

## Board of Education

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**Barbara Gaffuri, *Secretary***

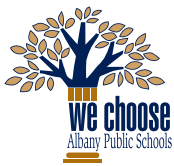
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information in this  
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Communications Office, Academy Park, Albany, N.Y. 12207 | (518) 475-6065 | Fax: 475-6069 | [www.albanyschools.org](http://www.albanyschools.org)

## Polling locations

The City School District of Albany has approved new voting locations in eight of the city's 15 wards. Find your location below, or use the searchable street directory on our Web site, [www.albanyschools.org](http://www.albanyschools.org).

1st Ward, Election Districts 1, 2 & 3 Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology Lincoln Park	8th Ward, Election Districts 1-3, 9, 11 & 12 Albany School of Humanities 108 Whitehall Road
1st Ward, Election Districts 4-10 City Parks & Recreation Building 7 Hoffman Avenue	8th Ward, Election Districts 4-8 & 10 St. Catherine of Siena School 35 Hurst Avenue
2nd Ward, Election Districts 1-3, 5-13 & 15-17 Giffen Memorial Elementary School 274 South Pearl Street	9th Ward, Election Districts 1-9 St. Teresa's School 8 Hollywood Avenue
2nd Ward, Election Districts 4 & 14 City Parks & Recreation Building 7 Hoffman Avenue	10th Ward, Election Districts 1-8 Albany High School 700 Washington Avenue
3rd Ward, Election Districts 1-15 Sheridan Preparatory Academy 400 Sheridan Avenue	11th Ward, Election Districts 1-8 First Lutheran Church 646 State Street
4th Ward, Election Districts 1-5 & 12 North Albany Academy 570 N. Pearl Street	12th Ward, Election Districts 1-3, 5 & 11 Harriet Gibbons High School 75 Watervliet Avenue
4th Ward, Election Districts 6-11 Arbor Hill Elementary School Arbor Drive	12th Ward, District 4 & 9 North Albany Academy 570 N. Pearl Street
5th Ward, Election Districts 1-12 Philip Livingston Magnet Academy 315 Northern Boulevard	12th Ward, Election Districts 6-8 & 10 Montessori Magnet School 65 Tremont Street
6th Ward, Election Districts 1-7 & 9 Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology Lincoln Park	13th Ward, Election Districts 1-6 & 8-9 Pine Hills Elementary School 41 North Allen Street
6th Ward, Election District 8 First Lutheran Church 646 State Street	13th Ward, District 7 Eagle Point Elementary School 1044 Western Avenue
7th Ward, Election Districts 1, 4-6, 8-9 Delaware Community School 43 Bertha Street	14th Ward, Election Districts 1-10 Eagle Point Elementary School 1044 Western Avenue
7th Ward Election Districts 2 & 3 St. Teresa's School 8 Hollywood Avenue	15th Ward, Election Districts 1-3 & 8 Eagle Point Elementary School 1044 Western Avenue
7th Ward, Election District 7 Albany School of Humanities 108 Whitehall Road	15th Ward, Election Districts 4-7 Teresian House, 200 Washington Avenue

Colored boxes indicate where changes have been made

## Voting requirements

To vote on the City School District of Albany's proposed 2008-09 budget, you must be:

- Registered to vote with either the Albany County Board of Elections or the City School District of Albany;
- At least 18 years old; and
- A citizen of the United States and a resident of the City of Albany for at least 30 days prior to the vote.

You must provide identification at the time of registration and voting. For more information, please contact Catherine Cutting, clerk of the board, at 475-6010.

## Absentee ballots

The City School District of Albany automatically will send absentee ballots to individuals designated by the Albany County Board of Elections as having a permanent disability.

Others who require an absentee ballot because of illness, hospitalization, vacation, studies, business or incarceration should contact the district at 475-6010. You also can download the absentee ballot application from the 2008-09 Budget News section of our Web site, [www.albanyschools.org](http://www.albanyschools.org).

Applications must be received by the district clerk seven days prior to the vote, by May 13, for an absentee ballot to be mailed to a resident's home. If an absentee ballot is to be picked up personally, the application must be delivered to the district clerk one day in advance of the budget vote, by Monday, May 19.

A completed absentee ballot must be returned to the district clerk, located in the District Administration Building in Academy Park, by 5 p.m. the day of the school budget vote, May 20.

## What happens if the budget is not approved?

If voters do not approve the proposed budget on May 20, under state law the Board of Education has three alternatives:

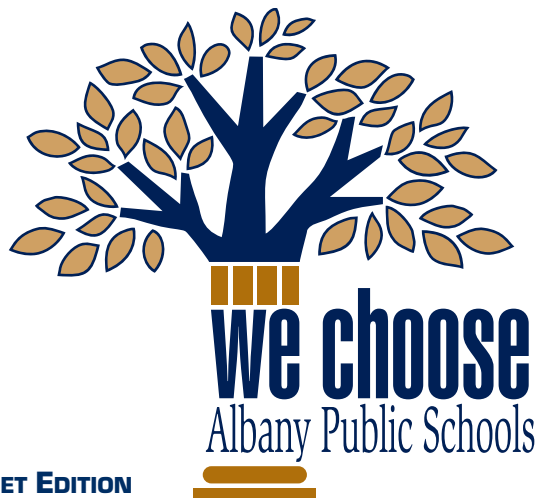
- Put the same budget up for a re-vote
- Present a revised budget for voter consideration
- Adopt a contingency budget (The board opted for this plan for 2007-08 after voters rejected the proposed budget in May 2007.)

If the board presents a revised budget for consideration and it is not approved, a contingency budget must be adopted. State law mandates that a contingency budget cannot exceed the previous year's budget by more than 3.36 percent, after adjustments are made for specific expenses not subject to the cap.

State law closely regulates district expenditures under a contingency budget. For example, the district cannot spend money on:

- Community use of school buildings
- Student supplies
- Equipment
- Certain raises

The district would have to make reductions in staffing and programs to reduce the budget the necessary \$7.1 million to a contingency level. These cuts would lead to larger class sizes and fewer academic and extracurricular opportunities for students.



2008 BUDGET EDITION

# CAPITAL education

## Board acts unanimously to send \$206.7 million proposal to voters

The City School District of Albany Board of Education voted unanimously this spring to approve a proposed budget of \$206,741,488 for 2008-09 that would continue and expand educational, social, health and extracurricular services for all of the district's students.

The proposed budget that will be presented to voters May 20 includes a 2.49 percent tax levy increase and a 9.52 percent increase in overall spending. The proposal represents an estimated increase of \$39 per \$100,000 of assessed value for city residents, \$23 for those with Basic STAR savings and \$9 for seniors with the Enhanced STAR.

It reflects the district's continued efforts to seek out and obtain external funding that helps maintain strong programs in

every school while minimizing the burden on Albany taxpayers.

"The budget proposal reflects the board's attempt to recognize the realities of fiscal prudence, while not compromising on our top priority – the education of all of the district's students," said board President William Barnette.

"The board views the proposed budget not merely as a cost, but as an investment that supports a comprehensive blend of the high-quality educational, social and emotional services that our students need and deserve as they prepare to become the leaders of tomorrow."

The budget proposal includes:

- Expanded prekindergarten programs
- Enhanced acceleration opportunities



### SCHOOL BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday, May 20  
7 a.m. – 9 p.m.

for middle school students

- Enhanced programming for students at every level, including those in need of extra academic and emotional support.

"The unanimous support of the Board of Education for this proposal is an indicator of our efforts to match our fiscal responsibility to the community with our primary mission as a school district – to educate and nurture all students to be responsible citizens, critical thinkers and life-long learners," said Superintendent Eva C. Joseph, Ed.D.

If approved by voters, the budget will restore funding to allow community organizations to use school facilities free of charge, both during and after school hours. The district adopted a contingency budget for 2007-08 after voters turned down the proposed budget, which prevented the district from making its facilities available without charging for the operational expenses during those times.

Voters will have a variety of opportunities to learn more about the 2008-09 proposed budget and to ask questions during community meetings in the weeks leading up to the May 20 vote, beginning with the May 6 budget hearing at 7 p.m. at Albany High School.

"It is our goal to assure that every child receives the best we have to offer, and we welcome questions and dialogue with students, parents and the broader community," Mr. Barnette said.

## New polling locations set for May 20 school budget vote

With a focus on enhancing accessibility for voters throughout the community, the City School District of Albany has approved new voting locations in eight of the city's 15 wards.

The Board of Education approved the new locations at its March 4 meeting. The decision followed the work of an ad hoc committee that began studying the issue in 2007. The committee presented information and statistics about voting trends to the Albany Common Council and requested suggestions for changing the boundaries of voting locations to accommodate voters.

Voting for the 2008-09 school budget will be Tuesday, May 20. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. To accommodate increased numbers of voters in the new locations, additional inspectors and/or voting machines will be assigned to those locations.

Polling sites for the school district budget vote are different from the polling locations used for city-wide elections. Follow the chart on the back page of this newsletter to learn where you vote on the school budget.

You also can find a searchable directory online at [www.albanyschools.org](http://www.albanyschools.org). Visit the 2008-09 Budget News section. If you have additional questions, please contact Catherine Cutting, clerk of the board, at 475-6010

Please refer to page 4 for voting locations.

## Educating and nurturing all students, from pre-K through high school

It happens in every classroom. In the libraries, hallways, offices, cafeterias, auditoriums and gyms of every school. On field trips, playgrounds, athletic fields and buses. Before, during and after every school day.

It is the education and social and emotional development of every child in Albany's public schools.

The annual budget supports all of this and more. It supports the future of every child.

From prekindergarten through high school, the annual budget provides an opportunity for each child to learn who they are and what they like, and the tools to put their aspirations into action as adults.

### Beginning a journey, building a foundation

There is no more important step in education than the first one. The district supports this fundamental idea with full-day prekindergarten and kindergarten programs.

The proposed 2008-09 budget would add 144 openings in prekindergarten to provide 640 spots in all 12 of the district's elementary schools and six off-site locations. Among the proposed additions is prekindergarten in the Dual Language Program, a Spanish-English immersion program at Delaware Community School.

State funding for prekindergarten covers only a half-day program. However, the district supports the cost of full-day programs because our community has requested this type of expanded early childhood programming, and because

research shows that prekindergarten is an important time in a child's social, emotional, behavioral and academic development.

Our full-day kindergarten programs continue a child's journey, ensuring that children build the skills, confidence and relationships for a lifetime of learning.

### Small classes, quality teachers

The district's classrooms have an average of 20 students, meeting our goal of small classes to allow more student-teacher interaction and more student support.

The district also believes strongly that it needs to deliver quality education in every classroom by investing in its teachers. Our partnership with the National Urban Alliance for Effective Education is

(continued on page 3)

### Budget Presentations

- May 6 – Albany High School, 700 Washington Ave., 7 p.m. (budget hearing)
- May 12 – Albany School of Humanities (ASH), 108 Whitehall Rd., 7 p.m.
- May 13 – Philip Livingston Magnet Academy, 315 Northern Blvd., 7 p.m.
- May 14 – Albany High School, 700 Washington Ave., 7 p.m.

If you would like to schedule a budget presentation for your organization, please call 475-6010.

## About the budget increase

The proposed 2008-09 budget represents an increase of \$17.98 million over the contingency budget the district adopted for 2007-08 after voters turned down last year's budget proposal.

The proposal would not eliminate any programs in a year in which the district

again faces elevated costs in many areas, including debt service, special education, charter school payments, employee benefits and utilities.

The district received a state aid increase of about \$13 million. This increase qualified the district to file a Contract for Excellence this year, mandating the fixed expenditure of \$1.5 million on new and expanded programs. Debt service payments increased \$3.24 million, charter

school payments increased \$2.47 million, employee benefits increased \$1.87 million and utility costs rose \$1.28 million.

In an effort to minimize the burden on Albany taxpayers, the district's first draft budget March 4 proposed a 3.71 percent tax levy increase. The Board of Education made further reductions to arrive at the final proposed tax levy increase of 2.49 percent. The board unanimously approved this proposal April 1.

## Projected tax rates and STAR tax savings

The City School District of Albany's proposed 2008-09 budget represents the proposed tax rates shown below. Please note that these are only estimates. The district will finalize tax rates during the summer.

### Estimated tax rates

#### Homestead

- \$15.78 per \$1,000 of assessed property value

#### Non-homestead

- \$25.67 per \$1,000 of assessed property value

### STAR savings

New York State's STAR school property tax relief program is projected to continue this year both for qualifying senior citizens and other property owners.

Senior citizens age 65 and older with an annual household income of less than \$70,650 per year can receive an approximate \$50,000 exemption on the assessed value of their home through the Enhanced STAR exemption.

For all other homeowners, the Basic STAR exemption means that approximately \$30,000 of your home's full-property value will be exempt from school taxes.

STAR savings are not automatic. Homeowners must apply through the city assessor's office to be eligible for the tax break. Senior citizens who qualify for Enhanced STAR must reapply each year.

If you have questions, please contact the city assessor at 434-5155.

STAR does not provide the school district any additional revenue, nor does it result in a loss of tax dollars. New York State reimburses Albany dollar-for-dollar for the tax relief it provides district property owners.

The STAR and Enhanced STAR exemption amounts are subject to adjustment due to equalization rates set by the state Office of Real Property Service.

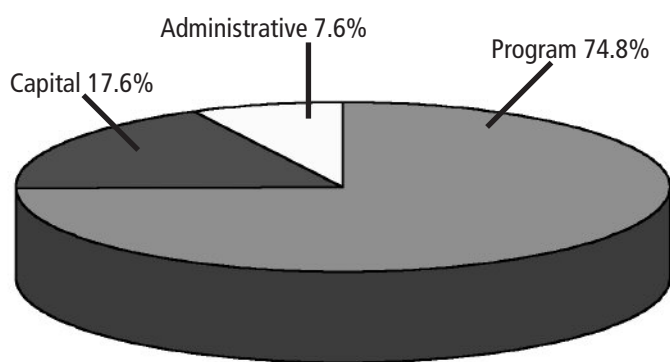
## PROPOSED EXPENDITURES

	2007-08 Budget	2008-09 Proposed	\$ Change
<b>Program Budget</b>	<b>\$141,923,229</b>	<b>\$154,745,128</b>	<b>\$12,821,899</b>
Instruction	112,452,982	122,370,139	9,917,157
Charter School Payments	22,140,545	24,610,337	2,469,792
Pupil Transportation	6,431,784	6,681,662	249,878
Athletics	697,918	882,990	185,072
Lunch Program Assistance	200,000	200,000	0
<b>Capital Budget</b>	<b>\$31,440,300</b>	<b>\$36,357,690</b>	<b>\$4,917,390</b>
Debt Payments & Borrowings	13,905,640	17,143,651	3,238,011
Building Rentals	397,145	412,438	15,293
Operations/Maintenance/Capital	9,637,515	9,960,781	323,266
Utilities	5,200,000	6,471,820	1,271,820
Tax Refunds & Judgments	2,300,000	2,369,000	69,000
<b>Administrative Budget</b>	<b>\$15,400,738</b>	<b>\$15,638,670</b>	<b>\$237,932</b>
School Supervision	13,672,549	13,767,352	94,803
Property & Liability Insurance	568,644	585,013	16,369
Printing, Mailing & Data Processing	944,990	1,063,168	118,178
Legal & Other Services	214,555	223,137	8,582
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$188,764,267</b>	<b>\$206,741,488</b>	<b>\$17,977,221</b>

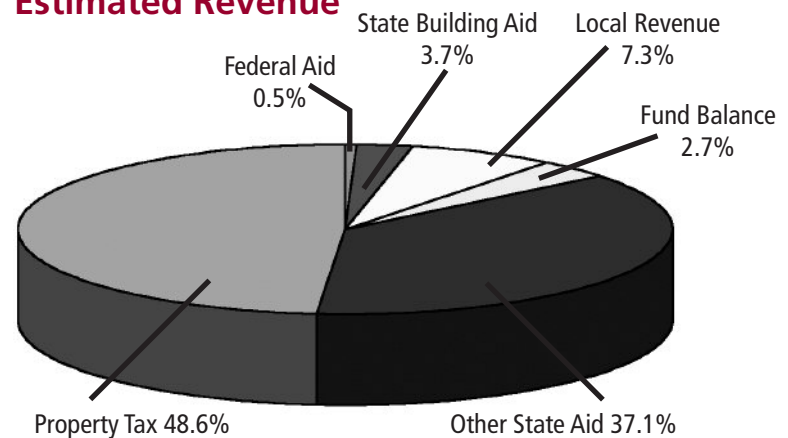
## ESTIMATED REVENUE

	2007-08	2008-09	\$ Change
Federal Aid	\$1,550,000	\$950,000	-\$600,000
Fund Balance	5,675,000	5,675,000	0
Local Revenue	14,904,091	15,093,091	189,000
State Building Aid	4,637,084	7,707,647	3,070,563
Other State Aid	63,881,340	76,754,359	12,873,019
Property Tax	98,116,752	100,561,391	2,444,639
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$188,764,267</b>	<b>\$206,741,488</b>	<b>\$17,977,221</b>

Estimated Expenditures



Estimated Revenue



## CAPITAL education

Capital Education is published by the City School District of Albany.

Please direct comments about the newsletter, story ideas and questions to Ron Lesko at (518) 475-6065 or [rlesko@albany.k12.ny.us](mailto:rlesko@albany.k12.ny.us).

City School District of Albany  
Academy Park  
Albany, New York 12207

## Estimated tax bill

A property assessed at \$100,000

	2007-08	2008-09	Estimated change
Without STAR exemption	\$1,539	\$1,578	\$39
With Basic STAR for other homeowners	\$921	\$944	\$23
With Enhanced Star for senior citizens	\$368	\$377	\$9

\* Estimated calculation based on preliminary assessment information and adjusted tax base proportions. The middle class STAR rebate program provides additional savings not included in the above calculations.

## 2008-09 Contract for Excellence update

The 2008-09 New York State budget is providing the City School District of Albany with additional funding and opportunities to invest in new resources and programs to help all students achieve greater academic success.

The increased funding requires the district to develop a Contract for Excellence. A district must meet this requirement if it receives an increase in funding of at least \$15 million or 10 percent, and has one or more schools requiring improvement. The City School District of Albany's \$13 million increase in state aid represents a 17.9 percent increase, and the district also meets the requirement for academic improvement.

The district will work with the state in the coming months to develop a contract and has committed \$1.5 million for new and expanded programs that specifically will help students make strong academic strides.

The district was exempt from filing a Contract for Excellence for the 2007-08 school year because the increase in state aid was offset by a significant increase in charter school costs.

Details about the district's Contract for

Excellence will be provided during the May 6 budget hearing at Albany High School and other budget presentations in advance of the May 20 vote, providing an opportunity for the community to offer input and feedback.

## Charter school costs continue to rise

Albany taxpayers once again will support two separate school systems in 2008-09: the traditional public school system serving about 8,500 students in 18 schools, and the expanding charter school system with nine schools and about 1,800 students.

The City School District of Albany's proposed budget includes \$24.6 million for charter school payments, an increase of nearly \$2.5 million, or about 11.2 percent. Charter payments represent nearly 12 percent of the total proposed budget, the fourth-largest expenditure.

State law mandates that the district pay a per-pupil amount for each in-district student attending a charter school, as well as provide services such as special education, transportation and health services.

The district can achieve some cost efficiencies due to charter schools. However, fixed costs such as operating buildings cannot be eliminated, and staff costs cannot be reduced proportionately with the enrollment changes.

A budget defeat does not impact the amount the district must pay to charter schools.

## Propositions on the May 20 ballot

Albany voters will be asked to consider the proposed \$206.7 million school budget for 2008-09. Here is what will appear on the ballot.



### Proposition #1

Shall the resolution adopted by the Board of Education on April 1, 2008, authorizing the City School District of Albany to expend the sum in the amount of \$206,741,488 during the 2008-2009 school year and a levy tax therefore be approved?

YES  NO

Voters also will be asked to consider a \$4.6 million tax levy proposed by the Albany Public Library. *This proposition is unrelated to the school district budget, and, therefore, has no impact on school taxes.* Here is what will appear on the ballot.



### Proposition #2

Shall the sum of \$4,616,816 be raised by annual levy of a tax upon the taxable real property within the City School District of Albany for the purpose of funding the operating budget of the Albany Public Library?

YES  NO

There also will be a vote for one open seat on the Albany Public Library Board of Trustees. This vote also is unrelated to the school district. For more information about the library, please call Interim Library Director Tim Burke at 427-4379.

## Educating and nurturing all students...

(continued from page 1)

helping us reach our goal of culturally relevant classrooms through the use of research-based teaching strategies proven to raise achievement levels for students from different backgrounds.

The district also is proposing to continue a variety of additional professional development programs for teachers, including literacy and math coaches, a teacher mentoring program, and literacy development and writing workshop programs.

### The middle years

Providing the support middle school students will need as we implement state standards for the transition from Math A to Algebra, the proposed budget includes funding for a new Algebra textbook series. It also would purchase calculators for all students, again to meet new state requirements.

The proposed budget also includes funding for William S. Hackett Middle School to replicate the full-service model that successfully has reduced disciplinary problems and suspensions at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy.

Acceleration opportunities in Spanish also will be available next school year at Hackett, which also offers French and Latin. Livingston and Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School offer French and Spanish, and North Albany Academy offers Spanish.

### A world of opportunity

There is no more comprehensive school in the Capital Region than Albany High School for students at all levels.

From an unsurpassed list of Advanced Placement options and the prestigious International Baccalaureate program to a Career Explorations program that provides real-world exposure to a diverse and growing list of career options, Albany High provides academic challenges and support to help all students succeed.

### Supporting students at risk

The proposed budget would restructure the district's alternative education programs to provide stronger support for students in danger of falling behind academically due to behavioral issues and suspension.

The district is proposing to extend its current three-hour Tutorial Opportunity Program for Suspended Students (TOPS) to a full school day, enhancing the program's academic, social and emotional support.

The district will continue to work with local service providers and community partners to find a suitable location in Albany for the expanded program in its efforts to help all students stay in school and on track.

### Choosing Albany's public schools

The district offers many school choice options. In addition to nine neighborhood elementary schools, there are three

magnet schools focused on specific themes: Albany School of Humanities (ASH), Montessori Magnet School and Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST). These schools are available to students city-wide and are enrolled through an annual lottery.

The district also offers open enrollment, allowing families to choose a school outside their neighborhood enrollment zone provided space is available. For middle school, there is an enrollment lottery for Myers and North Albany. All students are eligible.

### Rebuilding our schools

The district will unveil the two newest schools in our facilities project in 2008-09.

Hackett Middle School will return to 45 Delaware Ave. for the start of the school year, and Public School 19 will return "home" to 369 New Scotland Ave. in January. Both facilities will blend the best of the old and the best of the new to create state-of-the-art learning environments.

We will begin renovating Arbor Hill Elementary School in 2008-09, the final piece in our comprehensive rebuilding plan for the elementary and middle schools. Arbor Hill will move into the former Philip Schuyler Elementary School at 141 Western Ave. for the start of the school year and is scheduled to return to 1 Arbor Drive by September 2010.

Work also will continue at Giffen Memorial Elementary School and TOAST, with both scheduled to be completed by September 2009.

## Albany's public schools by the numbers

- **Zero** – Capital Region schools with more Advanced Placement courses than Albany High
- **1** – Albany High's place on the list of U.S. public schools to go nano
- **2** – Area high schools offering the International Baccalaureate program, including Albany
- **2.49** – Proposed tax levy percent increase
- **4** – Age magnet students begin foreign language
- **5** – Grade Dual Language students can complete first high school Regents requirement in Spanish
- **6** – Bands at Albany High
- **11** – Varsity teams earning state scholar/athlete recognition in the 2007-08 fall and winter seasons (spring TBD!)
- **12** – Proposed number of elementary schools with full-day pre-K (all of them!)
- **18** – Advanced Placement courses at Albany High
- **19** – Years Albany High has offered Mandarin Chinese
- **20** – The date of May's school budget vote (don't forget!)
- **28** – Courses for college credit at Albany High through the College in the High School program
- **33** – U.S. high schools offering an Academy of Engineering when Albany launches its program in 2009
- **51** – Sports teams at Albany High
- **52** (and counting!) – Clubs at Albany High
- **90** – Percent of 2007 graduates accepted to college
- **100** – Percent whole grain hamburger and hot dog rolls served in school lunches
- **144** – New pre-K spots proposed for 2008-09
- **5,500** – Cartons of chocolate milk served in school lunches daily
- **26,647** – Books in Albany High's Media Center
- **475-6010** – Phone number to schedule a presentation to learn more about the 2008-09 budget proposal