



Superintendent's Newsletter



March 15, 2024

Dear Manhasset School Community,

As you may be aware, the 24-25 school year budget process is underway. This budget has been very challenging to formulate amid immense pressure created by increased costs in employee healthcare, with back-to-back enormous increases in health insurance premiums, pension costs, and a significant increase in the cost of out-of-district special education placements. These increases total \$2.3 million or two-thirds of the total allowable budget-to-budget increase, as determined by the State's tax cap formula. This leaves the District with only \$1.2 million or one-third of the allowable budget-to-budget increase to address all other items in the budget, including contractual increases in compensation. Compounding these pressures are fewer than usual staff retirements which typically serve to mitigate the impact of contractual increases in compensation.

The significant pressures on the expense side of the budget are further exacerbated by the unexpected 20.7% reduction in State Foundation Aid that was included in the Governor's proposed budget. In this budget, the reduction in State Foundation Aid of \$629,000 has been neutralized by our initiative to recover funds from FEMA. As a result of these recoveries, we have assumed a full restoration of State Aid. While our approach neutralized the impact on the 24-25 budget, it does reduce our ability to be more flexible on the expense side of the budget.

Despite these challenges, the preliminary budget is laser-focused on our commitment to our goals. These goals include lowering class sizes K-12, expanding academic course offerings, upgrading facilities, enhancing technology, boosting security staffing, and supporting student wellness. Specifically:

- to lower class size, we have added 3.0 Elementary teachers which results in all classes at Munsey Park and Shelter Rock at an average of 20 students per class.
- at the Secondary School, we have added 2.5 Secondary teachers to lower class size and support the expansion of new courses to include AP Macroeconomics, Virtual Enterprise, Business Law, and Mandarin 1.
- the preliminary budget adds an additional security guard to each elementary school to provide perimeter security throughout the school day.
- a teaching assistant in the Learning Wellness Center has been added to provide transition support for Middle School students.
- the partnership with Northwell Health which provides private access to Northwell Mental Health services for Manhasset families who opt to use it is fully funded.
- the preliminary budget also continues to fund our investment in maintaining and enhancing our school facilities. Funding is maintained to refresh classrooms at the elementary schools.
- the preliminary budget also continues to fund our investment in maintaining and enhancing our instructional technology infrastructure, including the IT equipment rotation program which ensures ongoing reliable access to technology.

Following our commitment to incorporate best practices in the delivery of instruction, this school year we successfully piloted a full-day integrated co-teaching (ICT) model in our elementary schools. The integrated co-teaching program supports both general education and special education students by providing two highly qualified full-time teachers (one general education teacher and one special education teacher) to our ICT classrooms. The previous model in our ICT classrooms had the special

education teacher in the classroom for ELA and Math only. For the remainder of the day, instruction was supported by a teaching assistant to support students in the Special Education teacher's absence. Removing the Special Education teacher for half the day was not in accord with best practices.

As a result of the success of this pilot, we have adopted this best-practice model. As a result, we have reduced 10.0 teaching assistant positions from the preliminary budget. Staff reductions are always difficult, and it is critically important to acknowledge the valuable contributions of our teaching assistants in our previous model. To be clear, in this best-practices model, the student-to-adult ratio in ICT classrooms remains the same as in the previous model and certain classrooms will continue to have a teaching assistant based on the needs of particular students.

While the preliminary budget accomplishes our primary goals, the realities of our fiscal climate require us to make some difficult decisions to achieve a balanced budget within the property tax cap. While we have strived to limit staff reductions to comply with the State's property tax cap, compensation and benefits make up 75% of our budget. Therefore, it is necessary to reallocate certain staffing resources as follows:

- 3.5 FTE teachers on special assignments are returning to traditional teaching roles. These teachers are currently assigned to provide IT staff development to teachers and to provide assistive technology assistance.
- 2.10 FTE teaching positions are reduced based on enrollment in particular areas.
- 2.0 FTE elementary computer lab teaching assistant positions are eliminated.
- 3.0 FTE library teaching assistant positions are eliminated.
- 1.0 FTE Secondary School Departmental teaching assistant position is eliminated. The remaining departmental teaching assistants at the Secondary School will be reassigned to ensure coverage for all departments.

On March 7, I presented my [preliminary budget](#) for the Board's consideration. You can watch that presentation on [YouTube](#). In addition, please consider joining us on March 21 or April 4 for our informal budget hearings. The Board of Education will adopt the budget on April 16.

Please email me at gpassi@manhassetsschools.org if you have questions about the preliminary 24-25 budget.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gaurav Passi

Superintendent of Schools

Manhasset Public Schools 2023-24 PRIORITY AREAS



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Priority Area Initiatives: *Strengthen Student Academic Experiences*

- The budget preserves our strong elementary program with a particular focus on class size.
- Staffing for elementary specialist positions to provide small group, individualized instruction, enrichment, and support for teachers are maintained:
 - 8.0 Reading Teachers
 - 6.0 Math Specialists
 - 2.0 Literacy Coaches
 - 2.0 Science Specialists
 - 2.0 Computer Specialists
 - 1.0 Health Teacher



Priority Area Initiatives:
Strengthen Student Academic Experiences

- Expand our comprehensive programming for students with disabilities to include Integrated Co-Teaching throughout the day at the elementary level



Priority Area Initiatives: *Strengthen Student Academic Experiences*

- At the Secondary School, the budget supports: Lowered class sizes with additional FTE added to Social Studies, English, Mathematics, and World Language.
- Expansion of classes based on student enrollment in Advanced Placement and support classes.
- Expansion of course offerings to include:
 - AP Macro Economics
 - Virtual Enterprise
 - Business Law
 - Mandarin



Priority Area
Initiatives: *Strengthen*
Student Academic
Experiences

- Expansion of Science Research program.
- Expansion of Engineering class sections, with an increase in enrollment in Aerospace Engineering.



Priority Area Initiatives:
Forge strong connections

- The budget supports the expansion of security guard/aide coverage at Munsey Park and Shelter Rock schools.
- A net increase of 2.0 Security Guards is included, one for each elementary school.
- The Budget supports a full-time TA in the Middle School Wellness Learning Center.





Preliminary Elementary Class Size

24-25 Projected Elementary General Education Class Size

Munsey Park Elementary School

Grade	Class Size Guide	2/29 Cohort Enrollment	Projected Enrollment with anticipated cohort change	Enrollment Diff	Proj. Sect.	Projected Avg Class Size	Projected Section Enrollment						
K	21		87		5	17.4	17	17	17	18	18		
1	22	88	100	12	5	20.0	20	20	20	20	20		
2	22	96	99	3	5	19.8	20	20	20	20	19		
3	23	115	120	5	6	20.0	20	20	20	20	20	20	
4	24	107	112	5	5	22.4	22	22	22	23	23		
5	26	142	146	4	7	20.9	20	21	21	21	21	21	21
6	26	149	151	2	7	21.6	21	21	21	22	22	22	22

24-25 Projected Elementary General Education Class Size

Shelter Rock Elementary School

Grade	Class Size Guide	2/29 Cohort Enrollment	Projected Enrollment with anticipated cohort change	Enrollment Diff	Proj. Sect.	Projected Avg Class Size	Projected Section Enrollment					
K	21		68		4	17.0	17	17	17	17		
1	22	72	79	7	4	19.8	19	20	20	20		
2	22	71	73	2	4	18.3	18	18	18	19		
3	23	93	95	2	5	19.0	19	19	19	19	19	
4	24	79	83	4	4	20.8	20	21	21	21		
5	26	100	103	3	5	20.6	20	20	21	21	21	
6	26	104	106	2	5	21.2	21	21	21	21	22	



Upcoming Budget Meetings

March 21	Informal Budget Hearing
April 4	Informal Budget Hearing
April 16	2024-25 Budget Presentation Adoption of 2024-25 Budget
May 9	Formal Budget Hearing
May 21	Annual Budget Vote

Construction Update

As part of our ongoing commitment to update our school facilities, I am pleased to report that the Baseball field project is expected to be ready for use on Monday, March 18. As part of our comprehensive Bond proposition, we installed new dugouts, replaced the existing turf infield, and installed synthetic turf to create a new multi-purpose field among other important improvements.

The classroom cooling project to install air conditioners in all of our classrooms is on track. We expect the Secondary School and Shelter Rock to be completed by September 2024. Munsey Park requires more extensive electrical upgrades and will be completed by September 2025.

Our interior doors and hardware replacement project has begun and should be completed by September 2024. Through this project, we will replace all classroom doors districtwide to adhere to the latest safety standards.

Munsey Park summer projects (pavement project, boiler replacement, bathroom reconstruction, classroom expansion, and library renovation) and the Secondary School summer projects (bathroom reconstruction, auditorium renovation, life skills classroom, social studies office, and tennis court renovation) are awaiting State Education Department approval. Once we receive SED approval, these projects are scheduled to begin this summer.



Manhasset Student Artists Featured in Local Exhibits

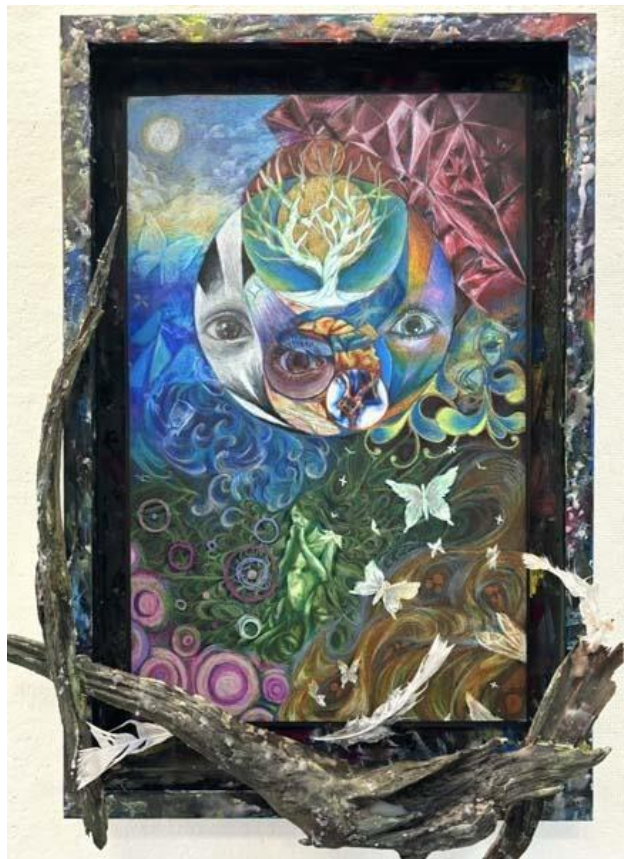
Juniors, Jocelyn Liu and Emma Theofilatos, had their artwork displayed in the Advanced Vision 19 Exhibition. This exhibition was held at the end of February at the S.A.L. Gallery in the B. Davis Schwartz Memorial Library on the LIU Post campus in Brookville.

Juniors, Peiyu Carrina Shi, Sophie Tay and Lili Tobar, had their artwork displayed in the 17th Annual Go APE Advanced Placement Exhibit at the Art League of Long Island. The student-artists had their creations on view in the Art League's Strolling Gallery from Feb. 24 to March 9. On the final day, Lili received an Award of Excellence for her piece, "Pandora's Box" and Peiyu received Honorable Mention for her piece, "Regressions."

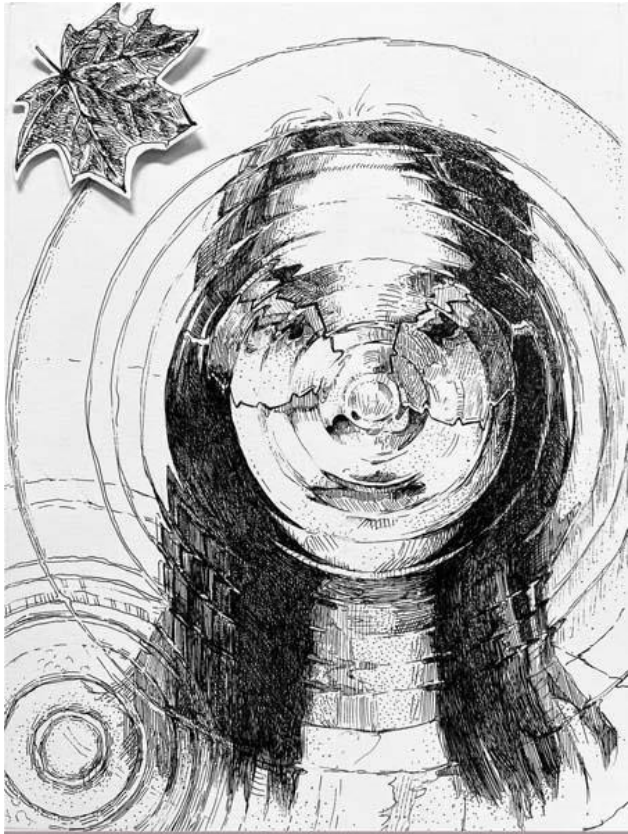
Freshman Julia DePietro and sophomore Hang Mi currently have their artwork featured in the Colors of Long Island: Student Art Exhibition at the Long Island Museum in Stonybrook. Their art will be on display from now until April 7.

Sophomore Zoe Eng and junior Jocelyn Liu had their art accepted into the 2024 Long Island's Best: Young Artists at the Heckscher Museum of Art. This year, 456 works of art were submitted. Zoe and Jocelyn's artwork is among 87 selected to be in the exhibition on view from March 23 to May 5.

Congratulations to all of our student artists!









Secondary School Hosts First 'SET At Night Event



Members of the Manhasset Broadcasting Company, specifically those in Broadcast IV, and the Manhasset Jazz Band combined forces to produce their first annual 'SET At Night event on Feb. 15! The night show, modeled off The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon, consisted of music, laughs, games and interviews. A full version of "SET At Night can be viewed here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tc32yv_gUKY

100th Day of School Celebrations













A large group of children, approximately 25-30, are posed on a stage with a red carpet. They are dressed in a wide variety of costumes. In the front row, a boy wears a black Jordan 23 jersey, a girl wears a white lace dress, and another girl wears a red and white jacket. Behind them, other children wear a yellow Lakers 23 jersey, a black baseball cap, a pirate costume, a girl in a white dress, and a girl in a blue and white outfit. Many of the children have a small red circular badge pinned to their clothing. The background is a simple, light-colored wall.

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