



Yorktown Central School District



Dr. Ronald Hattar
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Dear Yorktown School Community,

I hope this update finds you and your family well. Although we share a comprehensive newsletter each month as well as frequent social media and website posts, I thought it important to provide you with some additional, timely notifications before you receive our newsletter next week. As the month of April races by, our schools remain extraordinarily busy with all of the excellent work happening each day. Teaching and learning have been, and will always be, at the center of our mission. When we then add-in the many additional activities that take place within each of our schools, there is a palpable positive energy on our campuses. We look forward to continuing to cultivate this excitement as we enter the final months of the school year.

Our spring athletic season is well underway; please come out and enjoy a game--or two! Our concert season is rapidly approaching, and we eagerly look forward to celebrating the terrific work of our band, orchestra, and chorus programs. We also have many celebrations in the coming weeks to acknowledge and applaud the hard work and achievements of our students. This is an exciting time in our school district!

At our Central Office, we remain hard at work on the development of our 2024-25 school budget. This has been an extraordinarily challenging budget to develop given the many external factors converging simultaneously in a single year. The rising costs of underfunded and unfunded mandates, state aid falling short of our expectations, the inflationary reality of today, and the increased costs in contractual services (most notably in the bus transportation contract) have created a challenging set of circumstances in developing the budget. We also recognize that funding streams are limited. This year, state aid has fallen short of our expectations based on the state's aid allocation formula. Additionally, federal funding that has been used to support mental health support personnel and resources in our district is expiring. Thirdly, it is important to clarify that while residential and commercial real estate developments in our town may modestly lower a homeowner's property taxes as the tax levy becomes spread across more parcels, the real estate developments do not provide a source of revenue to our schools nor do they raise our tax levy. Consequently, as we develop the budget, we are committed to putting forth a budget that balances the needs of our students with a profound sensitivity to taxpayers and the realities of today's economic landscape.

Information regarding the budget and the budget development process is included below for your review. You may also visit our website and click on the banner at the top of the page for comprehensive information on the 2024-25 school budget.

2024-25 School Budget Update

We believe that the 2024-25 budget successfully achieves the necessary balance between providing the educational experience that our students deserve and a deep sensitivity to taxpayers. Most notably, the 2024-25 school budget includes the hiring of teachers and support staff to meet our enrollment needs as well as the specific needs of our students. The budget maintains class sizes at, or below, Board of Education guidelines and keeps all of the outstanding programs currently offered to students intact.

To continue to elevate the opportunities afforded to students, we are also making strategic investments in various areas of our instructional program by:

- Adding staffing to our orchestra and chorus programs;
- Adding science staffing to offer new middle school programs (including engineering);
- Adding new special education programming to meet the needs of students;
- Adding a school psychologist to support student needs;
- Adding modified sports to our middle school (boys volleyball, girls field hockey, and boys/girls cross-country); and
- Adding American Sign Language (ASL) to our middle and high schools.

We believe that we were successful in our goal to provide students with the high-quality of education that has become synonymous with Yorktown while also demonstrating fiscal responsibility and sensitivity to taxpayers. Overall, our budget is within the tax levy cap, and reflects a budget-to-budget increase of 2.97%. This results in the following:

- A tax rate increase in Yorktown estimated at 2.07%
- A tax rate increase in New Castle estimated 2.95%
- A tax rate increase in Cortlandt estimated at 0.02%

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Board and our administrative team for their tireless effort in putting forth a budget that reflects an appropriate balance between providing our students with the well-rounded education that they deserve and maintaining a genuine sensitivity to taxpayers.

The budget vote and trustee election will be held on Tuesday, May 21, from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m. in the French Hill School.

Kindergarten Registration

If you intend to register your child for kindergarten for September, **please begin the process immediately.** Kindly review this [document](#) to begin the registration process. You may contact Patty Sauber (psauber@yorktown.org) or Val Biberaj (vbiberaj@yorktown.org) for additional information.

Pre-K Update

We have received incredibly positive feedback throughout the first year of our new Pre-K program. With the New York State budget only approved this week, we are looking forward to another wonderful year of Pre-K in the Yorktown CSD! Please reach out to Patty Sauber (psauber@yorktown.org) or Val Biberaj (vbiberaj@yorktown.org) to register as seats are limited.

iGrants

Our Innovation Grant (iGrant) Program has been a resounding success. Introduced this school year, faculty and staff have been encouraged to put forward learning opportunities for students that

connect one's interests to our district curricula. The grants have brought so many wonderful learning opportunities to our students and schools, and I am grateful to our phenomenal faculty and staff for embracing this program and stretching their practice. More information on some of the iGrant awards can be found on our website.

Solar Eclipse

April 8 was an incredible day in our school district! The eclipse presented an amazing learning opportunity for our school district, and each of our schools created viewing opportunities for our students. In speaking to students, across many grade levels, I heard two comments repeatedly. First, students said, "That was so cool!" It was exciting to hear the interest in this rare scientific phenomenon. The first comment was almost always followed by "Is that it?" Perhaps the hype on social and news media led students to have elevated expectations of this event; however, knowing that we were not in the path of totality we recognized that the impact on our region would not be as dramatic as areas within the path of totality.

I offer my deepest thanks to our administrators, faculty, and staff for their efforts in creating a wonderful experience for our students.

Administrative Professionals Day

April 24, 2024 is Administrative Professionals Day. I extend my most heartfelt gratitude to all of the administrative assistants in our district. Regardless of the office in which our clerical staff work, their impact on the seamless and efficient operations of our district are incredibly profound. Our clerical staff are such an important part of our district!

Hiring Updates in the Yorktown Central School District

We continue to update our website with various job opportunities, both instructional and non-instructional opportunities. If interested, please visit our website for a list of vacancies or you may [click here](#).

As always, thank you for your continued support of our excellent school district. I wish you a terrific remainder of the week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Hattar", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Hattar