



2026-27 BUDGET NEWSLETTER



Learning is the Mission

District Budget Highlights



Proposed Budget
\$29,755,185

Budget Change
\$1,481,526 (5.24%)

Tax Levy Change
\$264,248 (2.95%)

(under the district's tax levy limit)

www.schoharieschools.org

May 19 Vote Set for 2026-27 School Budget

Schoharie Central School District residents will vote on a \$29.8 million proposed budget for the 2026-27 school year that maintains all programming.

The fiscal plan has an overall increase of 5.24 percent – or \$1.5 million – from the current year. Under the fiscal plan, which will be voted on by district residents from noon to 8 p.m., on Tuesday, May 19, the tax levy would change by 2.95 percent. This is below the state mandated tax levy limit, or “tax cap,” and equates to an additional \$264,248 being spread out among all taxable parcels in the entire district. The tax levy is the overall amount raised throughout the entire district. The tax levy increase is below the current 3.26 percent inflation rate.



Our reimagined and relocated Elementary Library has been a hive of activity this school year, with a book fair, Family Engagement Night, and many other activities to inspire a love of reading.

Voters will also select two members of the Schoharie CSD Board of Education; weigh in on a capital project (please see below); decide on a school bus purchase proposition and weigh in on a proposition to support the Schoharie Free Library. For more on those propositions and the

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Capital Project Designed to Prevent Future Costs

The Schoharie CSD Board of Education on Thursday, March 19, approved putting a capital project to voters in May along with the 2026-27 proposed budget.

The \$3.9 million proposal addresses needs identified in the district's recent five-year building condition survey. If approved by voters on May 19, the proposal would be funded through a \$500,000 transfer from the district's capital reserve fund and state aid. There would be no impact on the tax levy.

The bulk of the project involves the removal of two fuel oil tanks that have surpassed their

expected life span. These two tanks – one that fuels the Jr./Sr. High School and the other that fuels the Elementary School – will be replaced with one propane tank that fuels the entire building.

While voters in the last decade have approved two larger capital projects that reimagined both wings of the school building, the new proposal is limited to address specific high-needs areas and create energy and maintenance efficiencies that are projected to save the district money over the long haul.

The current boilers in the building will be

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Budget FAQ



What budget am I voting on?

On May 19, voters will be asked to authorize the total dollar amount of appropriations for the day-to-day activities involved in providing education for all Schoharie students during the 2026-27 school year. The proposed \$29,755,185 budget is a \$1.5 million (5.24 percent) increase from this year's budget.

What is a tax levy limit?

Under the New York state's tax levy limit law, a school district must follow an eight-step formula to calculate its individual tax levy limit. That limit then determines what level of voter support is required for budget approval.

The law excludes certain portions of a school district's tax levy from the calculation. A district can add these exclusions to its tax levy limit, increasing the amount of taxes the district is allowed to levy while still needing only a simple majority of voters (50 percent plus one) for budget approval.

A proposed tax levy increase above the limit requires budget approval by a super majority of voters (60 percent). Schoharie's proposed budget includes a 2.95 percent tax levy increase, which is under the district's tax levy limit.

How is the tax levy different from a tax rate?

The tax levy is the total amount of money that the district raises from local taxpayers, while the tax rate is the amount of tax residents pay per \$1,000 of assessed property value. School tax rates are determined in August after the district receives town property assessments and

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2026-27 Proposed budget

Continued from Page 1

school board election, please see pages 5 and 6. Voting on May 19 will be held in the hallway outside of the Jr./Sr. High School gym, which can be accessed by the set of doors there.

A projected increase in overall New York State school aid over what was budgeted for in the current year will help allow the district to maintain student academic services and support, while limiting the overall local tax burden. State aid accounts for about 75 cents of every dollar spent by Schoharie CSD. Foundation Aid, the largest category of state aid, would increase by 2.88 percent - or \$248,000. Overall in New York State, the year-to-year increase in Foundation Aid is projected to be 3.04 percent - which is the lowest year-to-year increase in recent years.

"We're fortunate that we have not had to make staffing or programming cuts," Superintendent David M. Blanchard said. "We do see significant constriction in state funding going forward into future years. The development of the new Amazon warehouse is a positive in terms of future budgets as the site will be on the tax roll."

Pressures on the proposed budget include health insurance costs, debt service payments and out-placed students that the district pays tuition for. The district has seen a 40 percent increase over the last three years in students who have moved here and who are in need of outplaced special education services.

"Making sure students are getting what they need does come at a high cost," Mr. Blanchard said.

Initiatives undertaken previously or planned through the capital project on the ballot are projected to ease operating expenses and increase energy efficiency. The district also continually looks at ways to make overall operations more efficient.

"The solar field installed as part of the Energy Performance Project is coming online this spring and savings related to that will be beneficial in the next school year and beyond," Mr. Blanchard said.

While the energy market continues to be

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Eleven Schoharie Valley FFA members, along with NY Commissioner of Agriculture Richard Ball, brought Agriculture Literacy Week to second grade classrooms.



Thirty-five students brought *Into the Woods* to life in March, above and below. They began rehearsing and building the set in December. The production featured three students in lead roles who have never been onstage before!



Capital Project *Continued from Page 1*

converted to operate on propane instead of fuel oil. New York State requires school buildings that use fuel oil to only purchase biodiesel, which is prone to bacterial and fungal contamination. This contamination has led to costly and frequent service repairs. The switch to propane is expected to alleviate this problem.

Should the fuel oil tanks – installed in 1995 – be left in the ground and continue to be utilized, the district risks expensive remediation should they fail. Emergency repairs that are not incorporated into capital projects such as this are not eligible for state aid.

In addition to the heating system work, the proposed project includes renovations to the Jr./Sr. High School main entrance, including new doors; some HVAC upgrades not covered under previous projects; outdoor lighting for externally accessible restrooms in the Elementary School wing; and roof replacements for those sections of the building not previously done in other projects.

The proposed capital project will appear on the ballot on Tuesday, May 19, as a separate proposition in addition to the annual budget vote and board of education election. Voting will be held from noon to 8 p.m.



The old boiler on the left in the Elementary School would be replaced with a new boiler like the one on the right, above. Aging fuel oil tanks underground outside the Jr./Sr. High School and Elementary School would be removed, below. A single propane tank would be installed behind the school to replace the two fuel oil tanks.



Tax Levy Falls Under State Mandated Cap *Continued from Page 2*

volatile, savings from the solar field are expected to be from \$60,000 to \$80,000 annually.

Tax Levy Limit

The Board of Education is choosing to present a budget with a 2.95 percent tax levy increase that is under the tax levy limit. State aid and operational efficiencies that are under constant review will allow

Schoharie CSD to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of our students while keeping the tax levy change below the state-mandated limit. If passed, the capital project will help reduce maintenance costs on the school's heating system.

Because the district is proposing a budget that is under the tax levy limit, only a simple majority of voters – 50 percent plus one.

Budget FAQ

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state equalization rates.

How can a STAR exemption reduce my school taxes?

Homeowners can reduce their school property taxes through a School Tax Relief (STAR) exemption or rebate. New applicants must apply online for this state tax break (Visit www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/star/).

How is my tax bill calculated?

Individual school tax bills are calculated using:

- The assessed value of each property (provided by towns);
- Equalization rates;
- Any applicable exemptions (e.g., STAR); and
- The proportionate share of the tax levy.

Why does the district use BOCES services?

By joining together, school districts are able to secure services through the Board of Cooperative Educational Services that may be more costly if a district were to purchase the services on its own. Schoharie gets reimbursed from the state for a percentage of its BOCES expenses in the following year.

What happens if the budget is defeated?

If a school district's proposed budget is defeated by voters a school board has three options: Put the same budget up for a second vote in June; put a revised budget up for a vote in June; or adopt a contingent budget.

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Budget FAQ

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What is a contingent budget?

If the Board of Education presents a budget — revised or not — for a second vote and it is defeated, the board must adopt a contingent budget for 2026-27. The contingent budget must include a tax levy amount that is no greater than the tax levy amount set by the Board of Education for 2025-26. Certain expenditures would not be allowed in a contingent budget, such as non-aided purchases of equipment, consumable supplies for students, non-essential maintenance, public use of school facilities (unless user fees are paid) and transfers from the operating budget to other monetary funds. The administrative component of the budget would also be subject to certain restrictions. For 2026-27, the contingent budget would be \$29,700,815.

How can I vote if I can't be there on May 19?

Eligible district residents who are unable to go to the polls on May 19 can cast their votes by absentee ballot or an early mail ballot. For an application, call the Schoharie Central School District office at (518) 295-6679 or visit the office at 136 Academy Drive, Schoharie. Completed applications must be received by the district clerk at least seven days before the election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or the day before the election if the ballot is to be delivered personally to the district clerk at the polling place, no later than 5 p.m. on May 19.

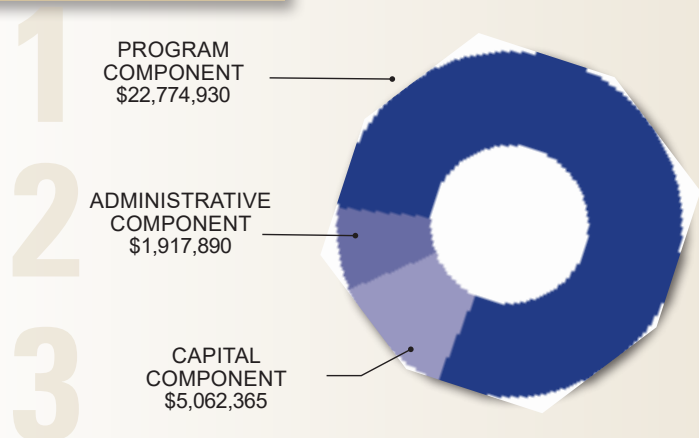
Budget revenue : Where does the money come from?

Description	2025-26 Budgeted	2026-27 Proposed Budget	% Change Year to Year
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$532,237	\$831,276	56.19%
State Aid	\$15,001,041	\$15,722,124	4.81%
Medicaid and Federal Aid	\$75,000	\$80,000	6.67%
Payments in Lieu of Taxes	\$2,107,794	\$2,149,950	2%
Allocation from Reserves	-	\$150,000	-
School Tax Levy/STAR	\$8,957,587	\$9,221,835	2.95%
Fund Balance Allocation	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000	0%
Total Revenue	\$28,273,659	\$29,755,185	5.24%

Budget Appropriations : Where does the money go?

Description	2025-26 Budgeted	2026-27 Proposed Budget	% Change Year to Year
Employee Salaries	\$10,495,741	\$10,530,576	0.33%
Employee Benefits	\$8,629,304	\$8,957,131	3.80%
Debt Service	\$2,626,538	\$3,446,481	31.22%
Fund Transfers	\$234,768	\$151,625	-34.41%
BOCES Costs	\$2,933,225	\$3,082,239	5.08%
All Other Costs	\$3,354,083	\$3,587,133	6.95%
Total expenses	\$28,273,659	\$29,755,185	5.24%

Three-Part Budget



See Page 5 for information on the Three-Part Budget

Residents to elect two to Board of Education

On May 19, residents will vote to fill two seats on the Board of Education for three-year terms beginning July 1, 2026. The seats are currently held by Laraine Gell, who is not seeking re-election, and John Florussen, who is running for another term. Jessica Kirby is running for her first term. There are no other candidates.

The Board is comprised of seven residents who serve overlapping, unpaid terms of three years each. Together, they establish district policies, approve an annual budget proposal, approve or disapprove the superintendent's recommendations on personnel matters and contracts, review courses of study and textbooks, and act as a communication link between residents and the school district. For more information on the Schoharie CSD Board of Education, including how to access agendas and meeting minutes, please visit the district website at www.schoharieschools.org

Board of Education candidate information is provided below. They are listed in ballot order.



John Florussen is seeking re-election to the Board. He graduated from Springwood State H.S. in Queensland, Australia and has a Film and TV Production Bachelor's Degree from the Queensland College of Art. He later received a Master's Degree in English from the University at Albany and is currently studying at Russell Sage to receive a School District Business Leader Certification. He is employed as a program manager at Capital Region BOCES where he supports schools through the Science Kit Program, the non-public textbook loan service and the inter-library loan courier. Florussen is the president of the Schoharie County School Boards Association, attends Schoharie Community Partner's

events. He is also a contributor to the Friends of the Fine Arts and supporter of the Booster Club. Florussen is a member of the Gallupville House Association, performs at local venues with a small band, and contributes to and participates in community and village events. He and his wife, Heidi, have three children. Noah is in 11th grade; Kieran is in 9th grade; and Gabriel is in 7th grade.



Jessica Kirby is seeking her first term on the Board. A Schoharie High School graduate, she has a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from SUNY Cobleskill and is working toward her Master's Degree in Business Administration at SUNY Albany. Kirby works for the New York Power Authority and is the Director of Community and Government Relations for Central New York. She volunteers in the classroom and during Elementary Parent Teacher Student Organization events. Kirby is the current chair of the Village of Schoharie Zoning Board of Appeals and previously served as a board member of the Cobleskill Campus Childcare

Center and the Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce. She is a past president of the Schoharie Valley Association. She is married to Ian Kirby and has a son, Benjamin, in second grade, and a daughter, Charlotte, in kindergarten.

Three-Part Budget



New York State requires school districts to present budgets in three parts. The proposed 2026-27 Schoharie Central School District budget to be voted on May 19 includes the following:

Program Budget

\$22,774,930 – The salaries and benefits of all certified faculty and staff, teacher aides, monitors and nurses. Also included are in-service training, library costs, transportation, co-curricular programs and interscholastic athletics.

Administrative Budget

\$1,917,890 – The salaries and benefits of all professional staff members who spend 50 percent or more of their time in administration, finance and supervision. Also included are clerical staff, public information, curriculum development and supervision, research, planning and evaluation, legal services, and school board-related costs.

Capital Budget

\$5,062,365 – Debt service on building additions and renovations, bus purchases, property assessment challenges and court-ordered costs, and operations/maintenance costs, including staff.

District residents may vote on the proposed 2026-27 budget, capital project, Board of Education candidates, the bus purchase proposition, and Schoharie Free Library tax levy from noon to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 in the hallway outside the Schoharie Jr./Sr. High School gym.

Ballot Propositions

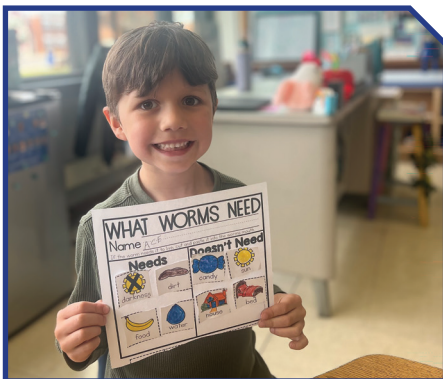
Residents of Schoharie CSD will be asked to decide on the following propositions at the voting booth from noon to 8 p.m., Tuesday, May 19.

Proposition 1 - If approved, would authorize the Board of Education to expend the sum of \$29,755,185 for the 2026-27 school year. (See Page 1.)

Proposition 2 - If approved, would authorize the purchase of three buses and a fourth vehicle. This amount is not to exceed \$560,000.

Proposition 3 - If approved, would increase the Schoharie Free Library tax levy from \$161,000 to \$183,000.

Proposition 4 - If approved, would authorize a \$3.9 million Capital Project and the transfer of \$500,000 from a Capital Reserve Fund. (See Page 1.)



Ms. Vickers' kindergarteners celebrated Earth Day last month by learning about worms and what they need and don't need. They finished the lesson with a fun treat, "dirt cups" pudding, Oreos and gummy worms!

Residents to vote on bus purchase

A proposition on the May 19 ballot will ask voters to consider authorizing the purchase of two 66-passenger buses, one 29-passenger bus with a wheelchair lift, and one 7-passenger vehicle at a total cost of \$560,000 before trade-in.



If the bus purchase proposition is approved, the district would receive approximately 75 percent of the purchase price in state aid. The school district would use its Transportation Capital Reserve Fund to purchase the buses, resulting in no additional cost to taxpayers.

Why does the district purchase buses every school year? The proposed bus purchases are part of an ongoing bus replacement plan designed to ensure students are transported on buses that meet the latest safety standards. The plan also allows the district to trade in or phase out older, high-mileage vehicles to avoid the cost inefficiencies related to keeping them in service.

What about the new state requirement that school districts transition to electric buses? New York State law requires all new school bus purchases to be 'zero emission' by 2027, and all school buses in use be 'zero emission' by 2035. Schoharie CSD will begin incorporating this requirement into its planning when it receives more guidance from the state. At this time, the school district is not purchasing electric buses.

Funding sought for Schoharie Free Library

New York State Education Law allows libraries to place a funding proposition on school district ballots and requires school districts, at the libraries' request, to levy and collect taxes for libraries. The amount of the tax levy collected by a school district for a library remains the same each year until the library requests a proposition to change that amount.



On May 19, Schoharie CSD residents will be asked to vote on a proposition to increase the annual tax levy for the Schoharie Free Library Association from \$161,000 to \$183,000. If the proposition is approved, Schoharie Central School District would annually levy and collect taxes in the new amount for the library beginning in the 2026-27 fiscal year.

Taxes levied for the Schoharie Free Library go directly to the library to fund services provided to Schoharie Central School District residents. The library is a separate legal entity with its own funding and budget. The amount authorized for library services is a separate line on tax bills.

SCS recognizes twins as Class of 2026's top students

Hanna Peters is the Valedictorian for the Class of 2026. A dedicated scholar, athlete, and performer, Hanna has distinguished herself through exceptional academic achievement, dynamic leadership, and a heartfelt commitment to her school and community.

Hanna plans to attend SUNY Geneseo, where she intends to major in English. She has maintained High Honor Roll throughout all four years of high school, a testament to her academic consistency and drive. Hanna was also recognized as the Most Distinguished Athlete for Varsity Volleyball.

Among her many honors are the NYSCD SWE Merit Award, the Student Sage Award, the George H. Ball Community Achievement Award, the UAlbany Capital District Leadership Award, and Most Improved Player (MIP) for Varsity Volleyball. Hanna is also a proud member of the National Honor Society.

Hanna is an active and versatile leader in her school community. She serves as Co-President of Best Buddies and Treasurer of Key Club, and is a member of the National Honor Society, Youth As Leaders, Leading Tones, and the Youth Belonging Leadership Team. She has performed in Musical Theatre, playing Jack's Mom in Into the Woods, and has been a dedicated Varsity Volleyball player. Her volunteer work includes

Ethan Peters is the Salutatorian for the Class of 2026. A dedicated scholar and leader, Ethan has distinguished himself through outstanding academic achievement, a commitment to service, and a passion for language and education.

Ethan plans to attend SUNY Oswego or SUNY Geneseo, where he intends to major in Spanish and Adolescence Education, pursuing a future as a Spanish educator. He has maintained High Honor Roll throughout grades 9–12, reflecting his consistent dedication to academic excellence.

Among his many honors are the George H. Ball Community Achievement Award, the Student Sage Award, the State of New York Triple "C" Award, and the Scholarships for Academic Excellence (SAE), all received in 2025. Ethan is also a member of the National Honors Society, where he serves as vice-president, and was previously a member of the Junior National Honor Society.

Ethan is also an active leader in his school and broader community. He has served as President of Key Club and is a member of the Youth Belonging Leadership Team and Leading Tones. His involvement extends to Best Buddies/Positive Pals and Youth As Leaders, reflecting

the Joshua Project, the local food pantry, multiple trash clean-ups, tutoring, and serving as a counselor at her local church camp.

Reflecting on her time at Schoharie High School, Hanna shares:

"Being at Schoharie High School has allowed me to grow lasting connections with students and staff. The classes, clubs, and sports I have been a part of have allowed me to grow intellectually and personally in ways I will carry with me for the rest of my life."

Hanna is the daughter of Tanja Peters and Dirk Peters, and resides in Schoharie. She is the twin sister of Ethan Peters.



Class of 2026 Valedictorian Hanna Peters

a deep commitment to fostering inclusion and community connection.

Reflecting on his time at Schoharie High School, Ethan shares:

"High school has led me to find my passion and future career with Spanish and has given me endless opportunities. Because of Schoharie's teachers, I was able to do well and achieve all that I have."

Ethan is the son of Tanja Peters and Dirk Peters, grandson of Marga Pohl, and resides in Schoharie. He is the twin brother of Hanna Peters.



Class of 2026 Salutatorian Ethan Peters



Board of Education

Daniel Guasp, President
 John Florussen, Vice President
 Tara Barton
 Brad Bruno
 Laraine Gell
 Emily Gigandet
 Laura Rosenthal

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 430 • 136 ACADEMY DRIVE
SCHOHARIE, NY 12157
WWW.SCHOHARIESCHOOLS.ORG

David M. Blanchard
 Superintendent of Schools

Produced in cooperation with Capital Region BOCES Engagement & Development Services.

SCHOHARIE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET NOTICE	Budget Adopted for the 2025-26 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2026-27 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2026-27 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$28,273,659	\$29,755,185	\$29,700,815
Increase/Decrease for the 2026-27 School Year		\$1,481,526	\$1,427,156
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		5.24%	5.05%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.63%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$8,957,587	\$9,221,835	
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)	\$8,957,587	\$9,221,835	\$9,166,835
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$292,169	\$736,883	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$8,680,384	\$8,856,086	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D)	\$8,655,418	\$8,484,952	
I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$14,966	\$371,134	
Administrative Component	\$1,874,301	\$1,917,890	\$1,917,890
Program Component	\$22,008,355	\$22,774,930	\$22,774,930
Capital Component	\$4,391,003	\$5,062,365	\$5,010,365
* If the Board of Education must adopt a contingent budget for 2026-27, the following items would be excluded, in the event of a contingency budget: Equipment Purchases not otherwise aided by New York State (\$25,000); Routine Maintenance not of an emergency nature, such as painting and sitework (\$30,000). Also, the administrative budget component cannot exceed that of the previous year, and the tax levy cannot exceed the amount of the previous school year.			
** 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)			
	Description	Amount	
	Purchase of three school buses and a passenger vehicle	\$560,000	
	Levy for Schoharie Public Library	\$183,000	
	Capital project	\$3,900,000	

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2026-27 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$467.00

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2026-27 by the qualified voters of the Schoharie CSD, Schoharie County, New York, will be held at Schoharie Jr./Sr. HS in said district on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 between the hours of noon and 8 pm, prevailing time in the Schoharie school(s), 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.