

# Garden City Public Schools

*Inspiring Minds, Empowering Achievement, Building Community*



## Question of the Week:

In alignment with the Board of Education's Legislative Affairs Committee's goal of enhancing communication with the community, Garden City Public Schools has continued its "Question of the Week" feature. If you have a question you'd like answered about public or board policy, school district operations, or budget preparation and voting, please email: [knightc@gcufsd.net](mailto:knightc@gcufsd.net).

**May 2, 2017**

***Q: Historically, voter turnout is low for school budget elections, especially among voters with school-aged children. What would you say to parents about the importance of voting?***

**A:** It is true – voter turnout has been historically low for Garden City's school budget votes. For example, in the May, 2016 budget vote, a total of 1,639 votes were cast (1,315 Yes; 324 No). This total is fairly typical of the past 5 years. How many registered voters are there in Garden City? 18,822! So, for 2016, only 8.7% of Garden City's registered voters cast votes in the budget election.

Let's face it - we are all very busy running to keep up with our crowded schedules. Parents are especially pressured, juggling family, work, and life priorities. The days rush by, deadlines come and go, and before you know it, another school year is winding down. Before it does, as you can see by the numbers above, it is vitally important that parents and residents mark May 16<sup>th</sup> with a star on their calendars as a reminder to vote in the Board Election, the 2017-2018 Budget referendum, and use of the Capital Reserve Fund for projects at all seven schools. Voting will take place from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. in the gymnasium at Garden City High School. Voting is a basic democratic right. The reality is - it only takes a few minutes to make your voice heard and to serve as a role model for the children of our community.

There are additional activities planned at the high school for you on Budget Vote Day. There is a district-wide art show from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the halls of the high school and two concerts: the Elementary String Ensemble at 6 p.m. and Jazz Night at 7 p.m. Parents: your children can come along and vote for their preferred Field Day Snack Vote (grades K-5) from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The proposed 2017-2018 budget (item # 1 on the ballot) operationalizes all aspects of the school program from academics to athletics and clubs. It also maintains the buildings, and provides funding for all the technology, books, and supplies needed to fill our classrooms. Please be aware that even though Garden City Public Schools has proposed a budget that stays within the tax cap for the sixth year in a

row, registered voters still must vote. If you are not sure that you are a registered voter, the district has posted a link to check this for you. Search under the “Budget Information” sidebar on the district website: [www.gardencity.k12.ny.us](http://www.gardencity.k12.ny.us), then “Voter Information.”

The second item on the ballot is Proposition II – permission to use the Capital Reserve Fund for specific projects, primarily updates to the HVAC systems in all seven school buildings, and roof replacement at Homestead and Stratford. These are identified by item in the district’s budget newsletter, now posted online under the “Budget Information” sidebar.

The third item on the May 16<sup>th</sup> ballot is the election of one Board Trustee for a 3-year term beginning July 1, 2017.

All the budget information, including all the budget presentations, audio recordings of the presentations, and a comprehensive budget brochure, is posted to the district website: [www.gardencity.k12.ny.us](http://www.gardencity.k12.ny.us).