



# North Shore Schools

*Discovering Your Dreams*

Dear North Shore Families,

As you may have seen over the weekend, an email was sent to certain community members that contained false and defamatory information.

This email that I am writing to you now contains only factual information.

In early October, the District began to receive emails asking for an independent budget review. At the same time, the District began to receive emails opposed to an independent budget review.

In order to bring the community together and find a way forward, I emailed those who asked for the review and asked them specifically what they were looking for in a review. Based on those responses from residents and discussions with our Central Office and Board of Education on what information would be most helpful to find greater efficiencies, we developed an outline for a budget study that was focused on comparisons to other districts and per-pupil spending as we were genuinely interested in finding efficiencies. The Board then approved a contract for the independent business review.

As the report was in draft form and was not complete on February 8, it was an intra-agency document and only portions of the report would be disclosed under New York State law. The draft report that was posted after the request was reviewed by the District's legal counsel and provided back to the District. That is the version that is posted currently until the final version is completed and followed the process that a school district would for any draft report.

**In addition, the content of the full draft report, including recommendations for cuts, was presented in person and on live stream at the Board of Education meeting on February 8th, 2024. In fact, the District invited Mr. Dragone to present to the Board on 2/8 and discuss his full report and recommendations. Please see the video of this presentation at: [https://www.northshoreschools.org/boe/board\\_videos.html](https://www.northshoreschools.org/boe/board_videos.html) - (presentation begins at 14:00 of 2/8 meeting; direct link: <https://youtu.be/2v4w6fL-loQ>). It was also live-streamed the night of the meeting.**

In addition, the slideshow from that presentation was also posted on the website, including all recommendations (Budget Challenges Presentation III – Using Data

to Navigate the Road Ahead) at:

<https://www.northshoreschools.org/boe/budget.html>. I encourage you to watch the video so you can see the detail of the presentation and the discussion that was entirely public. As is clear, **every effort was made to make this information public.**

Draft reports are routinely posted in final form after they are discussed publicly so they can then take into account the questions that arise in public comment and in the Board Discussion. After the 2/8 meeting, we spent several hours watching the video of the 2/8 meeting and consolidated that information into new requests for the independent budget reviewer who has been working on them. That report should be completed this week, and the final version will be posted when it is completed.

In addition, I spoke to the Board and public about the ideas of larger class sizes and school restructuring (Princeton planning) on September 28th and October 12th (please see the slideshows and video presentations at: <https://www.northshoreschools.org/boe/budget.html>)

- Budget Challenges Presentation I - The Road Ahead - 9/28/23
- Budget Challenges Presentation II - Navigating The Road Ahead -  
10/12/23

As you know, I have organized a series of pre-budget adoption meetings with all stakeholders in the community to answer questions and listen to their concerns, so this can be relayed to the Board before the budget is adopted. In those meetings, exact facts and figures like class sizes and potential savings are openly discussed.

As I have outlined in all of these presentations, the community has a difficult decision to make. Like all of Nassau County, taxes continue to rise. However, the shift in taxes due to the loss of tax revenue from LIPA is a unique situation and added burden for North Shore taxpayers. At the same time, parents have told me that they moved to North Shore in the last few years for the opportunities and small class sizes.

I encourage you to contact the Board of Education and me with your questions and thoughts on how to best move forward.

Last year, all budgets were held flat, and the following was cut from the budget:

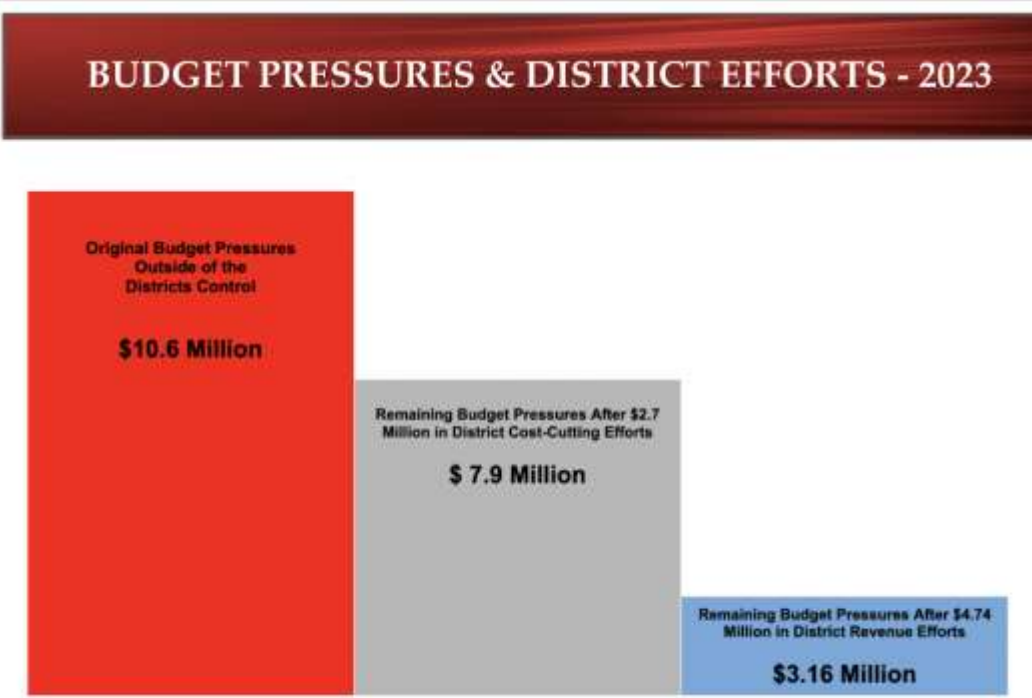
\$2.7 Million was cut last year and all budgets in departments were held flat:

- 3 Administrators
- 19 Teachers

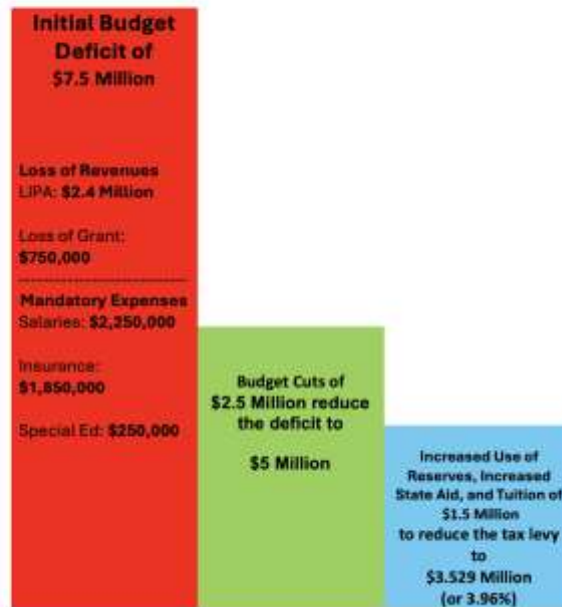
- 5 TA's
- 5 Paraprofessionals
- 2 Clerical

This year, we are proposing to cut an additional 9 teaching positions (\$1.1 Million) and a cut of 5 paraprofessionals and other non-instructional cuts (\$1.4 Million) (all departmental budgets were cut) for a total of 48 positions over 2 years (28 of which are teaching positions).

Over the last two years, the district has made \$5.2 Million in cuts (\$2.7 Million last year and a proposed \$2.5 Million this year) and has increased use of reserves, state aid, tuition and earned interest by over \$6.24 Million over the past two years to handle an \$18 Million combined two year deficit resulting from the loss of revenue from LIPA and loss of grants, increasing health care costs, fuel, heat, transportation and other inflationary based (non-discretionary) increases.



## BUDGET PRESSURES & DISTRICT EFFORTS - 2024



The independent budget report did help to confirm where these proposed cuts could work by increasing class sizes for students. Based on community feedback, the direction to make additional cuts would be informed by the report and student scheduling and enrollment data. Further cuts would require increasing class sizes at the elementary level and/or eliminating certain programs or options for students.

Here is the projected impact on personal property taxes based on different tax levy amounts:

**What should be our next steps?  
Tax Levy vs. Budget/Teacher Cuts**

| Tax Levy | # of Teaching Positions Eliminated | Approximate Cut in School Budget | Approximate Increase in Personal Property Tax on \$750,000 Home |
|----------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 5.63%    | 0                                  | \$1.0 Million                    | \$748   |
| 5.00%    | 3                                  | \$1.7 Million                    | \$659   |
| 4.50%    | 6                                  | \$2.10 Million                   | \$598   |
| 3.96%    | 9                                  | \$2.50 Million                   | \$526   |
| 3.50%    | 12.5                               | \$2.91 Million                   | \$465   |
| 3.00%    | 16.5                               | \$3.46 Million                   | \$398   |
| 2.5%     | 20.5                               | \$3.90 Million                   | \$332   |

Here is the tax rate per \$100,000 of home value in North Shore as compared to other communities:

| District           | Tax Rate        | Tax on Home with Taxable Assessed Value of \$750,000 |
|--------------------|-----------------|--|
| Hewlett            | 2552.110        | \$19,140.83  |
| Farmingdale        | 2415.718        | \$18,117.89  |
| Merrick            | 2345.543        | \$17,591.57  |
| Syosset            | 2340.995        | \$17,557.46  |
| Baldwin            | 2329.251        | \$17,469.38  |
| Rockville Center   | 2304.211        | \$17,281.58  |
| Levittown          | 2141.485        | \$16,061.14  |
| Massapequa         | 2051.729        | \$15,387.97  |
| Jericho            | 1968.752        | \$14,765.64  |
| Oceanside          | 1968.719        | \$14,765.39  |
| East Williston     | 1916.264        | \$14,371.98  |
| Bethpage           | 1868.986        | \$14,017.40  |
| Roslyn             | 1857.068        | \$13,928.01  |
| <b>North Shore</b> | <b>1772.181</b> | <b>\$13,291.36</b>                                   |
| Herricks           | 1703.647        | \$12,777.35  |
| Locust Valley      | 1687.675        | \$12,657.56  |
| Garden City        | 1479.108        | \$11,093.31  |
| Great Neck         | 1367.434        | \$10,255.76  |
| Manhasset          | 1114.491        | \$8,358.68   |

**This is your community, and these are your children. If you would prefer lower taxes and more budget cuts, please let us know. If you would prefer fewer budget cuts and the maintenance of certain programs and/or class sizes, please let us know. If you have other thoughts or questions, please let us know. This is a tough balancing act and everyone in the community has a different opinion on it.**

The initial budget presentation can be found at the following link: [https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1QPDCQGpbRBS7sxMRThP2AL5mkxlWcajHmetuDcPuF70/edit#slide=id.g10f5da5a60a\\_4\\_12](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1QPDCQGpbRBS7sxMRThP2AL5mkxlWcajHmetuDcPuF70/edit#slide=id.g10f5da5a60a_4_12) and all budget information can be found at <https://www.northshoreschools.org/boe/budget.html>.

Your feedback is needed to take the next steps. I invite you to attend our upcoming community conversations and want you to always feel free to email us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Chris Zublionis