

## **Ichabod Crane Central School**

### **2011-2012 Budget Proposal**

## **Questions and Answers**

### **Q. What will this budget provide?**

The budget has been built to preserve the core instructional programs, High School advanced placement courses and electives, full-day kindergarten, transportation services, and extracurricular/athletic programs. Due to declining enrollment and to gain efficiencies, the Board of Education voted to close the two 3-5 elementary buildings and deliver educational services for all K-12 students on one campus. Due to the overall restructuring of the program, class sizes would increase somewhat.

### **Q. Is the pre-kindergarten program included in this budget?**

No, pre-kindergarten, which is not a mandated program, is not included in the budget. It was eliminated for cost savings and to provide needed space for the full-day kindergarten program. If the Board opted to keep the pre-kindergarten program in the Primary School, full-day kindergarten would be reduced to half-day to accommodate classroom space issues.

### **Q. Is the football program included in the budget, and, if so, how much does it cost?**

Yes, the football program, which costs \$31,000, is included in the budget. However, this expenditure is offset by a \$17,000 donation from the Booster Club and an estimated increase of \$4,000 in admission charges. Therefore, the total cost for the program is approximately \$10,000.

### **Q. Does the inclusion of the football program in the budget necessitate an upgrade of facilities?**

No, the existing facilities would accommodate the football program.

### **Q. Why is there a tax increase if the District reduced the budget by almost \$4 million?**

New York State aid to schools has been reduced dramatically in the past two years, particularly this school year. The state aid for the 2011-2012 school year was reduced 11% from the 2010-2011 year. The loss of revenue during this period necessitated the District to reduce expenditures by abolishing positions at every level. The District is scheduled to abolish 32.5 positions for the 2011-12 school year. The positions include an administrator, teachers, teaching assistants, nurses, technology support, clerical, maintenance, food service and bus drivers. These reductions are in addition to staff reductions that occurred in the 2010-11 school year.

### **Q. What additional steps is the District taking to reduce costs?**

As part of the Board of Education's commitment to reduce costs, the District has continued to implement an aggressive energy reduction program. For the past four years, each school building in the District has been designated as an ENERGY STAR building. Additionally, the District has received the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Energy Star Leader Award and is classified as a "Top Performer" by the EPA. To date, the District has reduced energy consumption by 20.88%, avoiding more than \$900,667 in energy costs.

**Q. Has the District explored shared services with neighboring school districts?**

Yes, along with the Schodack Central School District, Ichabod Crane received a grant for funds to determine how the two districts can work together to gain efficiencies. Currently, Community Advisory Committees from both districts are meeting to evaluate a consolidation/merger study and plan to present a recommendation in the Fall of 2011.

**Q. If the budget is defeated on May 17, what options does the Board of Education have?**

The Board may consider further reductions and present another budget for a vote on the third Tuesday of June. (The date is mandated by law.)

Districts are only allowed one budget revote. If the budget fails a second time, the Board of Education must adopt a contingency budget, which encompasses expenses specifically authorized by statute, legal obligations, and those items necessary to maintain the education program, preserve property, and assure the health and safety of students and staff. Items that might be excluded under a contingency budget are certain equipment purchases, student supplies, and costs related to community use of school facilities and grounds.