

Ithaca High School PTA Meeting, April 21, 2015

Minutes by PTA secretary Tonya Engst

PTA vice-president of communications Esther Racoosin led the meeting.

Note that audio recordings of Ms. Verba and Mr. Trumble are available online; click a link to listen to a stream:

* <https://soundcloud.com/thorster-1/amandamp3>

* <https://soundcloud.com/thorster-1/jasonmp3>

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE 2015/16 SCHOOL YEAR

Thanks for attending to superintendent Luvelle Brown and several ICSD board members, as well as IHS principal Jason Trumble and Boynton Middle School principal Joe Dhara.

Amanda Verba from the ICSD Budget Office shared a fast-paced presentation about the proposed budget for the next school year, with a look at how state aid is incorporated into the budget. She also distributed a handout; the PDF of this document includes a scan of the handout at the end.

She related that ICSD has committed to a 12-month budget cycle so it can be discussed all year. Last year was very difficult, and we had to make difficult choices. This year the ICSD school board tried to step back to identify values so that the district's vision and goals were kept in mind when deciding what to include in the budget.

Ms. Verba noted a few of those vision/goals:

- * Small class sizes in community-based elementary schools.
- * A wide breadth of offerings that educate the whole child not just academically, but socially, emotionally, and psychologically. Arts and athletics, for example.
- * Valuing all the adults—bus drivers, teachers, etc.—who make the school day happen.

You can read documents relating to this process at:

<http://www.ithacacityschools.org/index.cfm/icسد/Menu/board-of-education/budget.htm>

Compared to last year, the increase in the budget this year is much smaller. Rounding slightly, it is 9 cents per 1,000 assessed value.

State aid is difficult to predict, so a budget tries to make a smart guesstimate.

What happened to the GAP? It was reduced by 39% for our specific district.

HOW MIGHT THE BUDGET PLAY OUT AT ITHACA HIGH?

Jason Trumble says that IHS is a fundamentally different place than it was 23 years ago when he first came here. 23 years ago, droves of students wandered in the halls because they weren't that interested in the course work. What's different now is that Ithaca High has great course offerings. So students are on task and in classes that they care about. Like electives. Electives tend to be the great classes that keep students in the game.

So for any cuts coming to Ithaca High, his plan is that they shouldn't effect a student in the course of the school day. He wants students to feel that they are having the same great experience as last year. Graduation rates have gone up and need to stay up; targeted intervention services make a huge difference. And, the AP classes also engage students. So Ithaca High will have the same course offerings as last year, and 1,500 students will, for the most part, have the courses that they asked for.

But, he cautioned, the school may not offer every single section. Because if, say, only 8 students sign up for an elective, that's probably not enough. And, if a course has over 34 sign up, that's too many for one period/class, but not enough to open another one.

He added that IHS is the gem of our community and it reflects who we are and what we want to offer. And it seems that our community wants everything. But, in protecting what happens during the school year, he can't also find funds for some summer offerings. So, there will be no Introduction to Engineering over the summer and no summer Driver's Ed. He notes that Driver's Ed it not commonly offered by schools around here, and it will still be offered during the school year.

A clerical position is being removed to save money. The position of Assistant to the Principal was open when he got here, and it won't be filled.

There will also be a small adjustment with hall assistants.

Some discussion... a guidance counselor was lost from last year's budget. This is the Assistant to the Principal position that is not being restored. There are now five guidance counselors. Is that enough, asks a parent? Jason notes that as a school we need good communication about what guidance counselors do and don't do.

Another cut will be to after-school tutoring. This goes with the idea of protecting the school day more-so than the not-school-day. The goal is for tutoring to occur during the school day. In this way it is hoped that students can more easily take advantage of clubs and sports that occur after school.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(next page)

Any impact on sports? Everything (mostly?) the same. All offerings will continue for Modified through Varsity.

Any impact on graduation goals? In last year's budget we lost two master educators. And a few others. We are feeling that impact now. Will it impact graduation rates? Remains to be seen. Thinks graduation rates will remain strong. The school still has two graduation coaches.

Proposed teacher evaluation system? If that comes to pass, how might that impact the budget? Luvelle Brown answers this one, saying that nobody knows. Districts may be told to share administrators to help with mutual evaluation. But ICSD can't see how that would work. Seems like an example, says Luvelle, of a poor unfunded mandate.

Change in the administration of athletics? Danielle La Rouche, our current Athletic and Wellness Officer will be leaving her position soon—how will that work out for the sports programs? We will be advertising for a new Officer. Feedback from community is welcome. National search. Would like to see the IHS Wellness Center being used more, and see every student in some athletics program. Also, we'd like to see more leadership amongst our athletes.

Scheduling improvement? If a class won't be offered that a student signed up for, or if a student for whatever reason doesn't get class choices, could this be examined and sorted before the first day of school? Jason is hoping that schedules will be available in early summer. Suggestion to preschedule meetings, as in, if the computer detects a scheduling problem that is likely to trigger a meeting, why not preschedule a meeting so families don't have to keep trying to get in touch to make one? (This suggestion was based on the assumption there would be no opportunity to adjust scheduling until school began, so these meetings would occur during the school day between student and counselor.)

Course selection? How can we better help students who want to try a hard class, but also want an option to step down a level if after a few weeks it's obviously too much? For example, a math class. Jason says that he feels that the school needs to take seriously these sorts of problems.

More Regents/Honors combo classes? Will there be other courses where Regents and Honors are combined in one classroom? Social studies is finishing first year, and Math is in third year. Not looking to make changes going into next year.

How much of the budget is the Chromebook/iPad initiative? This comes out of the BOCES budgeted amount for technology. We are paying with a lease, so the entire amount doesn't come out of one year. Not sure of total offhand but someone in the room (Luvette?) says it is about 5 million for a 5-year lease—but need to double-check.

The Chromebook/iPad initiative will decrease some IT expenses. Over the course of time, we'll decrease the number of tech support folks [from BOCES—I asked about this at a different meeting and was assured that nobody is losing a job. —Tonya] because the number

of different devices and apps is being decreased/streamlined. An ICSD board member comments that even though he's an Apple guy, he felt that the savings was compelling when you look at total cost of ownership, and no important functionality loss.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Patricia Fox motions to approve the October 7, 2014, minutes. Shivaun seconds the motion. The minutes are approved unanimously.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Google Chromebooks Coming to a Student Near You: Thursday, May 7, 5:30pm at GIAC. Chromebooks are the laptops that IHS students will be receiving next year. Dominick Lisi of the ICSD Educational Technology department will lead this presentation. GIAC is at 301 W. Court Street; note that parking is available at the far side of the pool in a new lot between Etsy and Cascadilla St.

You may wish to read the ISCD FAQ about Chromebooks at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wB5-sH7Ra4X5rgNP3GNStxslAtncvmVPmurWciU5ao4/edit> before attending the meeting.

June 10 Staff Appreciation Luncheon. The PTA requests that families donate desserts. Watch the mailing list for info.

Also a **contribution toward cost of lunch would be appreciated.** Please send contributions to Ithaca High School PTA Treasurer, 1401 N Cayuga St, Ithaca NY 14850. Or, students can drop off contributions in the main office.

DOES THE PTA SUPPORT THE PROPOSED ICSD BUDGET?

Anne Horst motions that the Ithaca High PTA support the ICSD's proposed budget for the 2015/16 school year. Shivaun Archer seconds the motion.

After a wide-ranging discussion, including a question about Mr. Cass, all ten PTA members present vote to support the budget.



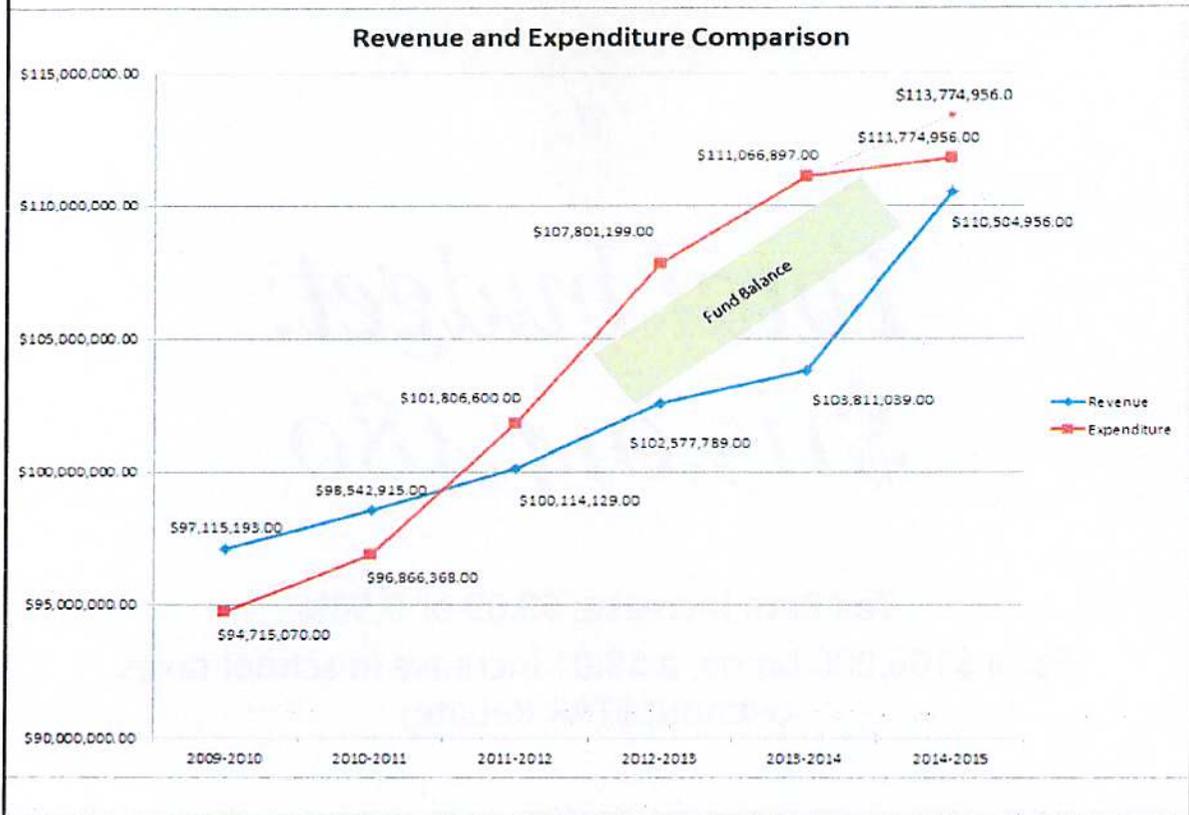
Total budget: *\$115,014,480*

Tax Rate Increase: \$0.09 or 0.50%
For a \$100,000 home, a \$9.01 increase in school taxes
(without STAR Rebate)

Revenue - Total

	Budgeted Revenue as of July, 2014	Proposed Revenue 2015-2016	Dollar Change	% Change
STATE AID	\$ 27,108,533	\$ 27,108,533	\$ 0	0.0%
OTHER REVENUE	\$ 3,609,050	\$ 3,609,050	\$ 0	0%
REAL PROPERTY TAX CAP = \$82,282,867 OR 3.13 %)	\$ 79,787,373	\$ 82,176,897	\$ 2,389,524	2.99%
DESIGNATED FUND BALANCE	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 0	0%
APPROPRIATED CAPITAL RESERVE	\$ 0	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000	
RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION RESERVE	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 0	\$ (1,000,000)	-100%
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS ACCRUED LIABILITY RESERVE	\$ 220,000	\$ 0	\$ (220,000)	-100%
UNEMPLOYMENT RESERVE	\$ 50,000	\$ 0	\$ (50,000)	-100%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 113,774,956	\$ 115,014,480	\$ 1,239,524	1.09%

Funding Gap:

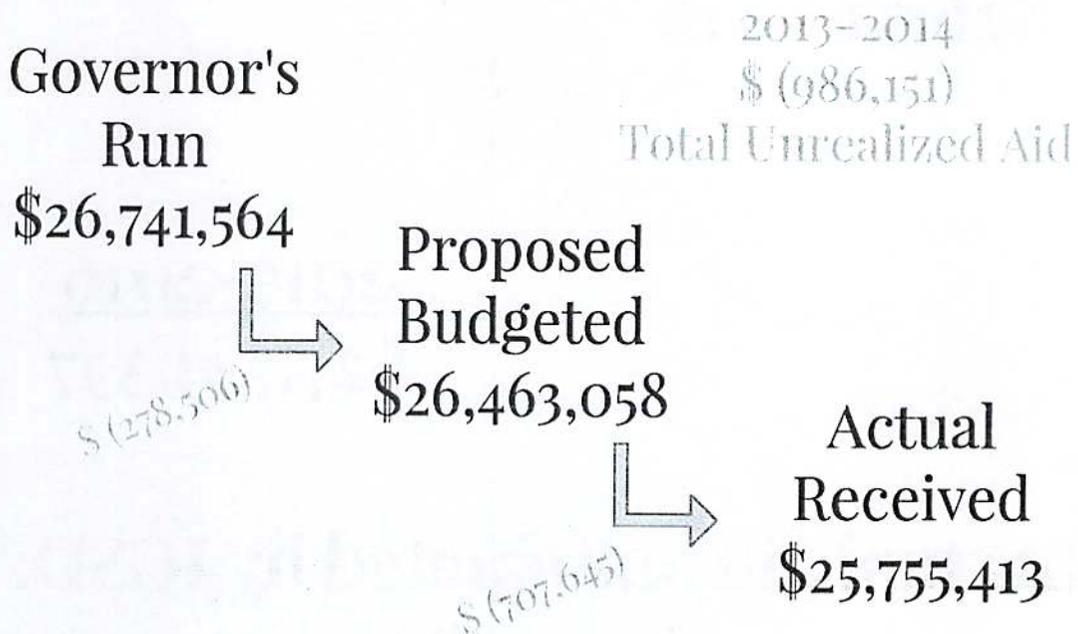


Governor's State Aid Runs

Actual Aid Received by ICSD

Proposed Budgeted State Aid

Another Way to Look at State Aid:



State Aid Run

2014-2015
\$27,266,590

ESTIMATES

State Aid Run
2015-2016
\$29,752,830

Governor's State Aid Runs:
\$ 2,486,240

2014-2015
\$26,320,446

ACTUAL ANTICIPATED

2015-2016
\$27,743,337

Actual aid anticipated by ICSD:
\$ 1,422,891

2014-2015
\$27,108,533

ESTIMATE

2015-2016
\$27,743,337

Proposed Budgeted State Aid:
\$ 634,804