



Highlights

BUDGET EDITION | 2022 - 2023



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Board of Education

Budget prioritizes student success and wellness as the district looks ahead

On Tuesday, May 17, residents will consider a \$102.7 million budget for the 2022-23 school year that preserves all academic programs and expands student supports with NO increase in the tax levy.

The proposed 2022-23 budget totals \$102,698,000, a \$661,000 increase compared to the current budget.

The plan is intended to support the district's four core values of academics, character, community and wellness.

"We have been successful this year in providing safe in-person learning opportunities for all students while still navigating the uncertainty of the COVID pandemic," said Superintendent Jody Monroe. "Our students are incredibly resilient, but we can't underestimate their needs as we look ahead.

"We are optimistic about what the coming school year will look like, but

what we have learned over the last two years is to be prepared for anything. This budget helps us in that preparation."

Maintaining small class sizes

Small class sizes, which have been a priority the last two years, will remain. At the elementary level (K-5), class sizes average 18 students per section; at the middle school and high school, core courses have 21-22 students per section. Student mental health would be reinforced with the addition of a new social worker at the middle school and a social worker to work with students and their families through a partnership with the Saratoga Center for the Family.

The budget also includes funding for a full-time Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). The position would help the district in its efforts to create a more inclusive school environment for all students and staff members.

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

2022-2023
PROPOSED
BUDGET
\$102,698,000

PROPOSED
SPENDING
INCREASE
**\$661,000 or
0.65%**

TAX LEVY
INCREASE
\$0

Budget Vote:

- Tuesday, May 17
- 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- BCHS Gym A

Board of Education Election (to fill two open board seats):

- Tamara A. Starr
- John Walston
- Robert Tietjen
- Douglas Lloyd

ESTIMATED TAX RATE CHANGES:

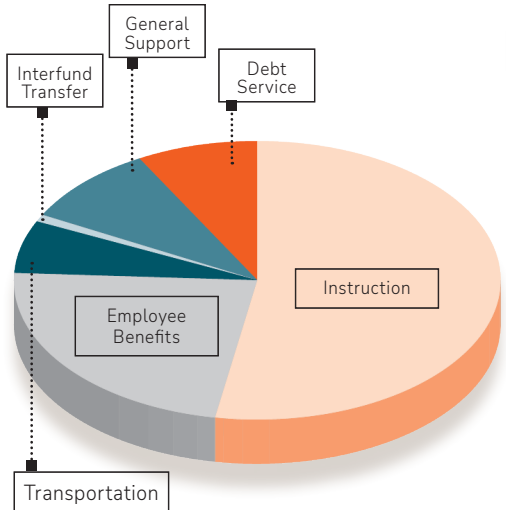
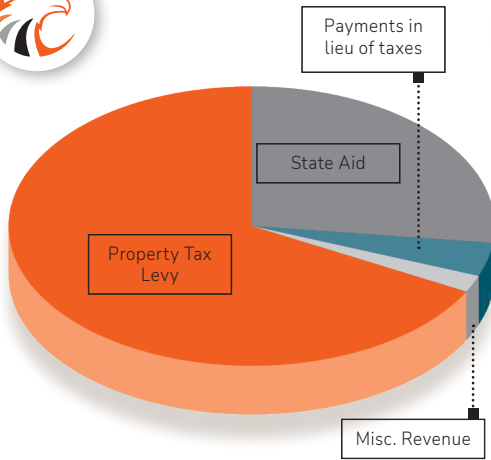
Town of Bethlehem

-1.10% or \$23.60 less per \$100k

Town of New Scotland

+2.75% or \$60.40 more per \$100k





BUDGET VOTE:
Tuesday, May 17

VOTE IN PERSON
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
High School Gym A

2022-23 budget questions and answers

- Q. What will the impact of the budget be on my tax bill?**
- A.** The tax rate for residents living in the town of Bethlehem is expected to decrease by 1.10%, or approximately \$23.60 less per \$100,000 of assessed value. In the town of New Scotland, the tax rate is expected to increase by 2.75%, or approximately \$60.40 more per \$100,000 of assessed value. The rates fluctuate from year to year. In the current year, the tax rate for New Scotland residents decreased by 2.23%, while the tax rate in Bethlehem decreased by 0.14%.
- Q. If there is no tax levy increase, why are there changes to the tax rates?**
- A.** The school district only controls the tax levy. The levy is the total amount of money the school district collects from local taxpayers to support its schools. The district is proposing no change to the levy. However, other factors that change annually impact tax rates and in turn, your tax bill. These include the total assessed value of taxable properties in your town and the equalization rates that are determined by New York State to level assessment values between municipalities within a school district.
- Q. Why is the district looking to purchase only one electric school bus in 2022-23?**
- A.** The decision to purchase one additional electric bus is based on logistics and cost-efficiency. In May 2021, BC voters approved the purchase of five electric buses and charging stations for the new vehicles. That charging infrastructure is in place and the district is awaiting delivery of five electric buses this spring. Last year, the bus purchase was aided by \$1M in grant funding that is not available for 2022-23. The district's current charging capacity can support a sixth bus, however, additional charging equipment for up to 25 more buses approved as part of the capital project will not be complete until 2024. The district also expects that new state and federal incentives will be made available in the next few years to reduce the cost of electric buses. As part of the 2022-23 NYS budget, all school districts will be required to have fully electric bus fleets by 2035. BC is one of the first districts in the state to have already begun to electrify its fleet.



ON THE BALLOT BUS PROPOSITION

Bus referendum replaces aging vehicles, looks to future

This year's bus proposition will appear on the ballot as a separate proposition from the school budget. At a cost of \$821,000, the proposal would allow the district to purchase four school buses: one 70-passenger electric bus and three mid-size 45-passenger diesel buses that can accommodate wheelchairs.

Approximately 63% of the cost of borrowing for the bus purchases is covered by state aid, resulting in a final cost to the district of \$303,770.

This year's bus purchase continues the momentum towards an electric bus fleet with the addition of a sixth electric bus in the district. All school districts in New York state will be required to have a fully electric bus fleet by 2035. This year's plan will also help the district achieve greater efficiencies by reducing the overall size of the bus fleet as more older buses are retired.



School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2021-22 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2022-23 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2022-23 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$102,037,000	\$102,698,000	\$102,420,000
Increase/Decrease for the 2022-23 School Year		\$661,000	\$383,000
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		0.65%	0.38%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.70%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$69,233,000	\$69,233,000	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	N/A	N/A	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	N/A	N/A	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	N/A	N/A	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$69,233,000	\$69,233,000	\$68,955,000
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$4,757,175	\$3,040,754	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$65,063,935	\$66,295,097	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$64,475,825	\$66,192,246	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$588,110	\$102,851	
Administrative Component	\$9,089,078	\$9,363,396	\$9,085,396
Program Component	\$75,616,225	\$77,928,526	\$77,928,526
Capital Component	\$17,331,697	\$15,406,078	\$15,406,078
* A contingency budget would result in an overall \$278,000 reduction in budgetary appropriations from the administrative component of the budget. Some new or vacant positions would remain unfilled and there would be reductions in certain professional fees.			
		DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
		Bus Purchase	\$821,000
** 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)			
Under the Budget Proposed for the 2022-23 School Year			
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹ (Town of Bethlehem)			\$606
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹ (Town of New Scotland)			\$600

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2022-23 by the qualified voters of the Bethlehem Central School District, Albany County, New York, will be held at Bethlehem Central High School in said district on Tuesday, May 17, 2022 between the hours of 7:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the school district, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine. Absentee ballots must be received by 5 p.m. on May 17, 2022.

¹ The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

Q. Why is the district reducing one teaching position at the elementary level?

A. Enrollment in grades K-5 across the district will decline by 50 students for the 2022-23 school year. This is allowing the district to reduce its elementary teaching staff by one position while keeping class sizes small. The average class size at each of the five elementary schools will remain at approximately 18 students for 2022-23. Smaller class sizes have been a priority especially since the start of the pandemic. At the secondary level, core courses have 21-22 students. The reduction will be made through attrition, which means not filling a vacancy created by a retirement.

Q. What happens if the budget is defeated?

A. If a budget is defeated, the district has three options: put the same budget before voters a second time; put a revised budget before voters; or adopt a contingent budget. When a contingent budget is adopted, the district is required to levy no more taxes in the coming year than it did in the current year – a 0% tax levy increase. Since the proposed budget includes no tax levy increase (0%) for 2022-23, the impact of a contingent budget would be minimal. With a contingent budget, the district would have to eliminate approximately \$278,000 from the administrative component that could include leaving unfilled positions vacant and a reduction in some professional fees.



BETHLEHEM CENTRAL BY THE NUMBERS

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There are 22 languages spoken at home by BC students include Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Spanish, Gujarati, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Karen and Edo.

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Bethlehem Central School District has been named the #1 school district in the Greater Capital Region five years in a row by the *Albany Business Review*.

Bethlehem is ranked #52 in the United States by *Niche* for having "The Best Teachers in America."

52

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A record 16 BC seniors have been named 2022 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists: Aliza Cotton, Orion Dennin, Connor Heineman, Eric Jestel, Maren Louridas, Heera Narang, Abigail Nautel, Sarah NeJame, Anushka Patel, Lindsay Pierce, Gordon Su, Ella Traynor, Victoria Voronina, Michael Xie, Tao Xie and Daniel Zhou.

4

Since 1962, only four Capital Region students have been part of the prestigious U.S. Senate Youth Program. One of them is current BC junior Henry Reichman, who is one of New York state's two delegates for the program this year. Henry is the second BC student to represent NYS in the program's 60-year history.

BC students recently earned 26 medals at the New York State Science Olympiad in categories including chemistry, biology, forensics and making a ping pong parachute!

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When investing for the future, the sky's the limit

BCHS senior Daniel Zhou gets a good look at the two trophies delivered to him by Liz Reidel, national director of the SIFMA Foundation. Zhou won both the New York state and national Investwrite competitions, topping nearly 2,800 other students with a detailed and innovative investment plan focused on space exploration that wowed the judges.



Only good vibes at Hamagrael

Students and staff lined the hallways recently to wish their school counselor Michelle Lavigne luck in the Boston Marathon. It must have worked. Lavigne finished in 03:24:36, averaging 7 min 49 sec a mile.



Student-run dog treat business takes off

Students in the BCHS RISE program have been making delicious, hand-made dog treats that are freshly baked onsite. The students are running their own small business known as the BC Barkery. They sell their cleverly packaged treats at pop-up shops throughout the year.



World Cup in sight for BCHS student

The BC community turned out to wish BCHS sophomore Claire Hutton the very best as she joins the U17 U.S. National Soccer Team. Claire and the U.S. team began competing internationally, starting in the Dominican Republic, with their eyes set on the World Cup.



Wellness Day a success for students and staff

Academics. Character. Community. Wellness. The district's core values are built on a foundation of health and well-being. On Mar. 18, students and staff got to choose wellness activities to strengthen their bodies and minds, all while having a lot of fun.



Clothing and textiles and books, oh my

Members of the BC Green Team had a lead role in the Town of Bethlehem's recent Spring Recycling Day. The group collected 6,098 lbs of clothing and textiles, 11,210 lbs of paper, over 6,200 books, and 143 bicycles. Everything collected was sorted for reuse or recycling.



Micieli named NYS Social Studies Teacher of the Year

Sixth-grade social studies teacher Khalan Micieli answers questions about a lesson on women in ancient history. Micieli was recently named NYS Middle School Social Studies Teacher of the Year by her teaching peers across the state.



Community grants help support BC schools

Students at Slingerlands got the chance to put their own designs on the walls of the K-1 wing thanks to a grant from the Bethlehem Central Community Foundation (BCCF). Every year, BCCF provides several classroom innovation grants that enhance learning for BC students K-12. Thanks, BCCF!



An elementary robotics lesson

A lovable robot named Dash has been engaging and challenging students in STEM learning. The students are introduced to coding through an app called Blockly that helps them write code to make Dash move, make sounds, blink lights, and dance. And it turns out, Dash has all the right moves.



ON THE BALLOT BOARD ELECTION

Tamara A. Starr



Tamara A. Starr of Delmar is seeking her first term on the Board of Education. A district resident for two and a half years, she is a Senior Business Analyst and UX/UI Designer at Optum. Starr and her husband, Daniel, have three children: two at Slingerlands Elementary School and one preschooler.

Robert Tietjen



Robert Tietjen of Delmar is seeking his first term on the Board of Education. A district resident for 17 years, he is an attorney with Conway, Donovan & Manley PLLC. Tietjen and his wife, Debra, have three children: two BCHS graduates and one in grade 10 at the high school.

John Walston



John Walston of Delmar is seeking his first term on the Board of Education. A district resident for 21 years, he is the owner of Skylands Services, Inc. Walston and his wife, Megan, have three children: one at the middle school, one at the high school and another, a graduate of BCHS.

Douglas Lloyd



Douglas Lloyd of Delmar is seeking his first term on the Board of Education. A district resident for the past eight years, he is Director of Technology for Essential Networks LLC. Lloyd has two children, both of whom attend Slingerlands Elementary School.

ELECT TWO BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

In person voting at
BCHS in Gym A
Tuesday, May 17 from
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.



On June 2, watch for a special edition of **The Spotlight newspaper** featuring members of the **BCHS Class of 2022**

A special THANK YOU to Board of Education members Jonathan Fishbein and Wendy Samson who will say goodbye to the Board in June. Their volunteer service to the BC school community is greatly appreciated!

ON THE BALLOT 2022 CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

Saving for future capital expenses

A separate proposition will appear on the ballot seeking voter approval to establish a 2022 Capital Reserve Fund up to \$20 million. A capital reserve fund allows the district to set aside money for future construction projects and major purchases, much like a savings account. Because capital assets have a predetermined useful life expectancy, a capital reserve reduces the need to borrow funds to replace those assets in the future, yet still maximizes state aid. Only in years where a surplus exists could money be placed in the capital reserve. Voter approval is needed to establish a capital reserve and would also be required at the time capital reserve funds were to be spent. There is no tax increase associated with the creation of the reserve fund.

Security camera upgrades

The 2022-23 proposed budget includes a \$100,000 "Transfer to Capital Fund" for the replacement of 68 old Cisco security cameras at the high school. The cameras will be replaced with Avigilon cameras that provide better resolution. The new cameras will also unify the school's 143-camera system, providing a more seamless security network at BCHS.



Changes to bus eligibility zones on hold

In response to the ongoing bus driver shortage, the district had been planning to limit bus eligibility for students K-12. This plan would have had to be approved by voters as a ballot proposition to be implemented in 2022-23. The proposition has been put on hold as the district continues its efforts to attract bus driver candidates. It will NOT appear on the ballot on May 17.

Recruitment for drivers in the district is continuous. Drivers start at \$23.60/hour. The district has held several Ride-and-Drive Open House events. Learn more about becoming a bus driver at www.bethlehemschools.org.

Adjusting school start times under consideration

Despite the ongoing driver shortage, the district is still committed to restoring a later start time at the high school. The current start time is 7:35 a.m.

Moving the high school start time would require adjustments to the start and end times at other schools in the district. To explore the best options for meeting this goal of a later start for high school students, the district is reconvening the Bell Time Committee established in 2017 to make recommendations for the district moving forward. Current bell times at all schools will remain the same for the 2022-23 school year.

All updates regarding school bell times or bus eligibility will be shared with families on a regular basis.

A closer look at tax rates...

Estimated Tax Rates

PER \$1,000 OF ASSESSED VALUE (ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST CENT)

	2021-22 FINAL	2022-23 ESTIMATED	% CHANGE
Town of Bethlehem	\$21.51	\$21.28	(1.10%)
Town of New Scotland	\$21.98	\$22.59	2.75%

Tax rates for 2022-23 are estimates only. Often the tax rates differ between towns because of equalization rates set by the New York State Office of Real Property Services. The equalization rate for the Town of Bethlehem is currently at 86% (down from 93%). The equalization rate for the Town of New Scotland is currently 81% (down from 91%). The district sets final tax rates in August, after the towns finalize assessment figures and the state confirms equalization rates. The rates and estimated changes shown here DO NOT reflect any STAR or other tax exemptions that may reduce individuals' school tax bills.

HERE IS WHAT'S NEW IN THE BUDGET

Instructional

- Add 1.0 FTE Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (see sidebar)
- Add 1.0 FTE Social Worker at BCMS
- Reduce 1.0 FTE elementary teacher based on decreased enrollment
- Increase faculty advisor stipends for extracurricular opportunities at BCMS, BCHS and art enrichment at the elementary level

- Add 1.0 FTE Social Worker for students and families K-12

Transportation

- Replace three older vehicles (1999, 2002, 2012) with two new vehicles: a Chevy Suburban 4x4 with plow and a Chevy Tahoe (this is separate from the bus purchase plan)

Athletics

- Add an assistant football coach at the modified and varsity levels
- Add an assistant tennis coach for boys and girls at the varsity level
- Rent fields for use by field hockey teams and other sports displaced while onsite field improvements are ongoing as part of the current capital project

Technology

- Replace student Chromebooks in grades 1, 5 and 9 and add devices for K students
- Update Chromebook devices for teachers
- Upgrades to ensure privacy and security of student data

NEW POSITION SUPPORTS DISTRICT MISSION

The district's mission is to educate and prepare all students to reach their potential, discover their purpose, and be engaged members of the community. The new Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will implement district initiatives that support student success by breaking down barriers and fostering a spirit of appreciation for differences and a positive school environment for all. The new director will serve as Title IX coordinator to ensure compliance with federal and state laws relating to sexual harassment and violence prevention. In addition, the DEI director will review the effectiveness of the district's inclusive hiring and recruiting efforts and make recommendations to enhance these practices and will keep staff up to date on changes to laws, regulations and best practices.



-BUDGET STORY CONTINUED FROM: PAGE 1

Technology in the proposed budget includes upgrades to the Chromebook devices teachers use and a scheduled replacement of student Chromebooks every four years. In 2022-23, devices at three grade levels (grades 1, 5 and 9) will be replaced and Chromebooks for kindergarten classes will be added, providing 1:1 Chromebook access in all grades. Online privacy and security are priorities in the budget with multiple layers of filtering and monitoring, hardware upgrades and

software that meets the strict NYS Ed Law 2-d regulations for student data privacy.

The proposed spending plan was developed during several weeks of public meetings that began in February.

"The budget plan for next year would provide the resources for keeping our students on track, keeping them engaged and for creating a school environment that is as supportive as possible," said Superintendent Monroe.



700 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, New York 12054

Board of Education

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Welcoming our audiences again...

Experience BC's state-of-the-art high school auditorium on May 17

On Tuesday, May 17, residents will have the opportunity to vote on the 2022-23 BCSD budget and elect two members of the Board of Education. For the first time, voters will also be able to experience the new high school auditorium, which was completed in 2020. Music groups will be performing between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. on the evening of the vote.

The auditorium made its official public debut in April when more than 100 students took part in Stage 700's amazing production of Les Misérables School Edition. Cast and crew of the show received standing ovations for each of their four performances.



VOTER ELIGIBILITY & ABSENTEE BALLOTS

To vote, you must be at least 18 years old, a U.S. citizen and a resident of the Bethlehem Central School District for at least 30 days prior to the vote. You do NOT need to be registered to vote. If you need an absentee ballot, contact District Clerk Brittany Barrett by email at bbarrett@bethlehemschools.org or by phone at 518-439-7098.

NOW HIRING FOR THE 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR!

Bus drivers have the power to positively influence the beginning and ending of the school day for our students with a smile, a kind word, and a safe ride! Please consider joining the Student Transportation Team and help us maintain our friendly, efficient and professional service.

- ✓ \$23.60/hour to start
- ✓ Paid training
- ✓ \$1,000 retention bonus

It's not just bus drivers we need! Hiring for all positions. Scan the QR code below or visit www.bethlehemschools.org



SCAN ME

Vote in person:

- ✓ Tuesday, May 17
- ✓ 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- ✓ High School Gym A
- ✓ 700 Delaware Ave., Delmar

What will I be voting on?

- A proposed budget for the 2022-23 school year with a 0% tax levy increase
- Two members of the Board of Education
- A proposal to purchase four new school buses (including one electric bus)
- A capital reserve fund that will allow the district to plan and save for future building expenses