

# VC ECHOES

Valley Central Teachers' Association



Volume 9, Issue 7  
Special Edition  
May, 2007

## Valley Central Budget Vote—May 15th

### VCTA—Endorsed School Board Candidates:

Incumbents

**Steve Mosenson**

and

**Kevin Reidy**



### VC Budget Vote:

Date: Tuesday,  
May 15th,  
2007

Time: 7am – 9pm

Where: Elementary  
School That  
Serves Your  
Voting Area

It's that time of year again Valley Central! Time for the annual budget vote and school board elections. The Valley Central School District continues to have one of the lowest per pupil expenditures in Orange County and the entire Hudson Valley. The proposed 2007-2008 school budget is fiscally frugal, while attempting to address the needs of students, staff and community members. The proposed school budget increase is a modest 6.58%. The District's *Simply Put* flyer indicates minimal change to monthly tax bills if this year's proposed budget is accepted by voters. For example, the difference between a Yes Vote and a No Vote Contingency Budget would be 91 cents per month for those who paid \$1,398 this year; \$2.08 per month if their bill was \$3,200; and \$3.12 per month if the tax bill was \$4,800 this year. Members of the Board of Education, administration, teachers/staff, and concerned parents and students continue to work hard on behalf of all community members in an attempt to improve state and federal

funding for public schools.

On May 8th, the VCTA Executive Council voted to endorse the 2007-2008 proposed school budget. Though the VCTA endorses the proposed budget, the Executive Council is concerned that it does not build on last year's modest inroads in rebuilding and expanding programs for students. The VCTA strongly advocates increased funding for programming. This year, the Valley Central School District is receiving approximately \$3.7 in Contract for Excellence (Foundation Aid) that must be utilized primarily for education programming. It is our hope that this additional aid will be used in support of building programs for our children. The VCTA will continue to lobby on behalf of the children that we serve every day within the Valley Central community.

On Friday, May 4th, the VCTA Executive council also voted to endorse the two incumbents, Steve Mosenson and Kevin Reidy, in their school board bids. There are three seats open on the Board of Education this year.

## PBTA Endorses "Candidates for Change"

Like Valley Central, the Pine Bush School District has three open seats on its Board of Education this year. In this hotly contested election, there are five people running to fill three openings. In addition to endorsing the budget, the Pine Bush Teachers' Association has endorsed the "Candidates for Change:" Jim Barrett, Jim

Starr, and Sher Singh.

Many Valley Central family members reside in the Pine Bush School District. If you are among them and are interested in additional information about these candidates, please visit [www.pinebushschools.org](http://www.pinebushschools.org) and select *budget information* to view candidate profiles and photos.

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TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



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**WE'RE ON THE WEB!!**

**WWW.VCTA.NET**

President, Timothy Brown (HS) VM 7613  
Vice President, Richard Steger (Walden) VM 5648  
Vice President, Patti Lunden (HS) VM 7664  
Secretary, Laurie Hey (MS) VM 6646  
Treasurer, John Bonagura (EC) VM 2604

**VCTA Executive Council Building Representatives**

- **Berea:** Erin Davis, Robin Sinclair-Scott, Carol DeMicco
- **East Coldenham:** Holly Bacon, Denise Pagliocca
- **Maybrook:** Donna Lloyd, Sandy Tarallo
- **Montgomery:** Gail Nozell, Jane Dionne, Melinda Sulzbach
- **Walden:** Kathy Bordone, Patricia Joy, Mary Ellen Mangiamele, Lori Myerson
- **Middle School:** Mary Bleau, Tammy Coleman, Joe Collins, Joe DeVenuto, Sandy Strauss
- **High School:** Bob Jurgens, Mindy Kane, Peter Meisel, Christine Mello, Antoinette Oakes, Eileen Purcell, Meghan Riley, Diane Ruggles, Carolyn Zayas, Lisa Aguilera (A), Jennie Meehan (A), Kerri Meyer (A), Keith Sexton (A), Glenn Taylor (A)
- **Secretarial Representative:** Pamela Cunningham (B)
- **Paraprofessional Representative:** Kathy Lennon (W)

The VC Echoes is the official publication of the Valley Central Teachers' Association—Local 3076—and is published regularly throughout the school year.

*Article contributions or Letters to the Editor for the next issue should be sent to Meghan Riley, HS, by May 11, 2007.*

Any articles submitted to the VC Echoes will also be posted on the VCTA web site.

## Support Our VC School Bus Employees

In January of this year, the more than 100 employees—including drivers, monitors, and mechanics—responsible for the safe transportation of Valley Central's children, voted to join Teamsters Local 445 of Newburgh. What prompted the decision to organize? Last year, Godeffroy Inc. sold the company to First Student Inc. of Great Britain, the "Wal-Mart" of transportation services. Since the company changed hands, the employees have seen their situation rapidly deteriorate. According to [www.firststudentwatch.info](http://www.firststudentwatch.info), this British based company has a history of placing profits over service and safety, something our local school bus employees are combating as buses arrive late due to understaffing. The VCTA believes local employees and local ownership are a community's greatest economic asset.

Though they organized in January, school bus employees are still working without a contract. Negotiations continue, however, it is not clear when an agreement will be reached. In the meantime, these men and women are dealing with difficult issues. Currently, they do not have medical coverage, retirement plans, vacation time, sick, personal or funeral leave. New employees get one holiday per year. The average starting wage for a driver is \$11 per hour, while monitors start at about \$8.50 an hour. Many employees have suffered pay cuts since the company changed hands.

In addition to employee benefit and wage deficiencies, there are concerns about maintaining safety standards and about the hardships placed on students and parents due to the consolidation of bus routes. These route changes are largely due to the fact that there is a shortage of drivers lining up for the job. Faced with these conditions, it is possible that the school bus employees will take a strike vote in the near future. Should a work stoppage occur, Local 445 members would still endeavor to put children center by ensuring that their demonstration does not interfere with state testing or graduation.

Although VCTA members cannot stop working and join Local 445 on the picket line all day due to restrictive Taylor Law mandates, we can lend our support in other ways. VCTA members and other VC employees can join Local 445's demonstration on a lunch break or before and after the school day, thus standing in solidarity with our union brothers and sisters.

Our school bus employees have asked the VC community to show its support by urging the District and the Board of Education to get more involved in their negotiations for a fair contract. The VC community can urge the school board to demand that the school bus employees' contract be honored regardless of what company controls the buses, and by joining them when, and if, they demonstrate for a fair contract. For more information, please contact Jerry Ebert: at (845) 857-4768, or [ebertteamster@hotmail.com](mailto:ebertteamster@hotmail.com).