

LONGWOOD

VOTING

7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday at Charles E. Walters, Coram, Ridge and West Middle Island elementary schools.

THE BUDGET

The district proposes a \$250 million budget for 2018-19, a 2.97 percent increase from the current \$242.8 million. The tax levy would increase 3.04 percent, from \$137,864,766 to \$142,061,078.

This increase is equal to the district's tax cap limit of 3.04 percent, so a simple majority will be required to approve the budget.

School taxes on the average single-family home assessed at \$2,280 would increase by 3.04 percent, from \$6,086.34 to \$6,271.60.

The proposed budget includes a contractual increase of 0.75 percent and a step increase of 2.3 percent for teachers.

The spending plan funds 2.4 part-time secondary teaching positions, one in physical education and health, two in special education, one in speech and four teaching assistants. The additional staff positions are intended to address an increase in student enrollment of about 100 students, to 9,300 students total, a district official said.

■ **District website:**
longwood.k12.ny.us

THE CANDIDATES

Ten candidates are running for four at-large seats: incumbents Penelope Blizzard-McGrath, Victoria Molloy, Maureen E. Silvestri and Daniel Tomaszewski, and candidates Josephine M. Bailey, Coralanne Griffith-Hunte, William Massian, Matthew Silberman, Rhonda Stitham and Keith Vincent Tola. The fourth-highest vote-getter will serve the one-year term remaining on the seat of Philip Reany Jr., who died. Terms are three years.

Josephine M. Bailey

BACKGROUND: Bailey, 50, is a special-education teacher and administrator at a child services organization. She has lived in the district her entire life. She has an associate degree in child care, counseling and child development from Suffolk County Community College, a bachelor's in psychology from Long Island Univer-



Longwood's Jake Murphy carries the ball past North Babylon's Schuyler Valensky in a lacrosse game.

sity, and a master's in education from Capella University. She has one child, who attended school in the district. She is vice president of the Gordon Heights Civic Association, co-founder of a community youth program and a volunteer for youth service organizations.

ISSUES: Bailey said she would seek to create new opportunities for district teachers and staff to engage with community members outside of school in order to strengthen community bonds. "It's good for the kids to see the teacher not only in school, but . . . in their communities doing projects," Bailey said. She also said students should have more chances to weigh in on decisions about the district. "A lot of times, the kids have information they can bring to the table," she said. Bailey said she also would seek to maintain and improve on before- and after-school programs, such as those in technology and professional development, in order to give students extracurricular forums for interaction and to help parents with early or late work schedules.

Penelope Blizzard-McGrath

BACKGROUND: Blizzard-McGrath, 51, is an attorney. She has lived in the district for nearly 16 years. She has a bachelor's degree from Dowling College and a law degree from Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center. She has one child who attends school in the district. She is a member of the Longwood PTA; the Central Brookhaven Lions Club; the Ridge Civic Association; and the Suffolk County Bar Association. She also is a volunteer with the American Red Cross. She has served on the board since 2015.

ISSUES: Blizzard-McGrath cited school safety as a primary concern, saying she would continue to solicit counsel from law enforcement and security experts on "advanced measures to enhance our security." She also said she would like to raise awareness among students, teachers and parents about mental health issues and the effects of bullying. "We need more accountability from our district requiring follow-up on a case-by-case basis to ensure our children are safe, secure and healthy even

months after an incident occurs," she said. Blizzard-McGrath said she would seek to reduce class sizes, especially in district elementary schools, to maximize the individual attention each student receives.

Coralanne Griffith-Hunte

BACKGROUND: Griffith-Hunte, 44, is a psychologist and professor of science and human values at the College of New Rochelle. She has lived in the district for close to six years. She has a bachelor's degree in organizational management from Nyack College, a master's in leadership of educational organizations from American InterContinental University, and a doctorate in human and organizational psychology from Touro University Worldwide. She has three children in district schools. She is the Long Island director for Not on My Watch, a subsidiary of the Safe Haven Network.

ISSUES: Griffith-Hunte said she would like to see the district implement more professional development programs that train students in testing and organizational skills to ensure they are prepared to complete college degrees efficiently and

succeed in professional environments. Griffith-Hunte also said she would seek to de-emphasize standardized test preparation and instead tailor teaching more to the particular needs and learning styles of students. She said she would seek to include parents more in decision-making on district and school policies. "A partnership between the district and parents can contribute significantly to children's educational, professional and personal success," she said.

William Massian

Massian did not return a candidate information form and could not be reached for comment.

Victoria Molloy

BACKGROUND: Molloy, 40, is the chief of staff for Brookhaven Town Councilman Michael Loguercio. She is a graduate of the Eastern Suffolk BOCES nursing program. She has been president and vice president of the Ridge PTA; treasurer of the Longwood Middle School PTA; PTA council recording secretary; a member of the Shared Decision Team at Ridge Elementary; a member of the Eastern Suffolk BOCES Career and Technical Task Force and STEM High School Engineering Advisory Board; and a member of the Longwood Education and Arts Foundation board of directors, among other civic roles. She has two children who attend schools in the district, and she has been on the school board since 2017. **ISSUES:** Molloy said she would advocate for additional funding for the district "to offset our decreasing state-aid reimbursements and unfunded mandates." She also said she would seek to promote "positive economic development" in the community in order "to provide tax relief." She additionally said it was important to keep schools safe.

Matthew Silberman

BACKGROUND: Silberman, 47, is senior manager of technical operations for the East End region for the Corcoran Group. A district resident for 40 years and a Longwood High School graduate, he has a bachelor's degree in information technology from Grumman Data Systems. Silberman has two

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children attending Longwood schools. He is a member of the district's Safety Committee and formerly served on its Technology Committee. He is running for his first term on the board.

ISSUES: Silberman said he spent much of his engineering career working on development and implementation of technology for schools, and would bring that experience to bear in the Longwood district. "Now that I'm on the hiring side, I see that kids aren't prepared," he said. He would focus on coding, networking and infrastructure, areas he said would prepare students for higher education and the job market. Silberman said he also would work on maintaining and improving school safety with regular inspections and funding for security guards, video and safety rooms. "We're never going to take our eye off that ball," he said.

Maureen E. Silvestri

BACKGROUND: Silvestri, who did not give her age, is a homemaker and volunteer who has served 27 years on the school board. She has served on a number of board committees, most recently the Safety Committee. She graduated from Seward Park High School in Manhattan. A daughter-in-law works for the district as a staff assistant.

ISSUES: Silvestri said she would "hire the best people available" for school security and would ensure district staff are trained as well. "Not just the teachers, the staff assistants, custodians, everybody that works in the district" should know "how to react and keep the kids safe," she said. On her candidate form, she also wrote that as trustee she would address a "lack of State aid to school districts."

Rhonda Stitham

BACKGROUND: Stitham, 45, teaches K-5 STEM in the William Floyd school district. She is a member of the Longwood Legislative Committee, a group of community members that advises the board on current and pending laws that may affect the district. She has a bachelor's degree in education from Lynchburg College, now Lynchburg University, a master's degree in education from Dowling College, an education specialist's certificate from Dowling College and a doctorate in teacher leadership from Concordia University. She has two children in Longwood schools.

ISSUES: Stitham said she wants the district to expand its career technical education offerings. "Not every student is going to go the college

career path or be college-ready," she said. "There have to be options" for students interested in such trades as being electricians or mechanics, she said. She would like to expand STEM at the elementary level, with a "steppingstone" to high school, trades and college, she said. She also said she would push for "enhanced safety procedures" in the schools, including physical barriers and background checks.

Keith Vincent Tola

BACKGROUND: Tola, 44, is an attorney and arbitrator in private practice. He has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Stony Brook University and a law degree from Touro Law Center. A district resident for 40 years, he has three children in Longwood schools. He is running for his first term on the board.

ISSUES: Tola could not be reached for an interview. In a candidate information form, he wrote that he would "review the budget with a keen eye and question spending." He would work on bullying, gang identification and safety, he wrote, cooperating with school staff and pushing for more literature and assemblies.

Daniel Tomaszewski

BACKGROUND: Tomaszewski, 71, is a retired social studies teacher at Longwood High School and director of the evening alternative high school. He has a bachelor's degree in sociology, a master's degree in education and a certificate in administration, all from LIU Post. A lifelong district resident, he has five grandchildren in Longwood schools, and four of his children graduated from Longwood schools. He is chairman of the Longwood Community Council. He has served on the school board since 2003, including seven years as board president and four years as vice president.

ISSUES: Tomaszewski said that as board member he has worked to unify taxpayers behind a \$39.1 million bond issue that passed last October, funding school security and infrastructure upgrades. "We absolutely have to do everything we can to protect our students and staff," he said. Planned security upgrades include cameras and "man-traps" at school building entrances, Tomaszewski said, and he will push for full-time resource officers at schools. The bond issue also will fund field, recreational and multipurpose space improvements, he said. "If kids are engaged in wholesome, appropriate activities, they are less inclined to negative behavior," Tomaszewski said.

MATTITUCK-CUTCHOGUE

VOTING

3 to 9 p.m. Tuesday at Mattituck Junior/Senior High School.

THE BUDGET

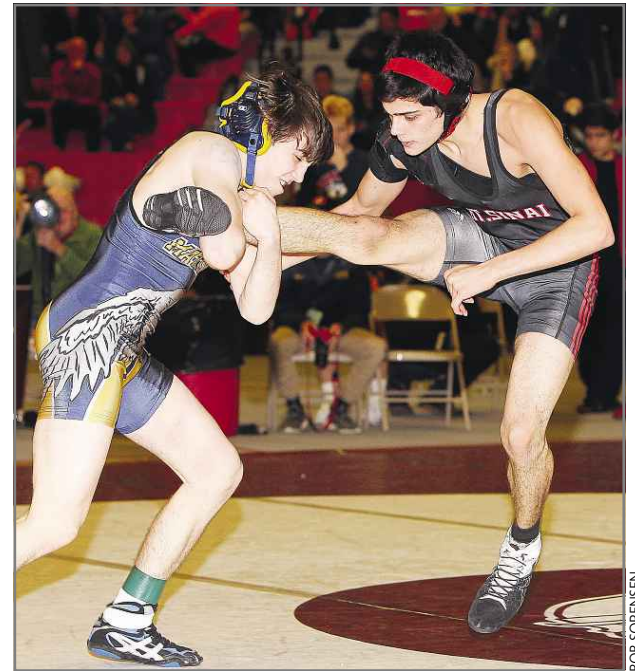
The district proposes a \$40,676,947 budget for 2018-2019, a 0.22 percent decrease from the current \$40,765,316. The tax levy would increase by 0.15 percent, from \$36,109,638 to \$36,163,125.

This increase is within the district's tax-cap limit of 0.97 percent, so a simple majority vote will be required to approve the budget.

School taxes on the average single-family home would increase by 0.54 percent, from \$4,832 to \$4,858.

The proposed budget includes an average salary increase of 0.60 percent and a step increase of 2.2 percent for teachers.

The proposed budget would cut 10 staff positions while adding one foreign language teacher and one security guard. Of those 10 positions, five are teachers and five are noninstructional personnel. Two of the teaching jobs are being cut through attrition and three of the teaching jobs are being cut through "excessing," a term a district official described as similar to a layoff except



Mattituck's Luke Bokina, left, wrestles Joseph O'Brien of Mount Sinai in the 132-pound weight class.

the teachers will have a "seven year period of being asked back if the position is reinstated for any reason."

Voters also will be asked to approve a proposition establishing a 10-year, \$6 million capital reserve fund that will cover districtwide renovations and improvements to facilities and equipment. Money for this fund would be transferred from other reserves

and general fund surplus. There would be no additional cost to the taxpayer, the district says.

■ **District website:** www.muhsd.com

THE CANDIDATES: Incumbents Douglas Cooper and Barbara Wheaton are running with Jeffrey Connolly unopposed for three at-large seats. Terms are three years.

MIDDLE COUNTRY

VOTING

6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday at Centereach High School in Centereach and Newfield High School in Selden.

THE BUDGET

The district proposes a \$250,124,601 budget for 2018-19, a 2.68 percent increase from the current \$243,590,487. The tax levy would increase 2.48 percent, from \$135,841,300 to \$139,209,728.

The increase is within the district's tax-cap limit of 4.80 percent, so a simple majority would approve the budget.

School taxes on the average single-family home would rise 2.48 percent, from \$5,705.07 to

\$5,846.54.

The proposed budget includes a 2 percent contractual raise for teachers and a step increase of 2.5 to 3 percent.

There would be a reduction of 9.6 teachers and 10 to 12 teacher aides and monitors, part of a general tightening of resources through attrition. The district anticipates declining enrollment at the secondary level. In addition, 12 contract security staff would be added.

The proposed spending plan includes funding for additional math periods for students in grades six through eight, expansion of Advanced Placement offerings, and a provision in the coming year for

students in grades four through seven to receive Chromebooks for educational use.

■ **District website:** mccsd.net

THE CANDIDATES

In the district's by-seat election, incumbents Arlene Barresi and Karen Lessler are running unopposed; Daniel Hill is running unopposed for the seat of James Macomber, who is not seeking re-election; and Kathleen Walsh is running unopposed for the two-year term remaining on the seat of Eliness Estevez, whom Walsh was appointed to replace when Estevez resigned. Full terms are three years.