

Questions & Answers about the School Budget Process at Chautauqua Lake Central School

Q When does the school district begin working on next year's school budget?

A The budget process begins during the late summer-early fall, when initial projections for enrollment, educational program requirements, maintenance needs, and other general budget issues are reviewed. The Board of Education adopts a budget calendar in September, with deadlines and dates for budget hearings and workshops scheduled. The district is also working towards a 18-month to two-year budget model, to more adequately address ongoing fiscal challenges facing our education system.

Q How can district residents participate in the budget process?

A The public is welcome at any meeting of the Board of Education, during which times are scheduled for public comments. Agendas are posted online at www.clake.org; locate Board of Education information under the District Info heading. Also, a **Budget Listening Session**, announced on the District Calendar, is held in the fall to hear what aspects of the school program are of primary importance to community residents. Finally, a number of Board of Education budget workshops are held from January to April, again with opportunity for community dialogue and input.

Q When is the budget adopted?

A All New York State public schools are required to present the proposed budget for the upcoming school year to district voters on the third Tuesday of May. To meet this required date, the Board of Education needs to adopt the proposed budget during the month of April, to allow time for legal notices and ballot strip printing. Check the Budget Planning Calendar for the last date for the Board of Education to approve the budget amount to be presented to voters; locate the calendar at www.clake.org. Select District > Budget Process > Related Files. Note that each year's budget documents remain on that page for easy public access until they are replaced with newer files for the next year's budget process.

Q What happens if district voters turn down the proposed budget at the May vote?

A If district voters turn down the proposed budget at the May vote, the school board must then decide either to schedule a second budget vote before June 30 or to declare a contingency budget immediately.

Q Why can't the District tell voters what the tax rate will be at the time of the vote?

A To determine final tax rates for each of the six townships that make up the school district, it is necessary to have final assessments and equalization rates for each township. These are not set until sometime in August. Therefore, the district can only estimate tax rates at the time of the May budget vote.

Q How do the workings of our state representatives in adopting a state budget affect school budgets?

A Until New York State adopts its budget for the following year, which starts April 1, it is difficult to estimate of the amount of state aid each school district will receive. We encourage district residents to call on elected state officials to work towards meeting the April 1 budget adoption date.

Information about the budget process is available online at www.clake.org; select the District heading, then Budget Process.