

It is budget building time for school districts across New York State and North Tonawanda Public Schools are in the midst of looking at all the issues that go into a school budget. As in years past, this is a balancing act between the expenses of running a school district and the revenues that come into the district. The Board of Education and the administration are working diligently to arrive at a figure that is both sufficient for educating its students and reasonable for its citizens who pay for these services.

This year finds the situation a difficult task. The circumstances mirror the discussions at the Federal level between the President and Congress in running the country. The issues are economically the same. Between rising costs and declining revenues, some serious thinking and discussions need to take place. This same situation is happening in the North Tonawanda School District. The forces of expenses, revenues and people are interacting. Like many upstate school districts, North Tonawanda Schools are dealing with a decline in student population, a decline in revenue, and additional costs. This year there is a loss of state aid and the expiration of federal stimulus funds. Added to that, there are additional expenses with costs associated with mandated employment contracts, health insurance payments, pension costs, and utilities among others. When these are coupled with a State mandated property tax cap, the North Tonawanda Schools face a budget gap of between 4 and 4.5 million dollars.

The North Tonawanda School Board and administrative team are at work to find ways to limit expenses and raise more revenue to insure that our students are receiving a quality educational program to secure their success in this 21st Century World. It is going to take innovative thinking, creative solutions, and contributions from all the stakeholders including the community. Please share your thoughts by going to the district website at www.ntschoools.org and clicking on the budget icon. The input of all will be required. The Board of Education will have budgetary numbers ready for public input in the upcoming months. The Board is planning on adopting a budget at the end of March or beginning of April. This will then be put to a public vote of the residents of the community on May 15, 2012.