

## PRESS RELEASE

### **SOUTH ORANGETOWN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT'S BOARD OF EDUCATION ADOPTS PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2007-08 ON APRIL 17, 2007**

Increased State aid, reduction in staff due to restructuring and projected flat enrollment increases, in addition to lower increases for employee benefits this current year, have helped South Orangetown school officials adopt the District's proposed budget for 2007-2008, resulting in a tax rate increase of just less than **4.6 percent**, the lowest tax rate increase over past several years.

In response to the clear sense that the community at large is experiencing a difficult time with tax increases, officials began work on the new budget in September. At that time, they were predicting a 10 percent spending increase. By early January the increase had been pared down to 6.5 percent, with the Board adopting a spending plan of just over 6 percent on April 17, to put to the voters on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

This adopted budget reflects a reduction in support staffing due to restructuring of personnel and a decrease in class sections, including approximately 20 teaching assistant positions, 6 teacher aide positions, and a net decrease to the teaching staff at 3 due to the offering of a retirement incentive and through leaves, resignations and attrition. The District also reviewed all administrative positions, and reduced additional expenses by not replacing a Central Office position through attrition.

According to Dr. Zambito, "this is great news in that through a comprehensive budget development process, the Board and administration were able to develop a spending plan that continues to provide all students with high standard programs and services, while also providing many opportunities through the arts and athletics. In addition, we can maintain focus on our annual district facilities' projects, improve safety and security, and continue to enhance instruction through technology and professional development."

#### **By the Numbers**

**Proposed Budget:** \$71,259,822

**2006-2007 Budget:** \$67,190,227

**Percentage Increase:** 6.06%

**Estimated Tax Rate Increase:** 4.59%

**Estimated 2007-2008 Taxes:** **31.06** per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The tax bill for a property assessed at the district average of \$200,000 would be \$ 6,212 or \$272 increase without the benefit of the STAR reduction.

**2006-2007 Taxes:** \$29.70 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The tax bill for a property assessed at \$200,000 is \$5,940.