



Highlights

BUDGET EDITION | 2025 - 2026

**PAGE 2:**
Expenditures/Revenues**PAGES 4-5:**
Photo Highlights**PAGE 6:**
Board of Ed Election

Delivering top-quality education with a budget focused on student success

On Tuesday, May 20, residents will consider a \$116.6 million budget for the 2025-26 school year. The budget would maintain high-quality instruction, small class sizes and support for students in all grades.

The proposed 2025-26 budget includes a tax levy increase of \$820,000, or 1.12%. The budget totals \$116,623,936, a 2.27% increase compared to the current budget. Both the tax levy increase and overall budget increase are **BELOW** the annual rate of inflation. The plan proposes the use of \$715,241 in fund balance to keep the tax levy increase within New York State's required tax cap formula.

The budget balances student needs against a backdrop of economic uncertainty. The year-to-year budget increase is mainly due to the rising costs of healthcare (medical and pharmaceutical) and retirement benefits. These contractual and mandated expenses are set to increase by \$1,893,736, or 6.5%, next year. Over the

last two years, health and retirement costs in the district have increased by \$4,578,239, or 17.4%. Salary costs, which are subject to contractual agreements, are expected to increase by 2.8% in the new school year.

"Education is a people business. The reason BC is continually ranked as one of the best districts in New York State is because of its people," said Superintendent Jody Monroe. "When you are asked to invest in schools, you are investing in those individuals who support students every day: teachers, principals, bus drivers, food service workers, grounds and maintenance employees, counselors, and coaches."

The proposed budget continues current academic programs, services, and student opportunities in music, art, and athletics. The budget maintains the smaller class sizes that have been in place since the pandemic. For grades K-5, the budget includes a new English Language Arts program known as Bookworms to increase reading comprehension and writing skills.

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

**2025-2026
PROPOSED
BUDGET****\$116,623,936****PROPOSED
BUDGET
INCREASE****\$2,586,402
or 2.27%****TAX LEVY
INCREASE****1.12%**

Budget Vote:

- ☒ Tuesday, May 20
- ☒ 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- ☒ BCHS Gym A

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

- ☒ John Walston
- ☒ Susan Barber
- ☒ Robert Tietjen

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

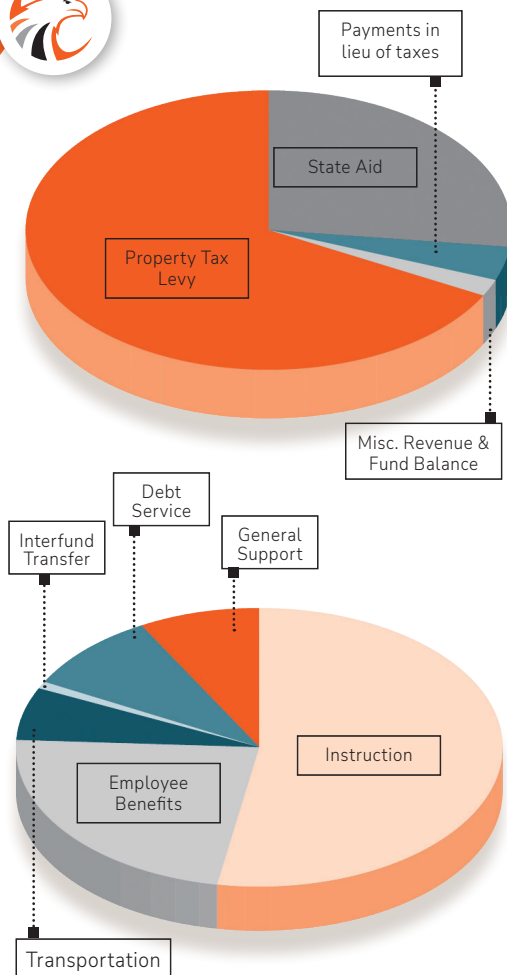
ESTIMATED TAX RATE CHANGES:

Town of Bethlehem

+1.35% or \$30 more per \$100k

Town of New Scotland

-1.64% or \$37 less per \$100k**-MORE BUDGET DETAILS INSIDE**



Where the money comes from...

	2024-25 BUDGET	2025-26 PROPOSED	% OF TOTAL REVENUES
State Aid (all sources)	\$33,381,560	\$34,616,508	29.7%
Use of Fund Balance	\$0	\$715,241	0.6%
Payments in Lieu of Taxes	\$3,855,000	\$3,624,000	3.1%
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$3,672,437	\$3,719,550	3.2%
Property Tax Levy	\$73,128,537	\$73,948,637	63.4%
Total Revenues	\$114,037,534	\$116,623,936	100%

Where the money goes...

	2024-25 BUDGET	2025-26 PROPOSED	% CHANGE
Instruction (51.2% of budget)	\$57,710,932	\$59,690,488	3.43%
Employee Benefits (26.5% of budget)	\$28,969,521	\$30,863,257	6.53%
Student Transportation (5.5% of budget)	\$5,326,865	\$6,458,626	21.25%
Interfund Transfers (0.9% of budget)	\$434,000	\$1,100,000	153.5%
General Support (8.0% of budget)	\$10,973,949	\$9,314,226	-15.12%
Debt Service (7.9% of budget)	\$10,622,267	\$9,197,339	-13.41%
Total Expenditures	\$114,037,534	\$116,623,936	2.27%

**BUDGET
VOTE:
Tuesday,
May 20**

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

**Universal Pre-Kindergarten lottery is May 30 - See back panel for details
To be eligible, a child must have been born between 12/2/2020-12/1/2021**

2025-26 budget questions and answers

Q. What will the impact of the budget be on my 2025-26 tax bill?

A. The 2025-26 school tax rate for residents of the town of Bethlehem is estimated to increase by 1.35%, or \$30 more per \$100,000 of assessed value. In the town of New Scotland, the school tax rate is estimated to decrease by 1.64%, or approximately \$37 less per \$100,000 of assessed value in 2025-26. The rates fluctuate from year to year and from municipality to municipality. These fluctuations are driven by the total tax levy, the total assessed value of property in each community and the equalization rates set by the state of New York. For a look at recent tax rate trends in the district, visit bethlehemschools.org/departments-services/budget-finance/. Final tax rates are determined each year in August, after tax rolls are finalized and before tax bills are issued.

Q. How does enrollment factor into district decision-making?

A. The proposed budget continues all academic programs and opportunities for students and maintains smaller class sizes. Enrollment impacts annual decisions on staffing. Compared to its 2006-07 peak, district enrollment has declined by 21.3%. To address enrollment declines, the district has reduced staff incrementally through attrition (when positions become vacant, they are not filled if not necessary to meet student needs). The proposed 2025-26 budget eliminates several staff positions (7.5 FTE instructional positions and 11 full- and part-time support positions). These are reductions of positions, not people; they affect only vacant positions or those that will be eliminated after an individual retires. These staff reductions will not impact students. Enrollment is influenced by birth rates, societal trends, economic conditions, and housing markets. Enrollment is expected to decline by 1.8%, a net decline of 67 students in 2025-26. The decline at the K-5 level is anticipated to be 4.6%, or 81 fewer students. Enrollment in grades 6-8 is expected to increase by 24 students, or 2.6%. BCHS enrollment is expected to decline by 10 students, or less than 1%. New housing developments could lead to enrollment growth over the next several years. Administrators are working with local officials to assess the impact of housing growth on the schools.



ON THE BALLOT TWO PROPOSITIONS

BUS PURCHASE PROPOSITION

A school bus purchase proposition will be on the ballot on May 20. The bus proposition would allow the district to replace aging school buses. The plan is to purchase six vehicles, including three large 70-passenger diesel buses and three small 24-passenger gas-powered buses for student transportation, at a cost not to exceed \$814,770. Approximately 66% of the borrowing cost for the purchase is covered by state aid, resulting in a final maximum cost to the district of roughly \$277,022 for the six vehicles.

The district is not planning to add to its fleet of electric school buses in 2025-26 due to uncertainty surrounding the federal grant funding that has made EV bus purchases affordable. The district is continuing its commitment to cleaner energy transportation and is planning to invest \$22,750 as part of the budget to purchase EV charge management software to maximize the efficiency of BC's EV buses.

2025 CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

A separate proposition will appear on the ballot seeking to establish a 2025 Capital Reserve Fund up to \$30 million. Reserve funds are separate accounts set up to finance various district expenses and serve as voter-approved savings accounts that are used for specific purposes.

A capital reserve fund allows the district to set aside money for future construction projects and major building repairs, reducing the need for borrowing for facilities improvement projects. Only in years where a surplus exists can money be placed in the capital reserve.

Voter approval 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.

School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2024-25 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2025-26 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2025-26 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$114,037,534	\$116,623,936	\$ 115,803,836
Increase/Decrease for the 2025-26 School Year		\$2,586,402	\$1,766,302
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		2.27%	1.58%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.95%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$73,128,537	\$73,948,637	
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)	\$73,128,537	\$73,948,637	\$73,128,537
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$4,118,159	\$3,016,883	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$69,644,499	\$70,931,754	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$69,010,378	\$70,931,754	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$634,121	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$10,085,506	\$10,123,707	\$9,788,513
Program Component	\$85,697,477	\$88,939,235	\$88,627,279
Capital Component	\$18,254,551	\$17,560,994	\$17,348,044

*A contingency budget would result in a reduction of approximately \$820,000 in budgetary appropriations including the potential elimination of new or upgraded equipment, curtailing of professional development and inservice training allocations, elimination of vacant, instructional positions which may result in increased teacher to student ratios or limitations in course availability, decreases to student supplies and resources and delayed implementation of information of information, technology and security safeguards.

** 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
Bus Purchase	\$814,770

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2025-26 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹ (Town of Bethlehem)	\$511
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹ (Town of New Scotland)	\$501

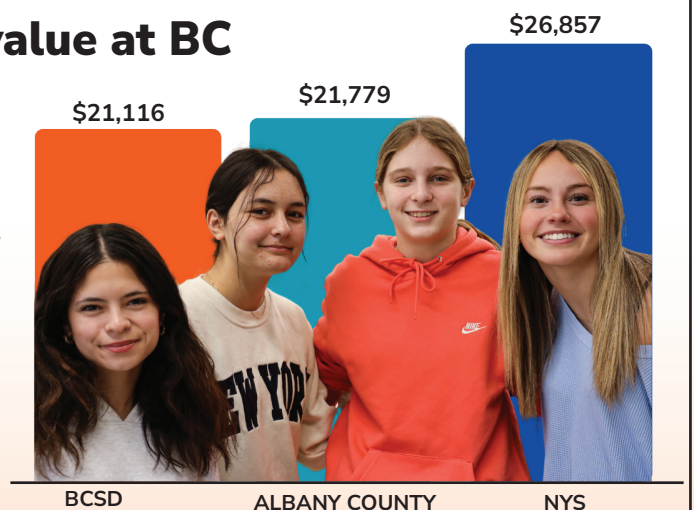
The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2025-26 by the qualified voters of the Bethlehem Central School District, Albany County, New York, will be held at Bethlehem Central High School in said district on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 between the hours of 7:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the school district, 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 20, 2025.

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

Education and value at BC

According to the most recent data from the NYS Education Department, per-pupil spending in the Bethlehem Central School District is \$663 LESS than the average per pupil spending by districts in Albany County and \$5,741 LESS than the average per pupil spending of districts in New York State.

Source: NYS Education Department (NYSED) Report Card





Unified sports are a year-round success

BC's Unified Bowling team celebrated another successful season with friends, faculty and staff during an afternoon of recreational bowling at Del Lanes on Mar. 14. Unified sports, sponsored in part by Special Olympics, supports teams of students with and without developmental disabilities. BC offers Unified Bocce in fall, Unified Bowling in winter and Unified Basketball in spring. Go Eagles!



Elsmere students prove science is swell

Prove it. That's what students at Elsmere set out to do as they tested hypotheses, gathered and analyzed data, and demonstrated their research techniques for family, friends and judges (including Principal Kate Kloss) at the Elsmere Science Fair on Mar. 20.



Cheer on your BC Eagles during the month of May

The boys' varsity tennis team is off to a great start this season with an early undefeated record. The tennis team is a Section 2 powerhouse, having won the section championship five of the last six years. The tennis team schedule and all sports schedules are available via Schedule Galaxy and can be found by scanning the QR code above.



Glenmont students are First in Math and in smiles

On May 31, a trio of Glenmont School first graders will compete in the NYS First in Math competition at the State Museum. Breanna L., Jacob D. and Zephyra M. will compete as a team after they scored top individual performances during an online test in March. With the high scores, they earned trophies and \$1,000 for the school to purchase math books and supplies. We have been rewarded with these smiles!



Stage 700's Anything Goes wows audiences at BCHS

Audiences packed the BCHS auditorium for this year's spring musical, Anything Goes. What they experienced was a Broadway-worthy production featuring showstopping dance numbers and amazing singing and acting. Kudos to the more than 90 students who received standing ovations for their roles onstage and behind the scenes, and to the faculty advisors and volunteers who make exceptional entertainment the standard at BC.



Career Day volunteers leave lasting impressions

Nearly 60 parent volunteers and guest speakers spent the day with seventh graders at BCMS in April, answering questions and helping to ignite interest in careers ranging from law enforcement to entrepreneurship, engineering to marketing, medicine, banking and more. Thank you to all of our volunteers including Curtis Rich, Kevin Nasadoski and Jason Bradt, pictured above (l to r).



Reading dogs make great listeners, and sweet pals

Some of the most beloved visitors at Eagle Elementary School are the reading dogs. Reading dogs are specific types of therapy dogs. The dogs are naturally good listeners and are non-judgmental, making them a great audience for children who might be hesitant to read aloud in front of others. Reading dogs can be found making frequent stops at the district's elementary schools.



Looking for a fight? Avoid these skilled debaters

Congratulations to BCHS students Sam Harwayne-Hymes, Kieran McNay and Molly Wladis on strong performances in the NYS Forensics League Championship Tournament held at the Bronx High School of Science. The trio debated whether the development of artificial intelligence is immoral. Molly and Kieran will compete in the NCFL Grand National Tournament in Chicago over Memorial Day weekend.



Walk and roll, wellness and safety

Twice a year, BC schools promote Walk or Bike to School Days like the one pictured above with Hamagrael Principal Ian Knox leading students safely to school. The Town of Bethlehem and the Bethlehem Police Department will host their annual Walk and Roll Fest for all residents on Saturday, May 17 from 10am to 1pm at 250 Delaware Ave. in Delmar. Walk and Roll is a bike and pedestrian safety event for the whole family.



Patrick, take the wheel

When the BC Transportation Department wanted to show prospective applicants just how easy it is to drive a school bus, they called on BC senior Patrick Noonan to prove it as part of a fun video. With experienced driver trainer Roxanne Richey by his side, Noonan cruised through the transportation parking lot, put the bus in reverse, and went through the steps of helping a "student" cross the road. BC is hiring drivers and attendants. Interested applicants can call 518-439-3830 for information.



Sharing is caring at Slingerlands Cultural Fair

Did you know there are 42 languages spoken by families at BC? Slingerlands recently celebrated the cultural diversity represented in the school and district. Storytelling, a drum circle, bagpipes, festive foods and interactive activities helped tell the story of holidays, customs and events that are the fabric of our students' lives.



It's ready, set, play for fifth-grade orchestra students

It was called the Spring String Fling. Eighty fifth-grade orchestra students from the five elementary schools visited the middle school in March to meet Gr. 6 orchestra teacher Jody VanVoris, be introduced to their new classmates and ensemble members and get a feel for the middle school music program. The fun fling was organized by VanVoris and elementary orchestra teacher Lillierose David. Bravo!



ON THE BALLOT BOARD ELECTION

Susan Barber



Susan Barber of Slingerlands is seeking a first term on the Board of Education. A district resident for 39 years, Barber is a reading teacher in the Niskayuna Central School District. Barber is also a parent of three children: a student at Slingerlands Elementary School, and two younger children.

Robert Tietjen



Robert Tietjen of Delmar is seeking a second term on the Board of Education. A district resident for 22 years, Tietjen is an attorney for The State University of New York (SUNY). Tietjen is also a parent of three children who are all recent graduates of Bethlehem Central High School.

ELECT TWO BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

In-person voting at
BCHS in Gym A
Tuesday, May 20 from
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

MEET THE CANDIDATES

A Meet the Candidates Night will be held on Wednesday, May 14 at 6:30 p.m. at BCBS in Room D-122. The event will be recorded and posted to the district website for viewing prior to the election.

John Walston



John Walston of Delmar is seeking a second term on the Board of Education. A district resident for 23 years, Walston is the owner of Skylands Services, Inc. Walston is also a parent of three children: a student at Bethlehem Central High School, and two recent graduates of the high school.

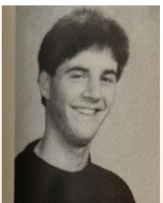


Friday, May 23 will be a
REGULAR SCHOOL DAY
due to the use of the only
snow day available per the
2024-25 school calendar.

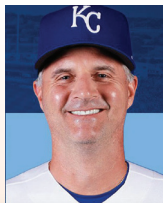
BIG TIME ALUMNI MAKING HEADLINES IN NATIONAL SPORTS

It turns out the path to prominence in the world of sports travels west from Delaware Avenue in Delmar to Kansas City, Missouri. That's where two Bethlehem Central alumni are touching the stratosphere of athletic achievement in their respective careers.

Matt Quatraro, BCHS Class of 1992: Quatraro is currently the manager of the Kansas City Royals. Under Quatraro's leadership during the 2024 season, the team made a historic turnaround and reached the American League championship series before losing to the Yankees. Quatraro finished second in voting for Major League Baseball's Manager of the Year award in 2024, only his second year as manager.



Matt Quatraro - Class of 1992



Claire Hutton - Class of 2023



Claire Hutton, BCHS Class of 2023: This year, Hutton was called up to play on the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team. One of the team's youngest players, Hutton has proven to be a rising star with her sights set on the 2027 World Cup and the 2028 Olympic team. A professional player for the Kansas City Current, Hutton started 19 of 22 matches in her rookie season in 2024 and was named a finalist for both 2024 NWSL Rookie of the Year and 2024 U.S. Soccer Young Player of the Year.



Budget plan includes \$100,000 for added security

The proposed 2025-26 budget includes a \$100,000 capital outlay to expand installation of the Avigilon Door Status Monitoring System throughout the district. The door alarm system immediately alerts staff if an exterior door is propped open or is ajar during the school day. The alert system allows for a prompt response so the door can be closed and locked or repaired, if needed.

The monitoring system has been installed at the high school and at the middle school following voter approval during the last two budget cycles. The 2025-26 budget would expand the door alert system to the elementary schools, beginning with Hamagrael. The system is integrated with the Avigilon security camera and access control systems, which are used districtwide.

DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN FEATURES NEW DASHBOARD

In 2024-25, a committee of stakeholders reviewed the BCSD Strategic Plan, which was introduced in 2019. The plan has been extended with goals identified in the areas of Academics, Character, Community and Wellness. It has also been reinvented with a new online data dashboard to help district residents track progress toward meeting those goals.

[Link to Strategic Plan](#)



A closer look at tax rates...

Estimated Tax Rates

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

	2024-25 FINAL	2025-26 ESTIMATED	% CHANGE
Town of Bethlehem	\$22.27	\$22.57	+1.35%
Town of New Scotland	\$22.59	\$22.22	-1.64%

Tax rates for 2025-26 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 64% (down from 71%). The equalization rate for the Town of New Scotland is currently at 65% (down from 70%). 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.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE PROPOSED 2025-26 BUDGET

Classroom Instruction

- Budget includes staffing to maintain the smaller class sizes that have been in place since the pandemic (elementary K-5 classes average 19 students per section; classes in grades 6-12 average 21 students per section in core courses)
- To increase reading competency and writing skills, the plan implements the phonics-based Bookworms English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum in grades K-5
- To match projected enrollment for 2025-26, the budget reduces 7.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) instructional positions, and 11 full- and part-time support positions (These are reductions of positions, not people; they affect only vacant

positions or those that will be eliminated after an individual retires. The reductions through attrition will not impact students and will save more than \$1.3 million)

Student Support Services & Student Opportunities

- To support food services at the district's seven schools, the budget includes a general fund transfer to the program of \$210,000
- The plan allocates \$5,000 for the school gardens. BCHS now features a "kitchen garden" where hundreds of pounds of produce grown in the garden go directly to the cafeteria for use in meals
- Proposed budget provides funding (\$5,000) for arts and

education to expand arts enrichment programs for students

- The plan includes \$2,850 for an ergometer and taping table to support health of student-athletes
- Budget expands opportunities in the following clubs and activities: Odyssey of the Mind, Yearbook, Pickleball, Ultimate Frisbee, Ski Club and French Honor Society

Transportation, Facilities & Human Resources

- To improve efficiency and recordkeeping, the budget allows the digitization of employee records (funds year two of a two-year project at \$40,500)
- The plan invests \$22,750 in EV Charge Management Software to ensure EV school bus efficiency

BC students outperform thousands of competitors to earn top spots in Stock Market Game

At a time when most people are feeling jittery about their investment portfolios, two BCHS seniors have embraced market volatility and defied the odds as New York State's top finishers in the Spring 2025 Stock Market Game.

Veer Williams, 1st Place: A senior and president of the BCHS Stock Market Club, Williams rang up more investment earnings than any of the 4,537 teams and individuals competing across the state. The Stock Market Game challenges students to use their knowledge of the markets and current events to grow an imaginary \$100,000 account over a ten-week period. Williams began with \$100,000 on January 21, 2025 and finished with \$138,575 on April 11, 2025.

Mahmud Zamamiri, 2nd Place: Zamamiri, a senior and vice president of the school's Stock Market Club, placed second in New York State, outperforming all competitors except Williams. Zamamiri had a \$100K portfolio that grew to \$128,228 during the same ten-week period. Both are students in teacher Jason Majewski's AP Economics class.



Congratulations to BC seniors Mahmud Zamamiri and Veer Williams!



700 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, New York 12054

Board of Education

Holly Dellenbaugh, President
Meredith Moriarty, Vice President
Lauren Grasso
Ewan McNay, Ph.D.
Katherine Nadeau
Robert Tietjen
John Walston

Superintendent of Schools

Jody Monroe

Deputy Superintendent

David Hurst, Ph.D.

Chief Business and Financial Officer

John McPhillips

ECRWSS POSTAL CUSTOMER

Non Profit Org.
US POSTAGE
PAID
ALBANY, NY
PERMIT # 730

UPK lottery information for 2025-26

Universal Pre-K application window is open through Friday, May 23

The Bethlehem Central School District is planning to partner with two local organizations to provide a pre-kindergarten program in 2025-26 for up to 92 eligible four-year-olds at no cost to families. It will be the second year the district will contract with a community-based partner to offer an instructional program for four-year-olds. The program is funded with state aid for Universal Pre-K (UPK) and has no impact on the 2025-26 school district budget.

Seats in the UPK program will be filled through a lottery process. The exact number of openings and classrooms at each location — TSL Adventures and ChildTime, both in Delmar – will be determined as part of the application and lottery process. TSL, which has been serving 36 UPK students this year, has indicated it would be able to provide as many as 72 spots in the new school year. ChildTime has indicated it could provide up to 20 spots in 2025-26. Selection and placement of students for UPK will be random, as determined by the lottery. The application window opened on May 1 and will close on May 23. The lottery will be held on Friday, May 30. To be eligible for the lottery, a child must have been born between Dec. 2, 2020 and Dec. 1, 2021. Children who are not placed in the program initially will be placed on a waiting list, and families will be contacted if space becomes available throughout the year. More information can be found on the district website at bethlehemschools.org.

If you are a BCSD resident and have a child born between 12/2/2020 and 12/1/2021, learn how to enter the UPK lottery for 2025-26

Scan the QR code below or visit bethlehemschools.org for more information



UPK INFORMATION

Budget voting information

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.

- Vote in person on Tuesday, May 20 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. at Bethlehem Central High School in Gym A
- Absentee ballots and early voting ballots are available from the district clerk. Similar to absentee ballot voting, you must fill out an application to vote early. For an absentee or early voting application, email voterinfo@bethlehemschools.org or call 518-439-7098. Completed ballots must be received by the district clerk by 5 p.m. on the day of the election.



ANNUAL BUDGET & BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTION IS TUESDAY, MAY 20

- Proposed budget for the 2025-26 school year
- Two members of the Board of Education
- Bus purchase proposal
- Capital Reserve Fund