but it is the benefits portion of the budget that is growing more and more unpredictable year to year. Benefits amount to approximately 25% of the total budget, and therefore even slight discrepancies in predictions can render such forecasts literally useless. The District is committed to continued diligence in examining appropriate staffing levels, which balance the needs of the program within the fiscal framework that does not overly burden the taxpayers of the community. The Board of Education established a Long Range Financial Planning Committee earlier this year with members of the community, staff, and Board members for the purpose of guiding the Board of Education on fiscal matters during these challenging economic times.*

**Q. During the budget development period is a forensic review of staffing requirements and all programs conducted? I am concerned that there is only one Reading Specialist on staff at Elem School. Many children in reading intervention yet most have to work with teaching assistants and substitute teachers because we only have one reading specialist. Yet we have 3 full time music teachers at the Elem School. We are not a school for the performing arts...why are we over delivering in music at the expense of children who cannot read? A review of programs and student**

**needs and the staffing would definitely uncover areas we need to re-prioritize staffing. Budget development helps to drive this type of analysis -- which clearly improves quality and yet helps us find savings. With the cap, it will be harder to sustain what we have. We need a continuous process on this.**

*A. The District's Administration is committed to continually examining staffing levels and their utilization. Staffing must be determined thoughtfully in response to enrollment, curricular needs, State and IEP mandates, as well as goals set forth by the Board of Education with input from the community, teachers, administrators, and subject matter experts. We do have one Reading Specialist on staff. This staff member works with some of our most struggling readers. There is also another teacher assigned as our Response to Intervention specialist. This teacher also works with students who need remedial services. Some children (K-2) do receive an extra period of language arts support during the day. Some of this extra support is provided by teaching assistants who work under the direction of our teachers/administrators. This model has enabled us to provide support to more children in our school without added expense. Additionally, it is true we have three music teachers in our school: one General Music, one Band, and one Orchestra. This staffing allows us to offer a complete elementary music program which serves the 500 students of the Elementary School.*

**Q. What is the line item "Recreation" line 7140.160 and 7140.410?**

*A. For 2013-2014 Account A7140.160 represents the budgeted salaries to support the 10-Month (Sept.-Jun.) after-school Youth Advocacy and Resource Development Program at Pierson. Account A7140.410 was for contractual expenses and is no longer budgeted for.*

**Q. I couldn't find the SHAEP program. How much does that program cost the district? Where can I find the monies budgeted for SHAEP?**

*A. The SHAEP program is not listed as a budgetary item, as it is fully self-supported by fees paid by the participating families.*

**Q. I am interested in seeing fund balance projects, capital reserves. I am concerned that we aren't refilling reserves.**

*A. All of this detailed information can be found in the District's year-end financial statements, which can be reviewed from the website. On the left side of the homepage, under "Quick Links", click on "Budget Information", and then "Auditor's Reports." The District has been very prudent the past few years and has established and funded a number of important reserves, including: Facilities Renovation, Bus Fleet Replacement, Retirement Contribution, and Employee Accrued Benefit. Additionally, the District has returned \$500,000 to the taxpayers for the past two years through Appropriated Fund Balance. This approach reduces budgetary spikes, helps to lessen the burden on the taxpayer, and is a strategy the District is committed to.*

**Q. It seemed there were more budget presentations last year with opportunity to view the entire budget at once. How many presentations of the entire budget did we have for the community this year? How was this advertised?**

*A. The Budget Workshop calendar has been posted on the homepage of the District's website since early January. It contains the exact same number of workshop sessions, presenting the same sections of the budget, in the same order as last year. It also appears to have followed the same basic timeline of previous years, with the exception of last year, in which public sessions began approximately six weeks earlier; likely in response to all of the uncertainty in the first year under the tax cap. This calendar can certainly be modified at the Board of Education's request, but the proposed expenditure projections are far more accurate and reliable when delivered later in the budget building season. To date, the budget was publically presented in its line-by-line entirety once. There are 261 lines in the budget and to go over it in such detail takes a significant amount of time, and much of the material is such that the average observer loses interest. It is much more productive delving into each functional area as in our District's workshop format. The entire line-by-line budget has been on the website for public review now for nearly a month. The Board of Education recognizes that public participation in the budget process is very valuable and important, and that is why they extended the budget adoption date from April 8<sup>th</sup> to April 22<sup>nd</sup> for the purposes of adding an additional workshop. They also provided the public with this mechanism of direct access for budget questions. Furthermore, this year's budget newsletter, when released, will be much more detailed and comprehensive. Lastly,*

*an open invitation was issued to all community groups who wish for a private budget presentation. The Superintendent, Business Official, and Board are eager to meet with any organization or civic group for the purposes of providing greater clarity of the budget making process.*

**Q. Was there any consideration of early retirement incentives during the planning stages for this year's budget?**

*A. New York State did not offer any retirement incentive this year. The State's incentives are typically tied to increasing lifetime pension benefits for the members, and therefore much more attractive to employees when offered. A "local incentive" would be completely District funded. Depending on the number of employees targeted this could be very costly and difficult to fund within the restraints of the tax cap. You have to be very careful in considering these options to be certain there will be an appreciable savings recognized, while keeping in mind that if you are replacing the retiree you now have two people receiving benefits from the District. These incentives best work when the retirement results in a reduction in the total staff count.*

**Q. Was there any consideration of the huge increases each year in health and dental? My understanding is collective bargaining agreement allows for flexibility, there is no exclusivity where everyone on the same plan. So can't we be examining different plans for alternative healthcare for the staff?**

*A. Health and dental insurance expenses are certainly a major consideration each year as the cost represents 10% of the total school budget. The various collective bargaining agreements do have varying language offering mixed levels of flexibility in choosing the carrier, but almost exclusively require that the "Empire Plan Plus Enhancements" be provided to all retirees, and that members that might choose an optional plan while employed be granted the ability to return to the Empire Plan at their discretion. One of the agreements clearly states the Empire Plan Plus Enhancements, or "an equivalent." The District has explored other options in recent years and based on the level of potential participation it was not cost effective to consider maintaining two plans. The Empire Plan is financially stable and competitive in its pricing as it serves over \$1.2 million State and local government employees, retirees and their families. Over 800 districts and municipalities statewide utilize the New York State Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP).*