



City School District of
ALBANY

Capital Education

Budget 2023

albanyschools.org

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SCHOOL BUDGET VOTE & BOARD ELECTION

POLLS OPEN 7 A.M.-9 P.M.

MAY

16

Proposal supports student success without raising taxes

The City School District of Albany's 2023-24 budget proposal would not raise taxes and would continue to support all current programs and services, including those added during the pandemic, following the state's fulfillment of its promise to fully fund all schools statewide.

The \$307.3 million budget proposal that voters will consider May 16 includes \$16.4 million in additional state aid. This is the final year of the state's three-year plan to phase in full Foundation Aid – the main revenue schools use to support programs and services for students – for every school district statewide.

The district's budget proposal has no tax-levy increase for the third time in the last eight years.

The district's average tax-levy increase over the past decade is less than 1% – 0.9% – as the Board of Education and district balance multi-year fiscal planning to meet student needs while minimizing the impact on taxpayers.

"We are grateful to Governor Hochul and our state legislative leaders for following through on their promise to fully fund Foundation Aid for all New York school districts by the 2023-24 school year," said Board President Vickie Smith.

"We cannot achieve equity for all students without the state's full commitment to providing all school districts with their fair share of funding. This is an important and historic step for New York and for our school district, and it will allow us to

maintain the staffing and resources our students need as we continue to rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic."

An equity promise fulfilled

In the 2021-22 school year, the district received only 78% of the Foundation Aid it was owed according to the state's school funding formula. Now funded at 100% for the first time in 2023-24, that represents a total gap of more than \$40 million in annual funding that the state has closed for Albany's public schools over the past three years.

With those increases, the 2023-24 budget proposal also marks the first time that state aid has accounted for more than half of the district's revenue (52%, compared to 42% in the 2016-17 school year).

The local taxpayers' share has decreased during that time from 49% to 40%.

In addition to the budget proposal on May 16, voters also will be asked to consider Proposition #2. This proposal would allow the district to invest \$9 million from its Capital Reserve Fund to offset inflationary cost increases in the Rebuilding Albany High School construction project, which have escalated above those in the project's original budget (see related story at right).

Two board seats also are up for election May 16. The terms of Vice President Anne Savage and member

Damarise Mann expire at the end of June. Both are seeking re-election, and at press time no other candidates had indicated an intent to run (see page 4 for more details).

Avoiding the 'fiscal cliff'

The timing of the state's commitment to fully funding Foundation Aid is ideal as school districts enter the final year with one-time federal COVID-19 relief funds available.

Without the state's commitment to fiscal equity in public education, many districts, including Albany, could have been facing a fiscal cliff a year from now.

The Foundation Aid increase for 2023-24 will allow the district's budget to cover all 73 positions currently in one-time federal American Rescue Plan funding. This maintains investments in staffing the district made during the pandemic to increase support for students' academic, social-emotional and mental health needs.

The budget proposal also would support 21.1 new positions (see page 3 for more details). That includes 7.5 new teachers at North Albany Middle School to accommodate the second year of the three-year phase-in of the middle school enrollment pattern approved in 2022.

(Continued on page 2)

Prop 2: No tax impact in facilities proposal

In addition to the 2023-24 budget proposal, voters also will have the opportunity May 16 to consider a proposition that would allow the district to use \$9 million from the Capital Reserve Fund to offset inflationary cost increases on the Rebuilding Albany High School construction project.

Proposition #2 would have no additional impact on taxes.

The additional \$9 million from the Capital Reserve is needed to complete the Albany High project due to significant increases in the cost of building materials, especially over the past year.

Cost escalations totaled 10% in the eight years prior to the successful \$179.9 million Albany High referendum in 2016, and inflation at this rate was built into the project's budget. Escalation in the last year alone has been 8.3%, with a total escalation of 33% since 2016.

These are the same economic pressures that have affected the cost of consumer items such as eggs, butter and fuel. As an example, in 2020 a dozen eggs cost about \$2.77 – today it costs about \$4.21.

That's an increase of more than 50% during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The high rate of inflation has increased the total cost of the Albany High project by nearly \$10.5 million.

(Continued on page 3)



2023-24 BUDGET AT A GLANCE

Total – \$307.3 million

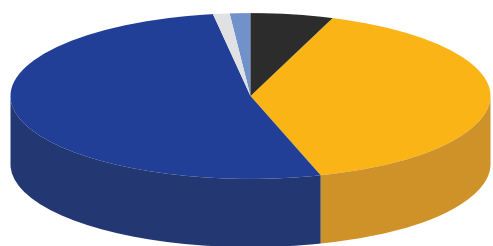
Tax-levy increase – Zero

- Third time in the last eight years there has been no tax-levy increase proposed
- Average increase in last 10 years would be less than 1%

What the budget supports

- Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and University in the High School courses at Albany High
- Career and technical education pathways at Albany High
- Social-emotional supports at all grade levels
- Athletic teams and intramurals for students in grades 7-12
- AVID college- and career-readiness programs starting in middle school
- Three themed magnet elementary schools
- Expanded bilingual Dual Language Program
- Band, chorus and orchestra starting in third grade
- Albany Marching Falcons band and color guard (including winter guard and indoor percussion ensembles)
- Full-day prekindergarten at 12 elementary schools and 10 community locations
- Community Schools initiatives at eight schools: Arbor Hill, Giffen, Myers, North Albany, Schuyler, Sheridan Prep, TOAST and Tony Clement
- Albany International Center (K-12)
- Tony Clement Center for Education (grades 7-12)

ESTIMATED REVENUE



Where the money **would come from**:

State.....	52.15%
Property tax.....	39.82%
Local - Other than property tax.....	5.70%
Other.....	1.32%
Federal.....	1.01%

REVENUE ▼

	2022-23	2023-24	\$ CHANGE
State	\$143,880,616	\$160,254,456	\$16,373,840
Property tax	\$122,351,302	\$122,351,302	\$0
Local - other than property tax	\$17,110,443	\$17,510,443	\$400,000
Other	\$3,765,000	\$4,052,257	\$287,257
Federal	\$1,050,000	\$3,100,000	\$2,050,000
TOTAL REVENUE	\$288,157,361	\$307,268,458	\$19,111,097

PROPOSED EXPENDITURES



Where the money **would be spent**:

Program including transportation.....	66.43%
Charter school tuition.....	13.16%
Administrative/general support.....	7.62%
Capital/debt service.....	6.45%
Maintenance & operations.....	6.34%

EXPENDITURES ▼

	2022-23 (ADOPTED)	2023-24 (PROPOSED)	\$ CHANGE
Program including transportation	\$190,494,954	\$204,111,259	\$13,616,305
Charter school tuition	\$38,324,815	\$40,425,000	\$2,100,185
Administrative/general support	\$22,106,983	\$23,428,063	\$1,321,080
Capital/debt service	\$19,004,073	\$19,811,746	\$807,673
Maintenance & operations	\$18,226,536	\$19,492,390	\$1,265,854
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$288,157,361	\$307,268,458	\$19,111,097

? For more information, visit albanschools.org/budget

Budget proposal *(continued from page 1)*

The proposal also would invest in a second new play area at Edmund J. O’Neal School of Excellence, 50 Lark St., for students at Albany International Center and the Dual Language Program. This would accompany the playground being built this year.

Voters approved the purchase of this second parcel, on Second Street behind the building, last year.

The district anticipates an increase of about \$2.1 million in payments to charter schools in 2023-24, with a projected increase from \$38.3 million in the current school year to \$40.4 million.

The district also is supporting the budget proposal with about \$4.1 million from reserves.

“New York’s commitment to equitable funding for all school districts is the right investment in our children’s future at the right time for our state,” said Interim Superintendent John Yagielski.

“This funding has allowed us to develop a budget proposal that would maintain the programs and services that are helping our students and families recover from the challenges we all have experienced over the last three years as a result of the pandemic.”

What’s new in the budget

- Funding for 73 total positions district-wide supported during the pandemic through the district’s one-time federal COVID-19 relief funds
- 21.1 new positions:
 - 7.5 new seventh-grade teaching positions at North Albany Middle School to support phase-in of our middle school feeder pattern
 - 3 teaching positions at Albany High: Cosmetology, Health Science and Social Studies
 - 3 district-wide computer technicians
 - 1 data engineer
 - 1 technical support leader
 - 1 assistant director of prekindergarten
 - 1 assistant director of transportation
 - 1 Dual Language Program second-grade teacher to continue the commitment to double the program’s size
 - 1 special education kindergarten teacher
 - 1 secondary special education instructional coach
 - 1 part-time elementary theater teacher (0.6 FTE)
- A second play area for students at Albany International Center and the Dual Language Program, located at Edmund J. O’Neal School of Excellence at 50 Lark St.

Federal COVID-19 relief funds

- New Chromebooks for students and employees
- Upgraded transportation routing software
- Hiring and recruiting initiatives to address staff shortages
- Elementary reading, phonics and math programs and supplies to support student growth
- After-school and extended-day opportunities, including programs with community partners
- Curriculum writing and development
- Enhancing summer school



How your tax bill is set

Your school tax bill is determined by four factors, three of which are outside the district's control.

- 1. School tax levy:** The total amount of money a school district needs to collect from property owners each year – \$122.4 million in the 2023-24 proposed budget. There is no tax-levy increase proposed for 2023-24. This is the only factor the school district controls.
- 2. The state School Tax Relief Program (STAR):** Partial school tax exemptions for owner-occupied homes (see the chart below).
- 3. Your property assessment and your exemptions:** The assessment is an estimate of the value of how much a property would sell for under normal conditions and is set by the City of Albany during the summer each year. Certain exemptions are available. For example, by law, not-for-profit entities are generally exempt from property taxes.
- 4. The homestead vs. non-homestead "Adjusted Base Proportions:"** These proportions were set by the City of Albany in December, and they are used in combination with the total homestead and non-homestead assessed values to determine the final tax rates for each category.

Once all factors are set, the final tax rate determines how much of the levy each property owner pays.

Residential taxpayers may also be eligible for the NYS Homeowner Tax Rebate Credit, a percentage of the existing STAR benefit. Basic STAR recipients with incomes below \$250,000 and Enhanced STAR recipients are eligible.

How the proposed budget will affect your taxes

The City School District of Albany is proposing no increase in its tax levy for 2023-24. However, your overall tax bill may change by a different percentage:

- If the value of your property changed, or your exemptions changed;
- If your STAR reimbursement changed; or
- If the change in the total assessed value for your property's category (homestead or non-homestead) is different than the change in the "Adjusted Base Proportions" for each category that the City of Albany set in December.

School Tax Relief Program (STAR)

SCHOOL TAX	2022-23	2023-24	ESTIMATED CHANGE*
Without STAR exemption	\$3,323	\$3,323	\$0
With Basic STAR	\$2,728	\$2,728	\$0
With Enhanced STAR for seniors	\$1,953	\$1,953	\$0

* Estimated school tax bill for a typical taxpayer whose home is valued at \$150,000.

The final tax rate will be set in late summer, after the City of Albany finalizes its tax assessments and those assessments are reviewed by the New York State Office of Real Property Tax Services.

Proposition 2 (continued from page 1)

The scope of the project also has increased by about \$767,000 to add work such as regrading the grass soccer and football fields behind school, reseeding the old tennis courts along Partridge Street and building an outside storage building for maintenance equipment.

The district has reduced those costs by redesigning some aspects of the project and accessing funds from other sources, including the Smart Schools Bond Act. But a gap remains to be able to complete the fourth and final phase. The project is scheduled to be finished in 2025.

Voters approved creation of a Capital Reserve Fund in 2013 to allow the district to set aside money to help offset the tax impact of construction projects and building maintenance. In 2016, voters approved the district's proposal to raise the cap for the fund to \$18 million.

Voter approval is required before the district can use any funds from the Capital Reserve. No additional taxes would be necessary to use \$9 million from this fund on the high school project.

BY THE NUMBERS

0

Tax-levy increase in the 2023-24 budget proposal

0.898

Percent of the district's average tax-levy increase over the past 10 years

4

Sports in which Albany High student-athletes qualified for states during the fall and winter seasons

9

Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways at Albany High that lead to professional certification

24

Albany High virtuosos selected for last fall's NYSSMA Area All-State Music Festival

45

Languages spoken by district families. Top five: English, Spanish, Arabic, Pashto and Karen

54

Fine Arts classes offered at Albany High (35 visual and performing arts, 19 music)

63

Sports teams available to students in grades 7-12

68

CTE students at Albany High inducted into the National Technical Honor Society on April 28

82

The four-year graduation percentage rate for Albany High's Class of 2022

120

Albany High seniors inducted into the National Honor Society this year

300

Bags of food sent home weekly last summer by the Albany Fund for Education's backpack food program

340

Artworks by district students displayed at the Empire State Plaza Student Art Exhibit in March

468

People following the district's new Instagram account this school year @albany.schools

1,805

Students from grades 3-12 playing an instrument in band or orchestra this school year

5,956

Cheesy bread sticks served in district elementary schools every other Friday

12,054

People following us on Facebook @albany.schools

27,126

Devices managed by our IT staff (372 more than last year!)

2,325,268

Email updates sent to families via SchoolMessenger from September-March

475-6065

Number to call to schedule a budget presentation for your organization (don't forget the 518!)

Capital Education is published by the City School District of Albany. Please direct comments, story ideas and/or questions to either:

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You can access all the information
 in this newsletter and more at:
albanschools.org

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES



OUR VISION

The City School District of Albany will be a district of excellence with caring relationships and engaging learning experiences that provide equitable opportunities for all students to reach their potential.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the City School District of Albany is to work in partnership with our diverse community to engage every learner in a robust educational program designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for success.

OUR GOALS

Increase student achievement; Enhance the delivery of quality instruction; Build our leadership capacity and increase accountability; Empower families; Partner with our diverse community

VOTING LOCATIONS



The City School District of Albany will hold in-person voting at 15 locations city-wide May 16. Polls will be open from 7 a.m.-9 p.m. Not sure of your voting location? Visit albanschools.org/vote for a searchable directory.

1st Ward (all districts)

NEW LOCATION

New Hope Church
 334 Second Ave.

8th Ward (Districts 5-9)

Albany School of Humanities (ASH)
 108 Whitehall Road

2nd Ward (all districts)

Giffen Memorial Elementary School
 274 South Pearl St.

9th Ward (all districts)

New Scotland Elementary School
 369 New Scotland Ave.

3rd Ward (all districts)

Sheridan Preparatory Academy
 400 Sheridan Ave.

10th Ward (all districts)

Pine Hills Elementary School
 41 North Allen St.

4th Ward (all districts)

North Albany Middle School
 570 North Pearl St.

11th Ward (all districts)

Albany High School's Abrookin
 Career and Technical Center
 99 Kent St.

5th Ward (all districts)

Arbor Hill/West Hill Library
 148 Henry Johnson Blvd.

12th Ward (Districts 1-3)

Italian-American Community Center
 257 Washington Ave. Extension

6th Ward (all districts)

William S. Hackett Middle School
 45 Delaware Ave.

12th Ward (Districts 4-9)

Montessori Magnet School
 45 Tremont St.

7th Ward (Districts 1-5)

Delaware Community School
 43 Bertha St.

13th Ward (all districts)

Pine Hills Elementary School
 41 North Allen St.

7th Ward (Districts 6-8)

William S. Hackett Middle School
 45 Delaware Ave.

14th Ward (all districts)

Maria College, McAuley Building
 308 South Manning Blvd.

8th Ward (Districts 1-4)

Maria College, McAuley Building
 308 South Manning Blvd.

15th Ward (all districts)

Eagle Point Elementary School
 1044 Western Ave.

Absentee voting

The City School District of Albany automatically sends absentee ballots to people the Albany County Board of Elections designates as having a permanent disability.

Those who want to vote with an absentee ballot because of illness, hospitalization, vacation, studies, business or incarceration must apply for the absentee ballot.

Please note that the state **will no longer allow** concern about potential exposure to COVID-19 as an option for absentee voting, as it has the last three years.

You can call (518) 475-6015 and ask to have an absentee application mailed to you, or you can download one at albanschools.org/vote.

If you want an absentee ballot mailed to your home, the district clerk must receive your completed application at least seven days before the vote – by Tuesday, May 9 at 4 p.m.

If you want to pick up your absentee ballot in-person at the district headquarters in Academy Park, you must have your completed application to the clerk by 4 p.m. the day before the budget vote – Monday, May 15.

All absentee ballots must be returned to the clerk by 5 p.m. on the day of the vote – Tuesday, May 16.

Two board seats open

Two seats on the City School District of Albany Board of Education will be up for election May 16.

Vice President Anne Savage and board member Damarise Mann both are seeking re-election to four-year terms.

Savage was first elected in 2014 and, if re-elected May 16, will serve her third term.

Mann was elected in 2018 to fill a vacancy and re-elected in 2019 to a full four-year term. She would begin her second full term July 1 if re-elected.

The deadline to submit petitions was April 26.

At press time, no other candidates had submitted the required petitions to run.

Visit albanschools.org/boe for more information.

What if the budget is not approved?

If voters do not approve the budget May 16, state law gives the Board of Education three options:

- Put up the same proposal for another vote;
- Present a revised budget proposal for voter consideration; or
- Adopt a contingency budget.

If the board opted for a second vote and it also failed, state law would require the district to adopt a contingency budget.

For 2023-24, a contingency budget would be \$305,932,378 and would hold the tax levy to its current level as required by state law.

In addition, a contingency budget requires cuts to specific areas: the district would need to eliminate \$1,336,080 from the proposed budget to meet those requirements.

The state closely regulates any district operating under a contingency budget. Community groups are required to pay to use school buildings when a district is operating under a contingency budget. The state also prohibits spending on student supplies, equipment and certain raises, to name a few additional items.

This would mean that, in addition to the prohibited spending noted above, the district would have to consider cuts to staffing and programs to meet the new contingency requirements.

Library vote info

In addition to school-related items on this year's ballot, residents will be asked to vote on the Albany Public Library's 2023-24 budget proposal.

The library's proposed budget for 2023-24 is \$7,710,529. The library's Board of Trustees unanimously approved the proposal on March 14. The total tax levy includes a 4.58% increase, which is below the library's tax cap.

The proposed increase would mean that the owner of a \$150,000 home would pay approximately \$11.16 more in library taxes next year.

There are no library Board of Trustees positions up for election this year.

For more information, visit albanypubliclibrary.org or contact Stephanie Simon at (518) 708-3912.