

Educating and nurturing all students, from pre-K through high school

It happens in every classroom. In the libraries, hallways, offices, cafeterias, auditoriums and gyms of every school. On field trips, playgrounds, athletic fields and buses. Before, during and after every school day.

It is the education and social and emotional development of every child in Albany's public schools.

The annual budget supports all of this and more. It supports the future of every child.

From prekindergarten through high school, the annual budget provides an opportunity for each child to learn who they are and what they like, and the tools to put their aspirations into action as adults.

Beginning a journey, building a foundation

There is no more important step in education than the first one. The district supports this fundamental idea with full-day prekindergarten and kindergarten programs.

The proposed 2008-09 budget would add 144 openings in prekindergarten to provide 640 spots in all 12 of the district's elementary schools and six off-site locations. Among the proposed additions is prekindergarten in the Dual Language Program, a Spanish-English immersion program at Delaware Community School.

State funding for prekindergarten covers only a half-day program.

However, the district supports the cost of full-day programs because our community has requested this type of expanded early childhood programming, and because research shows that prekindergarten is an important time in a child's social, emotional, behavioral and academic development.

Our full-day kindergarten programs continue a child's journey, ensuring that children build the skills, confidence and relationships for a lifetime of learning.

Small classes, quality teachers

The district's classrooms have an average of 20 students, meeting our goal of small classes to allow more student-teacher interaction and more student support.



The district also believes strongly that it needs to deliver quality education in every classroom by investing in its teachers. Our partnership with the National Urban Alliance for Effective Education is helping us reach our goal of culturally relevant classrooms through the use of research-based teaching strategies proven to raise achievement levels for students from different backgrounds.



The district also is proposing to continue a variety of additional professional development programs for teachers, including literacy and math coaches, a teacher mentoring program, and literacy development and writing workshop programs.

The middle years

Providing the support middle school students will need as we implement state standards for the transition from Math A to Algebra, the proposed budget includes funding for a new Algebra textbook series. It also would purchase calculators for all students, again to meet new state requirements.

The proposed budget also includes funding for William S. Hackett Middle School to replicate the full-service model that successfully has reduced disciplinary problems and suspensions at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy.

Acceleration opportunities in Spanish also will be available next school year at Hackett, which also offers French and Latin. Livingston and Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School offer French and Spanish, and North Albany Academy offers Spanish.

A world of opportunity

There is no more comprehensive school in the Capital Region than Albany High School for students at all levels.

From an unsurpassed list of Advanced Placement options and the prestigious International Baccalaureate program to a Career Explorations program that provides real-world exposure to a diverse and growing list of career options, Albany High provides academic challenges and support to help all students succeed.



Supporting students at risk

The proposed budget would restructure the district's alternative education programs to provide stronger support for students in danger of falling behind academically due to behavioral issues and suspension.

The district is proposing to extend its current three-hour Tutorial Opportunity Program for Suspended Students (TOPS) to a full school day, enhancing the program's academic, social and emotional support.

The district will continue to work with local service providers and community partners to find a suitable location in Albany for the expanded program in its efforts to help all students stay in school and on track.

Choosing Albany's public schools

The district offers many school choice options.

In addition to nine neighborhood elementary schools, there are three magnet schools focused on specific themes: Albany School of Humanities (ASH), Montessori Magnet School and Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST). These schools are available to students city-wide and are enrolled through an annual lottery.



The district also offers open enrollment, allowing families to choose a school outside their neighborhood enrollment zone provided space is available. For middle school, there is an enrollment lottery for Myers and North Albany. All students are eligible.

Rebuilding our schools

The district will unveil the two newest schools in our facilities project in 2008-09.

Hackett Middle School will return to 45 Delaware Ave. for the start of the school year, and Public School 19 will return "home" to 369 New Scotland Ave. in January. Both facilities will blend the best of the old and the best of the new to create state-of-the-art learning environments.

We will begin renovating Arbor Hill Elementary School in 2008-09, the final piece in our comprehensive rebuilding plan for the elementary and middle schools. Arbor Hill will move into the former Philip Schuyler Elementary School at 141 Western Ave. for the start of the school year and is scheduled to return to 1 Arbor Drive by September 2010.

Work also will continue at Giffen Memorial Elementary School and TOAST, with both scheduled to be completed by September 2009.