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COBLESKILL-RICHMONDVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

2023-24 BUDGET NEWSLETTER

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HOW TO VOTE

WHO

All C-RCSD residents who are qualified, registered voters.

WHAT

A vote to approve the 2023-24 school budget and elect three Board of Education trustees.

WHEN

Tuesday, May 16, 2023
9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

WHERE

C-R High School or by absentee ballot.



Ryder students enjoyed meeting Munchkin the therapy pony from SUNY Cobleskill during the PARP (Pick A Reading Partner) celebration.

Proposed budget preserves programs, limits tax impact

Cobleskill-Richmondville CSD is proposing a \$45,352,710 budget for the 2023-2024 school year that maintains all existing programs and limits the impact on tax payers of inflation, limited state funding, and expiring federal stimulus grants.

The proposed budget, which will go before voters on May 16, 2023, would raise the tax levy by 1.91%. Since the increase falls within the New York State "tax cap" for C-RCS, approval of the budget requires a simple majority of 50% plus one vote.

The district's expenses are projected to increase by 1.00% in the proposed budget, resulting from inflationary pressures that have been offset by strategic reductions in other areas. ■

FOR MORE ON THIS YEAR'S BUDGET, SEE 'FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT,' PAGE 2

Three-part budget shows breakdown of costs

State law requires that school districts present their budgets in three components: administrative, program, and capital.

	2022-23 Budgeted	2023-24 Projected	Change in dollars
Administrative	3,304,014	3,368,778	64,764
Program	34,817,113	35,417,711	600,598
Capital	6,784,351	6,566,221	-218,130

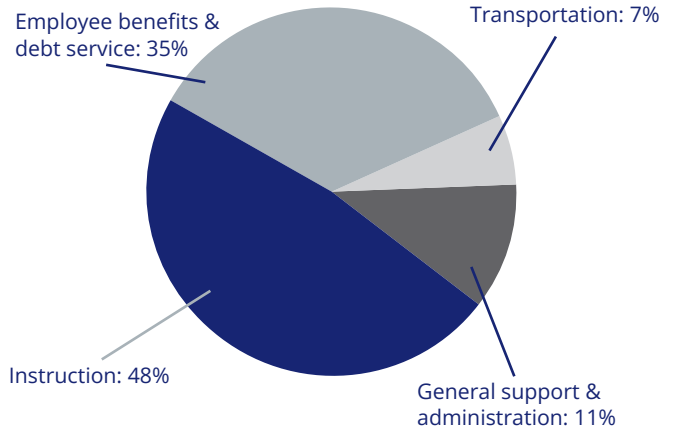
In the proposed budget for the 2023-24 school year, the district's administrative costs would increase 1.96%; program costs would increase 1.73%; and capital costs would decrease 3.22%.

Administrative costs include salaries and benefits of administrators and clerical staff, school board costs, staff development, tax collection, legal and auditing costs, central printing, data processing, and BOCES administrative costs.

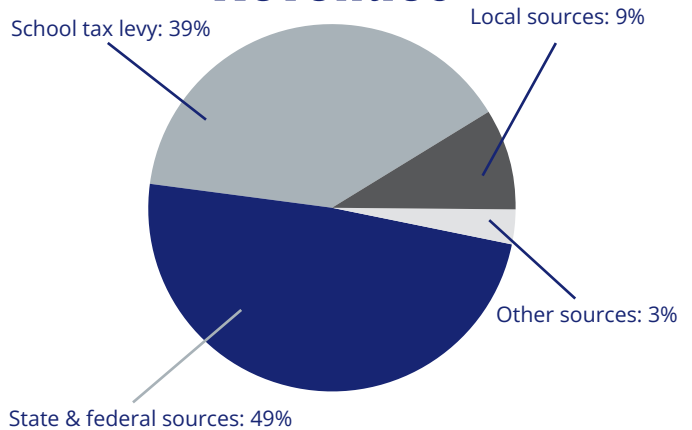
Program costs include salaries and benefits of all teachers and staff delivering pupil services (health, guidance, library, etc.), curriculum development, textbooks, instructional materials and equipment, extracurricular activities, athletics, BOCES program costs, and all costs associated with the transportation program, except for bus purchases.

Capital costs include salaries and benefits of maintenance and custodial staff, debt service on buildings, bus purchases, utilities, insurance, tax certiorari, and other court-considered costs. ■

Expenditures



Revenues



From the Superintendent

The 2023-2024 budget cycle presented unique challenges to the Cobleskill-Richmondville CSD. Over the past three years, New York State has made an historic investment in public education by fully funding Foundation Aid (the largest source of state aid to public schools) in three phases. However, while some districts have seen very large increases in their Foundation Aid allocations, C-RCS has received smaller allocations much closer to the "hold harmless" minimum increase of 3%. This year, C-RCS is set to receive a Foundation Aid increase of only 3.1%, or \$485,694.

In addition to the modest increase in Foundation Aid, other sources of annual state and federal

aid have decreased, resulting in an overall decrease in state and federal revenue of 1.2%, or \$271,678, for the 2023-2024 school year.

The minimal increases in Foundation Aid received by C-RCS over the past several years have led the district to appropriate fund balance (savings) as revenue to close annual budget gaps. However, since district savings are not endless, we must begin the process of scaling back our use of appropriated fund balance to offset recurring annual expenses. Therefore, the proposed 2023-2024 budget reflects a decrease in our use of appropriated fund balance to \$1.585 million, down from \$2.0 million used as revenue in the 2022-2023 budget.

The federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) is also set to expire on June 30, 2023, ending the funding for four positions that have supported our students for the past two years; one elementary teaching position to reduce class size, one special education teaching position to reduce caseloads, one school psychologist intern position to supplement special education testing and support, and a "building substitute" to support continuity of instruction at the elementary level.

These factors have all combined to create a tight budget cycle and necessitate the reduction of expenditures for 2023-2024. The

district administration, Board of Education, and Citizens' Budget Committee have given careful consideration to strategies for reducing expenses in 2023-2024 while still preserving quality programs for our students. In doing so, we have also had to recognize that 2023-2024 is likely to be the first of multiple years of tight budgets.

The district anticipates the continuation of small increases in Foundation Aid in the years to come, and the funds allocated through the American Rescue Plan Act (our largest source of federal stimulus funds) are scheduled to expire at the end of the 2023-2024 school year. This added challenge has required us to take a multi-year approach to reducing expenses to offset reduced revenues. Unfortunately, like all other public school districts, the majority of our costs are related to personnel (salary and benefits). Therefore, we have had to carefully evaluate our staffing levels to identify opportunities to reduce costs.

In consultation with the Citizens' Budget Committee, the district has analyzed every anticipated vacancy as a potential opportunity to reduce costs in 2023-2024. Subsequently, six teaching positions that will be vacated by retirement at the end of this school year will be eliminated from the 2023-2024 budget. Likewise, two additional teaching positions that are currently vacant will also be eliminated from next year's budget.

The District did not take the elimination of these positions lightly. While we wish we could sustain current staffing levels, we are confident in our ability to sustain programs and course offerings and provide our students with a quality education, even with the elimination of these positions. While we will

have to make some adjustments to how we provide certain programs and services, no services or course offerings will be eliminated as a result of these staffing reductions.

Positions Vacated by Retirement

The following positions, which will be vacated through retirement at the end of the current school year, will be eliminated from the 2023-2024 budget and their duties will be absorbed by current staff.

Three "Elementary" (K-6) Classroom Positions

- One of these positions will be filled by a teacher whose current position was funded by the CRRSAA grant and would

level where the retirement is occurring. This grade level will operate at the same number of teachers as other K-6 grade levels.

Two School Counselor Positions

- One of these positions has been dedicated to academic intervention and credit recovery at the secondary level. These responsibilities will be reassigned and absorbed by other staff members.
- One of these positions will be filled by adjusting student-to-counselor ratios at the High School and reassigning a counselor to the High

School Guidance Office. The American School Counselors Association recommends that student to counselor ratios not exceed 250:1. Due to an overall trend of decreased enrollment, the High School Guidance Office has been operating at a ratio of approximately 155:1. Moving forward, the High School Guidance Office will operate at a ratio of less than 200:1, well within the ASCA recommendation.

One Middle School Reading Position

This position will be filled by reassigning a teacher from the High School English Department. The High School English Department is able to absorb the position without decreasing course offerings and this teacher has the Reading certification necessary to support middle school students.

Current Vacancies to be Absorbed

The following positions are currently vacant and the responsibilities are being absorbed within the department and/or through other means. The vacant positions will be eliminated from the 2023-2024 budget and we will continue to use current strategies to sustain all course offerings for students.



The drama clubs at C-R High School and Golding took the stage for their productions of *The Addams Family* and *The Trial of the Wicked Witch*, respectively.

otherwise be eliminated. The grant-funded position was intended to lower class size at a particular grade level for a specific period of time. That grade level will return to the same number of classroom sections as our other elementary grade levels.

- One of these positions will be filled by an elementary teacher currently assigned as an interventionist. Intervention responsibilities will be redistributed among other intervention teachers.
- One of these positions will be absorbed within the grade

One Music Teaching Position

The middle/high school band teacher left the district unexpectedly in January 2023. We are grateful to the other music teachers who filled this vacancy by changing course assignments and taking on different responsibilities. This position will be eliminated from the 2023-2024 budget. We will continue to offer all existing courses with our five current music teachers. By building our schedules around five teachers to start the school year, rather than adapting to five teachers after the fact, we are confident that we will be able to sustain a strong music program with all our current course offerings. Creative solutions will be used to minimize the impact on lesson group sizes and lesson frequency.

One French Teaching Position

During the summer of 2022, we were unsuccessful in hiring a qualified French teacher following an

unexpected resignation. The vacancy was filled through the combination of Distance Learning and the partial reassignment of a French-certified teacher from another department. In 2023-2024, we will continue to assign our remaining French-certified teachers creatively and we will only use Distance Learning to the extent necessary to keep the entire French program intact. No course offerings will be eliminated.

Other Budget Reductions

Six paraprofessional positions (educational aides and/or teaching assistants) will be eliminated from the 2023-2024 budget and supervisory duties (study halls, etc.) will be reassigned among other staff. There is frequent turnover in these positions, so we expect to be able to absorb reductions through routine vacancies.

Building and departmental supply budgets have also been reduced slightly to close the remaining budget gap. All programs will still

be appropriately equipped to promote high quality instruction and meet the needs of our students.

Summary

The district and Board of Education is grateful to the Citizens' Budget Committee as well as our teachers, staff, and administrators for their patience, sacrifice, and hard work during this difficult budget development process. While we all regret the necessity of the spending reductions included in this budget, we are confident in the talent and dedication of our staff and our collective ability to continue to provide high quality programs and services to our students. We appreciate the continued support of the C-RCS community as we work to manage a multi-year budget challenge. Together, we will continue to work hard to prioritize our students, preserve programs, and be responsible to the taxpayers who make our work possible. ■

- Matthew Sickles, Superintendent

Board of Education trustee election

C-R residents will consider three candidates for three seats on the Board of education. C-R Board seats are "at-large," so the three candidates receiving the most votes will serve three-year terms beginning on July 1.

Susan Emerson Strasser

District resident: 25 years

Education: Farmington, CT HS; Williams College (B.A. Biology & Psychology double major); University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry (M.D.)

Employment: Family physician at Bassett Healthcare outpatient offices (per diem); Medical Director/Consultant for Schoharie County Dept. of Health

C-R committees and activities: Board of Education member for 8 years; C-RCS Strategic Planning Committee; C-RCS Policy Committee; C-RCS Wellness Committee; C-RCS School Counseling Advisory Council

Community involvement: Schoharie County Community Services Board; Schoharie County Child at Risk Response Team Board; Adverse Childhood Experiences Team; Schoharie County Home of Ongoing Learning member & presenter; Schoharie County Medical Society delegate to Medical Society of New York State House of Delegates; MSSNY Reference Committee for Government Affairs; MSSNY Addiction & Psychiatric Medicine Committee

Steven Philbrick

District resident: 36 years

Education: Niskayuna HS; Northeastern University (B.S., Criminal Justice); Albany Law School (Juris Doctor)

Employment: Retired (30 years with NYS Board of Parole where he held various positions including Deputy Counsel and Chief Administrative Law Judge)

C-R committees and activities: Board of Education member for 12 years; C-RCS Audit Committee; C-RCS Facilities Committee

Bruce Tryon

District resident: 25 years

Education: Cobleskill High School; SUNY Institute of Technology (B.P.S., Business Administration)

Employment: Division Street News Corp. (DBA Times Journal) Sales Manager

C-R committees and activities: Board of Education member for 15 years, 13 years as Board President; C-RCSD Audit Committee

Community involvement: Capital Region BOCES Board of Education; Cobleskill Partnership Inc. Board Vice President; Marathon for a Better Life board member; Schoharie County School Board Association President ■

C-RCS D Budget Notice

The information below is the New York state-mandated School District Budget Notice. It shows specific items for the 2022-23 budget, as well as the 2023-24 proposed budget and the 2023-24 contingent budget, which may be implemented if the proposed budget does not pass. The 2023-24 proposed budget of \$45,352,710 represents a \$447,233 (or 1%) increase in spending, from the current school year. The 2023-24 proposed tax levy of \$17,479,400 represents a 1.91% increase over the 2022-23 levy.

Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2022-23 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2023-24 School Year *								
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 44,905,477	\$45,352,710	\$44,475,324								
Increase/Decrease for the 2023-24 School Year		\$447,233	(\$430,154)								
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		1.0 %	(0.96%)								
Change in the Consumer Price Index		8.0 %									
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$17,151,174	\$17,479,400									
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$ 0	\$ 0									
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$ 0	\$ 0									
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$ 0	\$ 0									
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$17,151,174	\$17,479,400	\$17,150,490								
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$ 982,429	\$848,552									
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$ 16,168,745	\$16,630,848									
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D)	\$ 16,168,745	\$16,630,848									
I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$ 0	\$ 0									
Administrative Component	\$3,304,014	\$3,368,778	\$3,341,044								
Program Component	\$34,817,113	\$35,417,711	\$35,296,488								
Capital Component	\$6,784,351	\$6,566,221	\$5,837,792								
<p>* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2023-24 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.</p> <p>In the event voters reject a district's proposed budget, the board will enact a Contingent Budget. Under a Contingent Budget, the tax levy must be no greater than that of the prior year and the budget would be subject to certain contingent budget requirements. To comply, the board would reduce expenditures by \$877,386 and decrease the use of Fund Balance by \$548,476. The tax levy would be \$328,910 less. Required expenditure reductions include all equipment (including buses) and any non-contractual salary increases. In addition, various administrative expenditures would be reduced in order to comply with the contingent budget administrative cap. Also, under a contingent budget the district could not allow any outside groups to use school facilities without paying in advance for any anticipated costs.</p> <p>** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Description</th> <th>Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Establish Capital Bus Reserve</td> <td>\$ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>\$</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>\$</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Description	Amount	Establish Capital Bus Reserve	\$ 0		\$		\$
Description	Amount										
Establish Capital Bus Reserve	\$ 0										
	\$										
	\$										

*NOTE TO SCHOOL DISTRICT BUSINESS OFFICIALS: Please submit an electronic version (Word or PDF) of this completed form to: emscmgts@nysed.gov

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹

\$ 562

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2023-24 by the qualified voters of the Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District, Schoharie County, New York, will be held at the Cobleskill-Richmondville High School at 1353 State Route 7 in Richmondville on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 between the hours of 9:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

1. The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

C-RCSD Budget at a Glance

PROJECTED REVENUES

	2022-23 Budgeted	2023-24 Projected	Change in dollars
Local Sources (9% of total)			
Real property tax items	815,049	825,872	10,823
Charges for services	2,365,941	3,020,803	654,862
Interest earnings	10,000	200,000	190,000
Use of property	1,000	1,000	0
Refund of prior expenses	245,000	245,000	0
SUBTOTAL	3,436,990	4,292,675	855,685
State and Federal Sources (49% of total)			
Foundation aid	15,792,133	16,277,827	485,694
Building aid	2,070,835	1,317,458	-753,377
Excess cost aid	469,187	418,809	-50,378
BOCES aid	1,333,012	1,322,386	-10,626
Transportation aid	2,355,606	2,418,580	62,974
Incarcerated youth aid	15,000	15,000	0
Instructional materials aid	119,497	118,326	-1,171
Hardware and tech aid	27,043	27,249	206
Medicaid	85,000	80,000	-5,000
SUBTOTAL	22,267,313	21,995,635	-271,678
Other Sources (3% of total)			
Employee benefit ALR	50,000	0	-50,000
Retirement contribution reserve	0	0	0
Debt service reserve	0	0	0
Unemployment reserve	0	0	0
1 time appropriation of fund balance	0	85,000	85,000
Appropriated fund balance	2,000,000	1,500,000	-500,000
SUBTOTAL	2,050,000	1,585,000	-465,000
Tax Levy (39% of total)	17,151,174	17,479,400	328,226
TOTAL	44,905,477	45,352,710	447,233

PROJECTED EXPENSES

	2022-23 Budgeted	2023-24 Projected	Change in dollars
General support (11% of total)			
Board of Education	18,970	32,026	13,056
Central administration	258,755	240,991	-17,764
Finance	356,302	369,558	13,256
Support services	219,676	239,589	19,913
Central services	2,892,504	3,614,347	721,843
Special items	343,205	354,491	11,286
SUBTOTAL	4,089,412	4,851,002	761,590
Instruction (48% of total)			
Admin. & Curriculum	1,277,865	1,331,203	53,338
Teaching - regular school	9,111,139	9,028,623	-82,516
Teaching - special programs	7,522,302	7,961,770	439,468
Teaching - special schools	45,000	50,000	5,000
Instructional media	1,100,371	1,125,208	24,8
Pupil services	2,118,034	2,065,657	-52,377
SUBTOTAL	21,174,711	21,562,461	387,750
Transportation (7% of total)			
Transportation services	2,798,567	3,041,928	243,361
SUBTOTAL	2,798,567	3,041,928	243,361
Benefits & debt service (35% of total)			
Employee benefits	13,800,037	13,917,769	117,732
Bus/other borrowing	250,000	550,000	300,000
Debt services	2,792,750	1,429,550	-1,363,200
SUBTOTAL	16,842,787	15,897,319	-945,468
TOTAL	44,905,477	45,352,710	447,233

Visit the district website at crcsd.org for continued updates on the 2023-24 school budget and voting process.



Congratulations to Nicholas Underwood, Class of 2023 Valedictorian, and Alexa Walker, Class of 2023 Salutatorian.

Capital Bus Reserve Fund

In addition to voting on the school budget, residents will also consider a proposition that would authorize the district to create a Capital Bus Reserve that may be funded up to \$7.5 million, with a probable term of 20 years. This resolution would not transfer or allocate any funds to the new reserve, but would simply create the account.

Why does the district want to create this new reserve?

Currently, the annual cost of purchasing new buses to replace aging ones is included in the general fund budget. The cost of buses is on the rise, and the NYS mandate to begin transitioning to electric buses by 2027 will only increase those costs further. The creation of a Capital Bus Reserve will enable the Board to periodically transfer available funds into this restricted “savings account” to help offset the cost of future bus purchases. By setting

aside savings in this restricted reserve, the district will be better positioned to keep up with inflation, support the transition to electric buses, and decrease the impact of bus purchases on the general fund budget. Using this “savings account” to support the purchase of new buses will allow the district to allocate more of the annual general fund budget to support student programs, while also minimizing the tax impact on our residents.

If the creation of the Capital Bus Reserve is approved, how will it be funded?

The reserve may be funded through transfers of unappropriated fund balance (ex. end-of-year savings from the general fund budget) as determined by the Board of Education. Conservative and responsible spending often results in unexpended funds at the end of the school/fiscal year.

The Board can vote to transfer these unanticipated savings to various restricted reserves that promote the long-term financial needs of the district. State aid related to the purchase of buses, interest earned on the funds in the reserve, and other funds authorized by district residents (by vote), may also be added to the reserve.

Is voter approval required to spend money from the Capital Bus Reserve?

Yes, if the district intends to use funds from the Capital Bus Reserve to pay for or offset the cost of bus purchases, then voter approval is required. A proposition would appear on the annual budget vote ballot asking voters to approve a specific allocation from the Capital Bus Reserve to support the purchase of buses. ■



Blues musician Tas Cru performed at Radez and Ryder and taught students about blues.

Operations & Maintenance Vehicle Purchase

The fleet of vehicles used to plow snow and maintain our campuses is aging. Our oldest truck is a 1997 model and our newest truck is a 2014 model. The 1997 truck is in desperate need of replacement. Therefore, the 2023-2024 proposed budget includes a one-time appropriation of \$85,000 from fund balance to purchase a new truck and plow. The expense and the corresponding revenue from appropriated fund balance can then be removed from the 2024-2025 budget. This strategic approach will enable us to update our fleet of Operations & Maintenance vehicles without creating a recurring budgetary expense. ■

What's on the ballot?

School Budget

SHALL the Board of Education of the Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District be authorized to expend the sum of \$45,352,710 as the school district budget for the 2023-2024 school year during the period of July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 and to levy the necessary tax therefore, less revenues and state aid?

Capital Bus Reserve Fund

SHALL the Board of Education establish a capital reserve fund under the provisions of Education Law §3651(1)? The purpose of the fund is for the acquisition of school vehicles. The ultimate amount of the fund shall be \$7,500,000. The probable term shall be twenty years. The source from which funds will be obtained can include any or all of the following: Unappropriated fund balances from the general fund as determined by the Board of Education; State Aid related to expenditures from the capital reserve fund; interest income related to investment of monies in the fund; any additional monies thereafter authorized by the voters of the District, and any other legal source of funds.

School Board

Vote for **any three** (3) for a 3-year term: Susan Emerson Strasser; Steven Philbrick; Bruce Tryon.

Community Library

SHALL an annual appropriation of \$321,000 separate and apart from the annual school district budget, be approved to support and maintain the Community Library, which said sum shall be raised annually by a tax upon the taxable property of said school district and said appropriation shall be the annual appropriation therefore until changed by further vote of the electors of the school district, and such tax shall be levied and collected yearly as are other general taxes?

Library Board

Vote for **any one** (1) for a 5-year term: Julia Walter
 Vote for **any one** (1) for a 5-year term: Virginia Downs
 Vote for **any one** (1) for a 3-year term: Nathan Davis
 Vote for **any one** (1) for a 1-year term: Fred Barnes



Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School
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 Mary Black
 Dominga Lent
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 Susan Emerson Strasser
 Aimee Yorke

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Superintendent

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