NEV HARTFORD **Budget News**

SCHOOL DISTRICT CENTRAL



Computer Club members at Hughes Elementary School are bringing creativity to life. This year, students in the club are using a web-based software to design their own models to be printed on the school's 3D printer. The club, open to all 6th-graders at Hughes, offers students hands-on learning experiences to develop their digital skills by working on computer-based projects.

2025-2026 BUDGET OVERVIEW

Proposed budget: > \$67,724,281

Proposed budget increase:

> \$3,280,489

> 5.09%

Tax levy change:

- > \$1,296,266
- > 3.26%

Budget Vote:

- Tuesday, May 20
- ✓ 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. New **Hartford Senior High** School Gymnasium, 33 Oxford Road, **New Hartford**

New Hartford Central School District residents to vote on 2025-26 budget on May 20

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On Tuesday, May 20, New Hartford Central School District residents will vote on a \$67,724,281 proposed budget for the 2025-26 school year. The proposal carries a 3.26 percent tax levy increase, which is equivalent to the tax levy cap established under New York State law.

Voters will also elect one candidate who will serve one five-year term on the board of education (see page 5) and decide on a \$700,000 school bus purchasing proposition (see page 5).

The proposed \$3,280,489 budget increase would allow the district to expand educational opportunities for students and maintain all current programming.

The spending plan would allow the district to:

- > Increase the number of openings for New Hartford students to participate in career and technical education programs at Oneida-Herkimer-Madison (OHM) BOCES
- Maintain class sizes at traditional levels
- > Maintain social, emotional and mental health services for students
- > Continue supporting the arts, athletics, and extracurricular offerings
- Continue partnering with Connected Community Schools at the elementary level
- > Continue its school safety officer contract with the Town of New Hartford
- > Maintain the distribution of a Chromebook to every K-12 student
- > Continue updating curriculum
- > Upgrade bus radios

Proposed budget addresses rising costs

The primary factors driving the budget increase include rising costs for BOCES programming, higher insurance/benefit costs for employees (as determined by carriers), increasing costs for employee salaries and other contractual agreements, and increased costs to pay down the principal and interest on bonds for capital projects.

The district partners with OHM BOCES so that students may attend its Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. The costs of these programs, as well as for special education, food service, safety and security, and technology infrastructure support, are increasing for next year.

BOCES costs are expected to increase by \$225,279. The increase is primarily due to rising costs for P-TECH and CTE, increasing tuition for special education, and necessary upgrades for the district's bus radios.

The budget proposal also supports additional seats for New Hartford students to attend P-TECH and CTE in order to address increased student interest in these opportunities. In the last three years, New Hartford's participation has increased from 5 to 14 students in P-TECH and 43 to 71 students in CTE. See page 3 to learn more about P-TECH and the success of one New Hartford graduate in the program.

Another primary factor driving the budget increase is the higher insurance/benefit costs for district employees.

Since the 2022-23 school year, the district's health insurance costs increased 49.06 percent - from \$9,392,159 to a projected \$14 million by

NEW HARTFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Budget Vote 25-26

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the end of this school year. This is primarily due to a significant increase in prescription medication costs: from July 1, 2024 to Feb. 28, 2025, the district incurred a \$1,039,955 or 32 percent cost increase in prescription drug claims for its employees compared to the prior year.

The district projects its health insurance costs to increase an additional \$1,461,960 for the 2025-26 school year.

Included in the proposed budget is funding to cover increasing costs for contractual agreements. Contractual costs such as employee salaries, gas and electric, and school security officers are expected to climb by \$419,500.

Rising costs to pay down the principal and interest for capital improvement projects is another main factor contributing to the budget increase. Principal and interest payments are expected to increase by \$930,000. This is due to the district borrowing more money to cover construction costs, such as the ongoing renovations at Perry Junior High School and the start of construction at Hughes and Myles elementary schools.

State aid lags amid climbing costs

As the district's costs continue to climb, its revenue sources are failing to keep pace.

The district has two main revenue sources: state aid and the tax levy. While the district anticipates a \$1.8 million increase in state aid, the majority of that is in the form of building aid. Building aid is expected to increase by approximately \$1.6 million due to the completion of several construction projects related to capital project work, such as the Hughes and Myles roofs.

State aid in the form of Foundation Aid is a key funding source for the district's daily school operations. Foundation Aid is a formula-based aid that takes into account enrollment, among other factors, to distribute state funding to school districts.

Due to declining student enrollment in New Hartford schools, the district is estimated to receive only a \$289,027 increase in Foundation Aid from the previous year – the smallest increase in Foundation Aid the district has received in recent years.

The tax levy, which is the total amount the district raises through school property taxes, accounts for 60.58 percent of the district's 2025-26 proposed budget revenue. Under the proposed spending plan, the tax levy would increase by \$1,296,266 to be spread across all taxable parcels in the district, based on assessments and equalization rates in individual towns.

The budget proposal was adopted by the New Hartford Board of Education on April 15. The public budget hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, May 13.

SUMMARY OF PROJECTED REVENUES

 FUND BALANCE/OTHER
 TAX LEVY

 3.49%
 60.58%

 Tax Levy
 60.58%

 Tax Levy
 60.58%

 State Aid
 35.93%

BUDGET VOTE:

Tuesday,

May 20

REVENUE	2024-2025	2025-2026	COST (+/-)
Tax Levy	\$39,732,539	\$41,028,805	\$1,296,266
State Aid	\$22,490,353	\$24,334,356	\$1,844,003
Miscellaneous Items	\$1,320,900	\$1,461,120	\$140,220
Fund Balance	\$900,000	\$900,000	\$0
Total	\$64,443,792	\$67,724,281	\$3,280,489

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM 76.37% % OF 2025-2026 BUDGET CAPITAL 13.72% Instructional Program 76.37% Capital 13.72% Administrative 9.91% ADMINISTRATIVE 9.91% **EXPENSES** 2024-2025 2025-2026 COST (+/-) Salaries \$27,667,156 \$27,972,045 \$304,889 Equipment \$336,500 \$316,725 -\$19,775 Contractual \$3,612,600 \$3,727,045 \$114,445 **Supplies** \$1,655,700 \$1,582,115 -\$73,585 BOCES \$10,357,496 \$10,582,775 \$225,279 **Debt Services** \$4,035,000 \$4,965,442 \$930,442 Benefits \$16,679,340 \$18,528,134 \$1,848,794 Transfers \$100,000 \$50,000 -\$50,000 Total \$64,443,792 \$67,724,281 \$3,280,489

SUMMARY OF PROJECTED EXPENSES

Voter Information

Access for People with Disabilities

Enter Daly Place from Oxford Road and note signs for handicapped parking. For more information, please call 315-624-1233.

Voter Qualifications

You must be registered to vote in school elections. Voters registered to vote with the Oneida County or Herkimer County Board of Elections who are residents of the district will be allowed to vote in the New Hartford school elections without registering. To qualify to vote you must be:

- A United States citizen
- Registered to vote
- A resident of New Hartford Central School District for 30 days or more

Voter Registration Dates

For those needing to register, the registration dates are:

- Saturday, May 10, 2025 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Bradley Elementary Lobby
- Tuesday, May 13, 2025 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. - Senior High School Lobby

Proof of residency is required. A driver's license is acceptable. For more information, please call the District Clerk's Office at 315-624-1218.

Absentee Ballots

It is possible to vote by absentee ballot. Forms to request absentee ballots should be requested by mail from the District Clerk, Kim Schweitzer, c/o District Office, 33 Oxford Road, New Hartford, New York 13413. Completed applications for absentee ballots 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 picked up by the voter. The completed ballot must be received by 5 p.m. on the day of the vote.

Early Mail Voting

The Early Mail Voter Act allows for early voting via mail without being required to have a reason. Individuals who wish to vote early by mail must submit an application. Requests for an application should be mailed to the District Clerk, Kim Schweitzer, c/o District Office, 33 Oxford Road, New Hartford, New York 13413. Completed applications for early mail voting 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 must be received by 5 p.m. on the day of the vote.



New Hartford graduate reaches new heights by participating in P-TECH program

Alumnus of New Hartford Central School District Michael Spanneaut is earning his associate degree in Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems from Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC)—all at no cost.

Spanneaut enrolled as a high school student in the Oneida Herkimer Madison (OHM) BOCES Pathways in Technology Early College High School, or P-TECH, program, a four- to six-year program providing high school students with the opportunity to earn an associate's degree from MVCC for free.

Spanneaut is in year six and will be graduating from MVCC and P-TECH in May. He was recognized as part of New Hartford's senior class of 2023. This program provides students with handson learning experiences and a direct path to college and career opportunities.

Spanneaut first discovered P-TECH during a field trip to the OHM BOCES campus in 2019, where he was captivated by the program's unique approach to education.

"I was amazed by the hands-on learning experiences that allow students to graduate with an associate degree," Spanneaut said. "It was an opportunity I couldn't pass up."

Instead of following the traditional high school to college path, Spanneaut took advantage of P-TECH's specialized curriculum, which allowed him to study Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems while still in high school. Through the program, he completed an internship where



he earned his Part 107 certification to operate commercial drones. Now, as he prepares for graduation, Spanneaut has the flexibility to either enter the workforce with a stable career or continue his education.

Spanneaut has chosen to transfer to Alfred State College to pursue a bachelor's degree in land surveying, with the goal of becoming a licensed surveyor.

"The hands-on experience I gained through P-TECH, especially flying drones, confirmed my passion for mapping and surveying," Spanneaut said.

Spanneaut gained real-world experience by completing two summer internships with the New York Power Authority (NYPA). During his internships, Spanneaut used drones to assist in environmental research and vegetation mapping.

"I worked with thermal imaging drones to locate endangered species and created 3-D maps from drone imagery," he shared. "Those experiences helped me decide on my future career path."

As he reflects on his journey, Spanneaut credits P-TECH for preparing him for college and beyond.

"The transition from high school to attending MVCC was much easier as the P-TECH program is set to mimic college classes," he said. "It gave me more freedom but also more responsibility, which has helped me grow."

With 16 New Hartford students currently enrolled in the program, P-TECH continues to provide an invaluable opportunity for students to gain industryrelevant skills while earning a college degree at no cost. Spanneaut is the third P-TECH graduate from New Hartford. Previous graduates earned associate degrees in Mechanical Engineering Technology and Business Administration.

School Tax Relief (STAR) Eligibility

Under state law, all residential property owners, regardless of age, may receive a \$30,000 property tax exemption from the full value of their property, provided they filed for the exemption with their town assessor or at www. tax.ny.gov/star.

Basic STAR Exemption: A reduction on your school tax bill

- If you have been receiving the STAR exemption since 2015, you can continue to receive it for the same primary residence. As long as you remain eligible, you'll see a reduction on your school tax bill for the amount of your STAR exemption. NOTE: The STAR exemption is no longer available to new homebuyers.
- Available for owner-occupied, primary residences where the resident owners' and their spouses' incomes are less than \$250,000.
- Based on the first \$30,000 of the full value of a property, provided that they filed for the exemption with their town assessor or with New York State at www.tax.ny.gov/star.

Basic STAR Credit: A partial tax reimbursement

- If you are registered for the STAR credit, the Tax Department will send you a STAR check in the mail each year. You can use the check to pay your school taxes.
- You can receive the STAR credit if you own your home and it's your primary residence and the combined income of the owner and the owner's spouse is \$500,000 or less.
- Based on the first \$30,000 of the full value of a property, provided they filed for the exemption with New York State at www.tax.ny.gov/star.
- If you have filed for the Basic STAR (no age criteria), it is not necessary to reapply each year.
- If you have not previously applied, you must apply at the appropriate town assessor's office or with New York State.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

"Perry Points" aims to promote positive school environment

When Perry Junior High School student Henry Leigh saw another student sitting alone in the cafeteria, he didn't hesitate to offer up a seat at his table.

"He was by himself, so I invited him to sit with me and my friends at our table," said Henry.

Henry's act of kindness did not go unnoticed and it earned him a Perry Point.

Perry Points is a new initiative this year that rewards students for displaying positive behaviors and attributes such as kindness, respect, hard work, perseverance, and growth. Faculty and staff members award Perry Points to deserving students, who are then entered into a schoolwide raffle. At the end of each week, names are randomly selected from the raffle and the winning students earn a treat bag and recognition on the morning announcements.

Organized by the student-members of Kindness Club, Perry Points aims to promote a positive school culture and climate by acknowledging acts of kindness and positivity.

"This is a good opportunity for relationship-



 After showing kindness to a classmate, Henry Leigh (left) was recognized as part of Perry Points, a new student-organized initiative that rewards students for displaying positive behaviors and attributes.

building, praising positive behavior, and facilitating conversations about what it means to be a kind, hard-working member of our school and community," said Kindness Club Advisor and School Social Worker Krista Circelli-Smith.

When asked about how it felt to earn a Perry Point, Henry said "It felt good, like I accomplished something."

"That's the goal," said Mrs. Circelli-Smith, "to boost students' confidence and motivate them to continue being kind and accountable."

Perry Points launched in February and Kindness Club hopes to continue the initiative into next year.



Spreading Paw-sitive Vibes

Bradley Elementary School launched a new therapy dog program designed to enhance student well-being and promote a positive school environment. Lando the Labrador Retriever (pictured above), his twin brother Chewie, and Obi, a West Highland Terrier, have been working toward earning their official therapy dog certification. The dogs are available to support all Bradley students and staff members at various times during the school day.

Board of Education Candidates

Three candidates seeking one open seat on the board of education

On May 20, New Hartford voters will elect one district resident to serve on the New Hartford Board of Education. The individual elected will serve a five-year term beginning July 1, 2025.

The board is comprised of seven school district residents, elected by voters, and is the official policymaking body of the school district. Board members are not financially compensated.

Candidates are listed in the order they will appear on the ballot.



JP Kidwell

JP Kidwell is seeking his first term on the board of education. He and his wife, Christina, have three children: one who attends Hughes Elementary School, one who attends Perry Junior

High School, and one who attends Whitesboro High School. He has been a district resident for twelve years.

Mr. Kidwell is a graduate of Notre Dame High School. He received his associate's degree from Mohawk Valley Community College and earned his bachelor's degree in professional studies and health services management from SUNY Polytechnic Institute. He is currently the owner of AirWell Duct & Dryer Cleaning.

Mr. Kidwell is a member of the Oneida County Board of Ethics, a board member for Charity Motor Club, and serves on Integrated Community Alternatives Network's (ICAN) board of directors. He is also a judge for the New York Business Plan Competition. Mr. Kidwell is committed to supporting all students, valuing educators, and making fiscally responsible decisions that reflect the communities shared priorities. He would like to strengthen what's working, make improvements, and ensure the district remains a place of pride, opportunity, and excellence for every family in New Hartford.



Shahida Dar

Shahida Dar is seeking her first term on the board of education. She and her husband, Abdellatif Bourhim, have three children: one who attends Hughes Elementary School, one who attends Perry Junior High School and one who attends Syracuse University. She has been a district resident for nine years.

Ms. Dar earned her high school diploma and master of science degree in physics in Pakistan. She received her post graduate diploma in physics in Italy and attended the University of Delaware where she earned her doctoral degree in theoretical high energy physics. She is a professor at Mohawk Valley Community College where she teaches physics and engineering science.

Ms. Dar is involved in Integrated Community Alternatives Network (ICAN), Utica Children's Museum and is a science outreach volunteer at the Utica Zoo. She is also a member of the district's Educational Equity Committee. Ms. Dar would like to prioritize teamwork, transparency, and open communication among schools, families, and the community. She envisions a district that excels academically and promotes an inclusive and nurturing environment where every student feels valued and supported.

🔪 Brian Connery



Brian Connery is seeking his first term on the board of education. He and his wife, Andrea, have two children: both of whom attend Bradley Elementary School. He has

been a district resident for seven years.

Mr. Connery is a graduate of Beekmantown High School. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical and aeronautical engineering from Clarkson University and attended SUNY Plattsburgh for secondary education. He is currently a physics, chemistry and technology teacher for the Rome City School District.

Mr. Connery formerly attended New Hartford's Special Education PTSA meetings and is a member of the New Hartford Presbyterian Church. Mr. Connery aspires to fairly represent all district students for the outstanding education and opportunities they expect and deserve. He highly regards New Hartford's staff for their exceptional educational talent and dedication and eagerly welcomes the opportunity to be a collaborative part of the board.



Voters to decide on bus replacement proposition

On Tuesday, May 20, voters will decide on a school bus purchasing proposition at a total cost not to exceed \$700,000. The state will reimburse the district up to 61 percent of the cost of the new vehicles.

The proposal includes the purchase of a total of five diesel buses: two 66-passenger buses, two 30-passenger buses, and one 21-passenger wheelchair bus.

The proposed new bus purchases would replace five of the district's current buses, each of which have an average of 10 years of service and 100,000 miles.

The ideal replacement cycle for district buses is 10 years, when it is no longer cost effective to make the repairs needed to meet state inspection standards. Maintaining an aging school bus presents potential safety, maintenance and financial issues for the school district. After 10 to 12 years of service, bus maintenance costs increase by 10 to 20 percent and trade-in values decrease exponentially.

The district is required by the state to have enough buses to transport every student in the district in the event of an emergency, regardless of the number of students who walk or receive parent/guardian transportation to school. New Hartford buses transport approximately 2,500 students daily to 12 public, private and parochial schools, and travel 450,000 miles annually.

Get to know the new superintendent of schools: Q & A with Joe D'Apice



New Hartford Central School District's Superintendent of Schools Joe D'Apice began in his new role on April 28.

Mr. D'Apice is a district resident, parent and alum. He has more

than two decades of experience in education and previously served as the superintendent of schools for the Mount Markham Central School District, a position he held for nearly five years. Prior to becoming a superintendent, he was the principal of Richfield Springs Junior-Senior High School for seven years and began his career as a biology teacher in the Utica City School District.

Q: When and why did you become interested in a career in education and is there a person or a place that has been instrumental in your journey?

My interest in a career in education began during my formative years, fueled by a deep love for biology and a desire to make a positive impact on children. Becoming a biology teacher seemed the perfect way to combine these passions. More importantly, I wanted to provide students with the same level of support and guidance that my teachers at New Hartford provided me.

As a member of New Hartford CSD's graduating class of 2000, I experienced firsthand the transformative power of exceptional educators. I was blessed to have a plethora of teachers, coaches, and staff members who saw me as an individual, believed in my potential, and lovingly pushed me to be my best. Their dedication and personalized approach were instrumental in shaping my journey and ultimately inspired me to pursue a career in education.

Q: What about New Hartford Central School District appealed to you and made it the right place for you to continue your work as an educational leader?

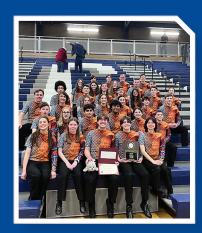
This is more than just a job; it's a unique opportunity to invest in the community that I love. What truly sets New Hartford apart is its people - the dedicated families, supportive community members, and passionate educators who are all committed to the success of our students. I am grateful and honored to serve as your new superintendent and promise to approach this responsibility with unwavering dedication and commitment.

Q: What are your priorities at New Hartford and why?

One of my priorities is to establish a strong foundation of open communication, collaboration, and transparency with all stakeholders. This involves a commitment to actively listen and learn from parents, students, teachers, staff, and community members to gain a comprehensive understanding of what is working well within our district and, equally important, what areas require improvement. By fostering a culture of transparency and responsiveness, we can ensure that our decisions are informed by the diverse perspectives that make up our school community.

This commitment to listening and learning directly supports my relentless focus on the whole child. We must recognize that student success extends far beyond academic achievement. It encompasses their social, emotional, and physical well-being. By understanding the needs of each student in these interconnected areas, we can create a supportive and nurturing environment that allows them to thrive. Focusing on the whole child will drive our efforts to provide targeted resources and interventions that address the diverse needs of our students, ensuring they are equipped to reach their full potential.

Furthermore, I am dedicated to maintaining a fiscally responsible and conservative posture for our taxpayers. This requires a deep dive into future budget allocations to ensure that every dollar is being spent in a way that directly impacts our students' learning and well-being. We must prioritize expenditures that demonstrate a clear return on investment, focusing on initiatives that enhance student outcomes and support our educational goals. This approach will ensure that we are maximizing our resources to provide the best possible education for our students while remaining accountable to the community we serve.





Success at States

New Hartford's Junior Varsity Winter Guard, Varsity Winter Guard, and Drumline achieved top rankings at the state championships with JV placing 2nd, varsity placing 4th and Drumline taking a 10th place finish in their respective classes. In early April, Varsity Winter Guard competed in the Winter Guard International (WGI) Color Guard World Championships in Dayton, Ohio. The team advanced to the preliminary round, where they faced-off against 128 teams from across the country.



School Tax Relief (STAR) Eligibility

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Enhanced STAR Program

- Provides an increased benefit for the primary residences of senior citizens (age 65 and older) with qualifying incomes (\$107,300 or less for the 2025-26 school year.)
- All Enhanced STAR recipients are required to participate in the Enhanced STAR Income Verification Program (IVP). In the first year that you apply for the Enhanced STAR exemption, your assessor will verify your eligibility based on the income information you provide. In the following years, NYS will verify your income eligibility. You will not need to reapply for the exemption or provide copies of your tax returns to your local assessor.
- Similar to Basic STAR, if a taxpayer is eligible and enrolled in the Enhanced STAR program, they will receive the benefit each year in one of two ways: an exemption or a credit.
- Based on the first \$86,100 of the full value of a home for the 2025-26 school year.

Senior Citizen Exemption

Seniors may also qualify for additional non-STAR Senior Citizen exemption. This exemption may entitle a homeowner to an exemption beyond the Enhanced STAR exemption.

Living Quarters for Senior Parent or Grandparent Exemption

- > The Board grants an exemption from taxation to the extent of an increase in assessed value of residential property resulting from the construction or reconstruction of the property for the purposes of providing living quarters, as a primary residence, for a parent or grandparent, who is 62 years of age or older. This exemption is subject to certain limitations detailed in Section 469 of the Real Property Tax Law.
- Tax exemption applications are processed through the appropriate town assessor's office and Senior Citizens exemptions are tied to age and income.

Empowering Digital Citizens

Fifth and sixth grade students at Myles Elementary School participated in a cybersafety learning session in an effort to build a safer community. Led by School Security Officer and New Hartford Police Investigator Annemarie Brelinsky, the session offered students strategies to safely navigate the digital world and use social media responsibly. Each of the district's three elementary schools hosted this lesson on safe internet use practices.







NEW HARTFORD

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 33 Oxford Road, New Hartford, NY 13413



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Budget News

News spring/2025-26

2025-2026 BUDGET OVERVIEW

Proposed budget: > \$67,724,281

Tax Levy change: > 3.26%

Budget Vote:

- ☑ Tuesday, May 20
- 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. New Hartford Senior High School Gymnasium, 33 Oxford Road, New Hartford

What's on the ballot:

✓ Bus Proposition: \$700,000
 ✓ 1 Open BOE Seat

Bus Proposition:

- To authorize the purchase of school buses at a cost not to exceed \$700,000.
- The state will reimburse the school up to 61 percent of the cost of these vehicles.

3 BOE Candidates:

- > JP Kidwell
- > Shahida Dar
- > Brian Connery

Voter Eligibility:

- **✓** 18 years of age or older
- A United States citizen
- **Registered** to vote
- A resident of New Hartford Central School District for 30 days or more

