

SOUTH SENECA 2024-25 BUDGET NEWSLETTER



LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear South Seneca Community,

As most everyone reading this knows by now, developing our 2024-25 budget was particularly challenging as we fought hard to avoid devastating cuts to foundation aid proposed by the Governor. We are incredibly thankful to our school community for rallying around this issue, and our voices were heard. With the New York State budget now finalized, Save Harmless was preserved and we will receive the same Foundation Aid next year as we did last year. It makes all the difference.

The South Seneca Board of Education endorsed our plan in such an uncertain year to present an expenditure budget that is essentially a rollover of our 2023-24 program. Newly bargained labor agreements will add significant dollars to personnel costs, but a unique year of dropoff in debt service (principal and interest payments on capital project bonds) caused an overall decrease in the bottom line, compared to last year. As a reminder: even as the year-to-year debt service overall goes up and down, we've stabilized the "local share" of those payments (the part that comes out of the general fund) to a consistent \$400,000, year after year. Lower payments are offset by a lower amount of building aid coming in next year, but the net payment out of the budget stays at our consistent \$400,000, as usual.

With so many variables in our school budget, adding these two unique circumstances this year means the board, and the community, has even more to keep track of to see us through a time of transition in both Albany and Washington. We encourage all those with questions to ask them, and to attend our budget hearing on Tuesday, May 14 if you'd like to do so there.

The good news is that this proposal comes in at the tax cap, a modest 2.74% increase to the levy, and that it allows us to preserve the programs we spent so much energy defending the last few months. We are truly a school district that cares deeply for the community, and one that continues to offer a rich set of opportunities for our students.

Stephen Parker Zielinski
Superintendent

#FOREVERFALCONS

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VOTE!

2024-25 BUDGET VOTE & HEARING

BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday, May 21

1:00-8:00 p.m.

ES Auditorium, Interlaken

BUDGET HEARING

Tuesday, May 14

6:30 p.m.

Flex Lab, Ovid

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Adam Prentice, President

Peter Jennings, Vice President

Ave Bauder

Dan Borst

Brenda Eastman

Shannon Brock

BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES

MARK BEARDSLEY

I am interested in running for a School Board seat in the South Seneca School District in 2024.

I am a life-long resident of Interlaken and graduated from South Seneca High School. Receiving my A.A.S. Degree from SUNY Morrisville, I pursued dairy farming and cash crop farming on our family farm, retiring in 2021.

Leadership positions over the years have included various administrative positions in the Dairy Industry. I have served seventeen years on the Ovid town board as well as a Deacon and Elder in the Interlaken Reformed Church

I'd welcome an opportunity to serve the educational system in South Seneca schools.



BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES

WHAT THE BOARD OF EDUCATION DOES:

- Convenes for bi-monthly meetings
- Addresses District academic and fiscal concerns
- Advocates for education, locally and statewide
- Serves the District voluntarily

ED GRANGER

Ed Granger, a 1975 SSCS alumni is looking for your support for position on the South Seneca Board of Education.

Ed and his wife Mary (also SSCS alumni, class of 1997) have been life long residents of the South Seneca School District. Their son Lee (class of 2026) currently attends South Seneca. Ed and Lee regularly attend the board meetings, as Mary watches at home on YouTube.

Ed is up to date on issues the board has been working on and future issues the board may face. Ed's main focus is on the needs of our students and addressing the feelings and ideas of this community!

"For years I have sat in the audience observing the board meetings. I often use the podium to speak on subjects that are important to me, my wife and my son. I look forward to joining the board and becoming part of the solution."

As an alumni, a lifelong resident, and a father of a school age child, Ed wants to work to keep and expand academic and extracurricular activities. He also believes an open line of communication is crucial for the success and safety of our children. Also, it is very important to him, to help provide the best education possible for our children while being a responsible caretaker with our tax dollars. For the past year there has been a lot of discussion and changes regarding communication and parents ability to share their concerns. He will make it a priority not only to keep those lines open but to create policies that will expand communication, not restrict them. He believes being open and transparent is crucial in building trust with the community and servicing their ideas.

Ed would love the support of the taxpayers, friends and neighbors of South Seneca for the honor to sit on the board of education.



2024-2025 BUDGET REVENUE

WHAT IS THE TAX CAP?

In 2010, NYS created the tax cap law.

The intent was to keep local property tax increases from schools and other municipalities below an allowable threshold, controlled by the same well defined factors in a budget. One of these factors is the Consumer Price index (CPI), which is a rough measurement of inflation to consumers. The state recognizes that schools and municipalities have many expenses that increase at a rate higher than CPI, so there are other factors included as well.

Please notice the calculation below. As you can see, there are multiple pieces that control the final tax cap number, which results in a final allowable increase, which turns out to be different for each school district in the state, each year. This year, South Seneca's tax increase is 2.74%.

HOW IS THE TAX CAP CALCULATED?

2023-24 Tax Levy	\$8,853,197
Levy Adjusted w/ Tax Base Growth Factor	\$8,919,596
Add: Pilots Receivable in 2023-24	\$4,949
Subtract: 2023-24 Capital Exclusions	\$531,545
Adjusted Prior Year Tax Levy	\$8,393,000
Multiply by CPI (2.00%)	\$8,560,860
Less: Pilots Receivable in 2024-25	\$8,283
Tax Levy Limit	\$8,552,577
Add: 2024-25 Capital Exclusions	\$540,104.
Add: ERS Exemption	\$2,886
Tax Levy Threshold	\$9,095,567
Allowable Increase in Dollars	\$242,370
Allowable Increase in %	2.74%

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES?

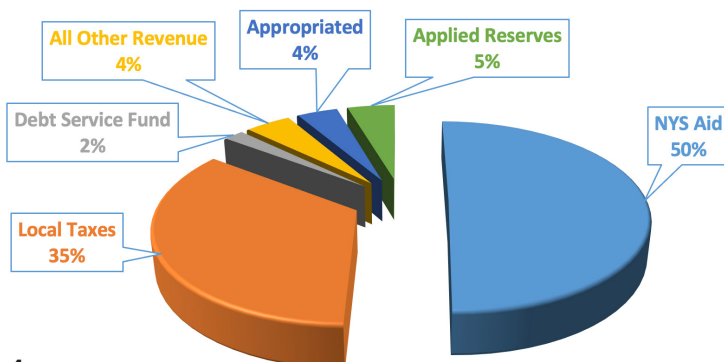
Revenues come from a variety of sources, district generated, state government, federal government and from local property taxes. New York State law requires that a school district's planned budget expenditures must equal their estimated revenues. The total local property tax, or tax levy, is calculated by subtracting district-generated revenues and state aid from the district's proposed budget. The tax levy proposed is an increase of 2.74% from last year.

ITEM	2024-25	2023-24	DIFFERENCE
NYS Aid	\$13,152,523	\$15,160,646	-\$2,008,123
Local Taxes	\$9,095,567	\$8,853,197	\$242,370
Debt Service Fund	\$500,000	\$350,000	\$150,000
All Other Revenue	\$1,150,000	\$1,000,000	\$150,000
Appropriated	\$1,026,162	\$1,000,600	\$25,562
Applied Reserves	\$1,200,000	\$500,000	\$700,000
Total Revenue	\$26,124,252	\$26,864,443	-\$740,191

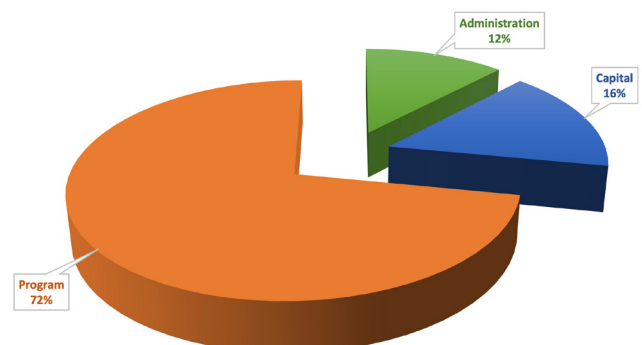
MAXIMUM 2024-2025 STAR SAVINGS BY SCHOOL DISTRICT: SOUTH SENECA

MUNICIPAL NAME	BASIC	ENHANCED
Town of Covert	\$329	\$855
Town of Hector	\$334	\$855
Town of Lodi	\$343	\$908
Town of Ovid	\$343	\$908
Town of Romulus	\$343	\$908

2024-2025 REVENUE BREAKDOWN



2024-2025 EXPENSE BREAKDOWN



2024-2025 BUDGET EXPENDITURES

WHERE THE FUNDS GO

Expenditures are incurred by the District to provide general support to instructional programs, transportation services, cleaning and maintenance, community services, employee benefits, athletics and debt service operations of the District. Because of a drop in Debt Service, there is a 2.76% decrease in the 2024-2025 budget compared to the 2023-2024 budget, please see the Q&A section for more information. Below are the details by department.

DESCRIPTION	2024-25 BUDGET	2023-24 BUDGET	CHANGE
Board Of Education	71,836	71,515	
Central Administration	248,200	241,137	
Business Administration	554,500	526,401	
Legal and Public Information	88,614	86,066	
Central Printing & Mailing	380,828	365,610	
Insurance and Administrative Costs	372,636	362,006	
Supervision and Benefits	1,440,351	1,392,032	
Total Administration	3,156,965	3,044,767	112,198
Operation of Plant	1,196,419	1,095,758	
Maintenance of Plant	668,250	621,950	
Refund on Real Property Taxes	3,000	5,000	
District Transportation Services	400,000	400,000	
Employee Benefits	582,087	530,366	
Debt Service	1,212,888	3,388,638	
Transfer to Capital Fund- Capital Outlay Project*	100,000	100,000	
Total Capital	4,162,644	6,141,712	-1,979,068
Teaching-Regular School	5,576,450	5,166,353	
Program For Students with Disabilities	4,243,773	4,043,221	
Occupational Education (Grades 9-12)	925,092	917,753	
Teaching-Special Schools	56,959	56,057	
School Library & AV	244,504	240,167	
Computer Assisted Instruction	1,336,486	1,289,254	
Guidance/ Health Services	475,838	492,039	
Psychological & Social Work Services	284,100	260,700	
Co-Curricular Activities	65,000	50,000	
Interscholastic Athletics	401,277	342,570	
District Transport Services / Garage	1,259,699	1,197,105	
Employee Benefits and Transfers	3,935,465	3,622,745	
Total Program	18,804,643	17,677,964	1,126,679
Total Budgets	26,124,252	26,864,443	-740,191
			-2.76%

*The 2024-25 Capital Outlay Project will focus on Facilities Improvements in the Elementary School Building

2024-25 BUDGET PROPOSITIONS

Proposition #1: RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the South Seneca Central School District shall be authorized to expend the sum set forth in the budget for the 2024-25 school year in the total amount of \$26,124,252 and to assess and levy upon the taxable property of the District the necessary tax therefore.

Proposition #2: Shall the Board of Education of the South Seneca Central School District be authorized to purchase motor vehicles for use in the transportation program of the District, including up to three (3) school buses and one (1) van, and expend therefore an aggregate sum not to exceed \$530,000 and be it further authorized that the sum of \$530,000 being the aggregate of the aforesaid maximum estimated amounts, or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be raised by the appropriation of the amount not to exceed \$530,000 from the School Bus Reserve Fund or available budget fund balance.

Proposition #3: RESOLVED, that pursuant to Education Law, Section 259, the Board of Education of the South Seneca Central School District is authorized to levy and collect an annual tax, year after year, separate and apart from the annual school district budget, in the amount of \$257,580, which shall be paid for the support and maintenance of the Interlaken Public Library (\$85,860); for the support and maintenance of the Lodi Whittier Library (\$85,860); and for the support and maintenance of the Edith B. Ford Memorial Library (\$85,860).

Proposition #4: To elect two members of the Board for a three-year term commencing on July 1, 2024 and expiring on June 30, 2027.



SEE ALL BUDGET PRESENTATIONS ON OUR WEBSITE

WWW.SOUTHSENECA.ORG

SCHOOL PRIDE AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Response to Intervention (RTI) which provides targeted academic and behavioral interventions to meet all student needs

Full-day UPK supported through grant funding

BOCES used for curricular and professional development needs

Social, Emotional and Behavioral Support for both students and families

- School Counselor, School Psychologist, Social Worker, Dean of Students (School Counselor), MTSS Coordinator and Seneca County Mental Health Counselor
- Teachers trained in Responsive Classroom, Youth Mental Health, First Aid and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention.

Maintaining strength in Special Areas

- All students, PK-5 receive Art, Library, Music and Physical Education classes
- Grades 4 and 5 participate in Band and Chorus

Extended Day Program for all K-5 students supported through grant funding

- After-school and summer program offering a variety of opportunities including, but not limited to:
 - Arts and Crafts, Book Club, Children in the Stream, Clay, Comic Book Club, Cooperative Games, Cornell 4-H, Dance, Drama Club, Fitness, Fine Motor Skills, French Club, Gardening, Lego Club, Mad Science, Mindfulness, Music Enrichment, Outdoor Exploration, Performing Arts, School Community, Sewing Club, and Tutoring

Additional Opportunities for our students

- Free breakfast and lunch for all students
- 1:1 chromebooks for all students K-5
- Extracurricular Activities including, but not limited to:
 - Composting Club, Swing Chorus, Marching Band, Jazz Band, Post Office Club, Safety Patrol, Student Council, Peer Mediation, and Book Store

MIDDLE SCHOOL

We are a close-knit community devoted to nurturing middle school students through this crucial stage where each student's unique sense of self is fostered. Together, students and staff create an environment that celebrates individuality while promoting academic excellence and ensuring safety, security, and wellness. Our goal is to foster positivity, inclusivity, resilience, and community connection throughout our middle school.

Effective communication between home and school is paramount, as it ensures that every child feels valued and understood as an integral part of our school community. We understand the unique requirements of middle school students and customize our support accordingly. Recognizing that their developmental needs differ from both their elementary and high school counterparts, we ensure our approach meets them where they are. Together, we transform the middle school experience into one filled with endless possibilities and potential for growth.

HIGH SCHOOL

At South Seneca High School, we strive to keep the district's priority areas of Academic Excellence, Safety, Security, and Wellness, and Community Connections at the forefront of our programming. Academic Excellence is paramount as we prepare students for their individual pathways and post-secondary plans by connecting them with a wide range of experiences, opportunities, and range of course offerings. By maximizing students' strengths and empowering student voice, we create a learning environment that is inclusive and accessible to all learners, prioritizing Safety, Security, and Wellness. Through maximizing our partnerships with community agencies and businesses, we not only shape our academic programs and address the whole student, but also foster a sense of Community Connection. Our commitment extends beyond academics to a comprehensive extracurricular program, promoting student engagement and connection within the school community. At South Seneca High School, we are dedicated to nurturing a passion for learning while instilling essential qualities such as perseverance, collaboration, problem-solving, self-esteem, and civility in our students.

SPECIAL EDUCATION:

The South Seneca Special Education Department plays a pivotal role in fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment for students aged 3 to 22. We are committed to providing a continuum of services tailored to meet the diverse needs of students, ensuring that every child receives the individualized support they require to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

The continuum of services offered by the South Seneca Special Education Department is designed to be flexible, allowing for adjustments and accommodations that align with each student's unique learning profile. From early intervention programs for the youngest learners to transition planning and support for older students preparing to navigate adulthood, the department ensures that the educational journey is seamless and supportive at every stage. This includes a range of services such as specialized instruction, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and counseling, all of which are integral to helping students overcome challenges and realize their full potential.

Meeting the needs of students within this age range requires a collaborative effort among educators, therapists, families, and the students themselves. The South Seneca Special Education Department emphasizes the importance of this partnership, recognizing that a strong support network is essential for the success of its students.

ATHLETICS

As a small school in the center of the Finger Lakes, South Seneca provides wonderful opportunities for our student-athletes and community through sports. Our students work hard to excel at athletics with the proud support of our community. Over the 23-24 school year several South Seneca athletes have been honored with all-league recognition, team sportsmanship awards, and some have participated in state qualifier events. The positive effects athletics have on our student-athletes are unmeasurable and provide a lifetime of skills and memories. We are very proud of our athletes, coaches, and our fans for making South Seneca athletics a great experience.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular activities play a key role in a school's community and culture, and that is especially true at South Seneca. South Seneca is a small school in the heart of the Finger Lakes where activities such as music, drama and other clubs create positive opportunities for students to get involved. At the Middle/High School we strive to offer a range of activities, clubs, and athletics that appeal to our entire student body. Through student feedback, we continually are expanding and adjusting our offerings to the interests of our students. As we continue to offer extracurricular activities of the highest quality at South Seneca, our students will continue to benefit from the lifelong lessons of cooperation, perseverance, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. HOW IS THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM BEING IMPACTED IN 2024-25?

A. South Seneca will continue to offer athletic programs to best support our students. We hope to maintain the same programs and continue to encourage participation throughout all our levels.

Q. WHY CONTINUE TO INCREASE TAXES EVEN WHEN OUR OVERALL BUDGET WENT DOWN THIS YEAR COMPARED TO LAST?

A. This is a common question, and a good one. To see what's happening, we need to look at debt service separate from the rest of the budget (what we call the operating budget).

Debt service costs are closely matched with the related building aid, and we have it mapped out to draw the same \$400,000 each year from the school budget. That was true last year, and it's true next year too, even though our principal and interest payments go down significantly next year. These payments are always offset by the incoming building aid, and it's the difference between the payment amount and the aid that we make sure always comes out to \$400,000.

If we look only at the operating budget, our costs (especially personnel costs) keep rising every year. Two years ago, they added \$900,000 to the expenditure budget; last year, it was an additional \$1 million; and next year, it will be another \$1.4 million. All of this is simply to run the same programs over these three years.

Other increases include an expansion to the agriculture program and increasing fuel and electric costs. Each department has reviewed their actual costs from the past and their needs for the future, and have been able to maintain their budgets flat.

To look at actual numbers:

In 2023-24, debt service plus operating budget came out to \$3,388,638 + \$23,475,805 = \$26,864,443.

For 2024-25, it's \$1,212,888 + \$24,911,364 = \$26,124,252. The operating budget itself is up \$1,435,559. The 2.74% increase in the tax levy will raise about \$242,370 to offset those higher costs.

Q. HOW WILL THE LIBRARY LEVY BE UTILIZED AT THE THREE LIBRARIES?

A. The Edith B. Ford Memorial Library will use an increase in funding to continue to provide a high level of community service, including technology and programming, for all residents of the South Seneca Central School District. The Interlaken Public Library will use this funding to continue educational and entertaining

programs, materials and support to inspire a lifelong love of learning for all residents. The Lodi Whittier Library continues to increase community engagement through essential services and support. Increased funding will be used to support staff and operating hours of the Libraries that serve the South Seneca community.

Q. WHAT AM I VOTING ON IN THE BUDGET PROPOSITION?

A. You are voting to authorize the South Seneca Central School District to budget \$26,124,252 for the 2024-25 school year. This represents a 2.76% decrease in spending from the previous year.

Q. WHAT IS THE ESTIMATED INCREASE IN THE TAX RATE PER THOUSAND DOLLARS OF ASSESSMENT?

A. The tax rate per thousand is based on property assessments and equalization rates provided by NYS Real Property Office and may be different depending on the town where your property is located. Actual tax rates will be determined after the real property tax rolls, as prepared by the (5) Towns' Assessor, have been finalized in August. The tax rate is calculated by dividing the total tax levy by the total assessments by town.

Q. WHAT IS THE PROPERTY TAX CAP?

A. NYS has enacted a Property Tax Cap using an 8-part formula. The tax cap may be different each year. For 2024-25, South Seneca's Property Tax Cap is 2.74%. Since the Proposed Budget is at the cap, a 50% simple majority of voters is required to approve the 2024-25 budget.

Q. TAX COLLECTIONS

A. For the 2024-25 tax year, South Seneca will continue to engage the Central Business Office at TST BOCES for its tax collection services. Property owners will be directed to send payments to TST BOCES. Taxpayers can view updated payment status on www.taxlookup.net.

Q. WHAT HAPPENS IF THE DISTRICT VOTERS DO NOT APPROVE THIS BUDGET?

A. The Board of Education may either propose a new budget in June or would go to a contingent budget. Under a contingent budget, all equipment purchases including buses, computers, science and musical instruments would be eliminated. A fee may also apply to previously free facility use and classroom-provided supplies for students may need to be provided by parents instead. The tax levy

would increase by 0%, and necessary cuts may be made to staff and programs to balance the budget.

Q. WHAT WORK IS PROPOSED IN THE 2024-25 CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECT?

A. One line item in the budget pertains to our \$100,000 annual Capital Outlay project. Each year, the capital outlay must focus on one of the two buildings, and in 2023-24, work is in the Middle-High School Building. For 2024-25, we will be doing facilities improvements in the Elementary building. This annual project allows the District to conduct needed repairs and receive 81.5% of its cost with state aid the very next year instead of the 15 year aided program of other capital projects.

DID YOU KNOW?

If the budget is defeated, the District will operate under a contingency budget. The following would be excluded by law from a contingency budget:

- New buses
- Computer equipment
- Musical instruments
- Maintenance equipment
- Science equipment
- Security cameras
- Free use of facilities
- School-provided supplies may be reduced
- Tax increase of 0%, up to \$870,258 in cuts may be made to staff and programming.

QUESTIONS?

For more information regarding the budget, please contact:

Miguel A. Andrade

Business Administrator

607-869-9636, ext. 3102

or see the complete budget on display at your local library, school building office or on our website.

SOUTH SENECA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



SOUTH SENECA
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

7263 MAIN STREET | OVID, NY 14521

#FOREVERFALCONS

f t @SOUTHSENECACSD

**VOTE
VOTE
VOTE
VOTE
VOTE**

BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday, May 21

1:00-8:00 p.m.

ES Auditorium, Interlaken

2024-2025 SCHOOL BUDGET NOTICE

	BUDGET ADOPTED FOR THE 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR	BUDGET PROPOSED FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR	CONTINGENCY BUDGET FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR
Total budgeted amount	\$26,864,443	\$26,124,252	\$25,253,994
Decrease for the 2024-25 school year		(\$740,191)	(\$1,610,449)
Percentage increase/ decrease in each proposed budget		-2.76%	-5.99%
Change in the consumer price index (CPI)		4.12%	
School Tax Levy Limit		\$8,552,577	
Proposed School Year Tax Levy (without permissible exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit)		\$8,552,577	\$8,853,197
Total Permissible Exclusions		\$542,990	
Proposed School Year Tax Levy (including permissible exclusions to the School Tax levy Limit)	\$8,853,197	\$9,095,567	\$8,853,197
Administrative component	\$3,044,767	\$3,156,965	\$3,041,537
Capital component	\$6,141,712	\$4,162,644	\$4,162,644
Program component	\$17,677,964	\$18,804,643	\$18,049,813
Statement of Assumptions for contingency budget for the 2024-25 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.	Should the district go to a contingency budget, the district must cut non-contingent items from the budget. In a contingent budget, there would be no purchase of new equipment unless purchase was deemed for health and safety reasons, no new capital expenditures, except in emergency situations, no non-essential maintenance and outside organizations would have to pay for facilities use. The Board of Education must exercise its best judgment in determining what the minimum expenditures shall be within the limitations imposed by the administrations and the contingent budget caps.		

EARLY VOTING AND ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Applications for Early Voting and Absentee ballots will be obtainable between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday from the District Clerk. The District Clerk must receive completed applications at least seven days before the election. The District Clerk must receive early voting and absentee ballots not later than 5:00 pm on Tuesday, May 21st. To request an application for an absentee ballot, contact the District Clerk, Shelley Reynolds at 607-869-9636, ext. 4147 or sreynolds@southseneca.org

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

In order to vote, individuals must meet the following requirements:

- Resident of the District for 30 days preceding vote
- The residence in the School District must be the individual's primary place of residence
- United States citizen
- 18 years or older

NEED MORE INFO?

For more information or to request an application for an absentee ballot, contact the District Clerk:

Shelley Reynolds
607-869-9636, ext. 4147

Or visit us on the web at:
www.southseneca.org