



Highlights

BUDGET EDITION | 2026 - 2027



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Expenditures/Revenues

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Photo Highlights

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Board of Ed Election

A mission-driven budget that maintains a quality education, stays within tax cap

On Tuesday, May 19, residents will consider a \$119.8 million budget for the 2026-27 school year. The budget preserves all programs for students, invests in early learning, and maintains small class sizes.

The proposed budget totals \$119,757,737, a 2.69% increase over the current year, and includes a 2.61% tax levy increase that meets the state's tax cap requirements. The plan utilizes \$1.12 million from the district's fund balance to help address the gap between anticipated revenue and increasing costs.

A major budget challenge has been rising costs tied to inflation. A projected 15.8% rise in employee health insurance (an increase of \$2,868,390 for next year) accounts for over 90% of the total spending increase included in the proposed budget.

"We began budget season with a \$4 million budget gap and ended with a balanced plan that preserves all student opportunities," said Superintendent Jody

Monroe. "Inflation has been a challenge, especially with explosive growth in health care costs. Ensuring our staff has these benefits to rely on is the cornerstone of a strong and effective school district."

To manage rising costs, the budget includes strategic staffing reductions, eliminating 15 positions through attrition (retirements) and the elimination of several vacant positions. No layoffs are required. All staff reductions are based on enrollment needs and course requests. The reductions will not impact students.

New spending is focused on student needs, including two new elementary reading teachers, a K-5 instructional coach, a full-time English as a New Language (ENL) teacher, and a part-time physical therapist. The budget also expands afterschool opportunities for students.

In addition to the budget, voters will elect three Board of Education members and consider a separate proposition to purchase nine large diesel buses to replace aging vehicles in the transportation fleet.

-MORE BUDGET DETAILS INSIDE

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

2026-2027
PROPOSED
BUDGET
\$119,757,737

PROPOSED
BUDGET
INCREASE
**\$3,133,801
or 2.69%**

TAX LEVY
INCREASE
2.61%

Budget Vote:

- Tuesday, May 19
- 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- BCHS Gym A

Board of Education Election (to fill three board seats):

- Becky vonWedel
- Meredith Moriarty
- Holly Dellenbaugh
- Sara Bailey

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

A+

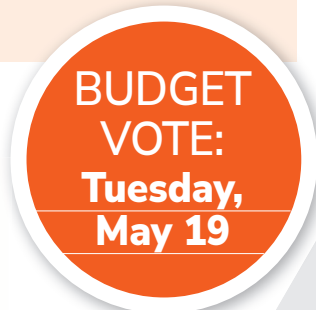
NICHE

2025-26 NICHE BEST SCHOOL DISTRICTS

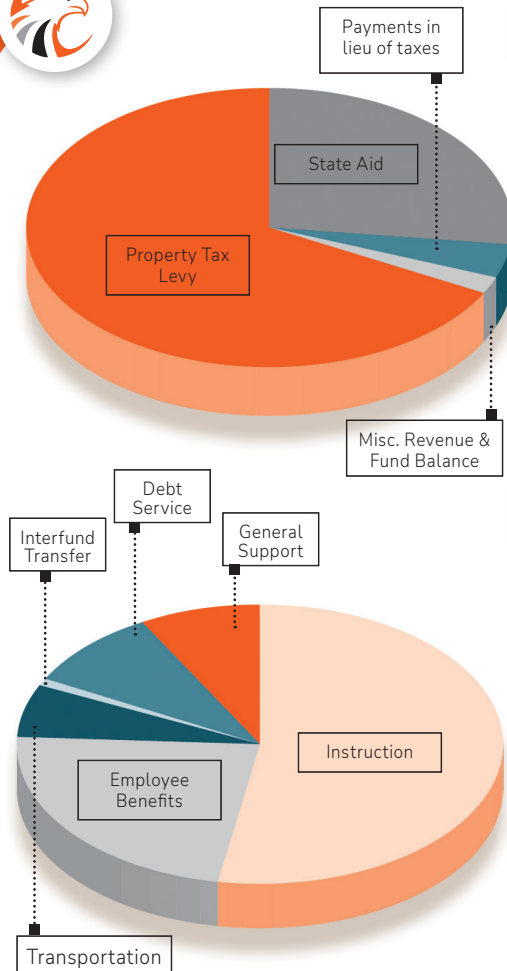
#1 CAPITAL REGION — BCSD

#42 BEST DISTRICTS IN NYS — BCSD

#70 BEST TEACHERS IN USA — BCSD



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



Where the money comes from...

Estimated Revenues	2025-26 BUDGET	2026-27 PROPOSED	% OF TOTAL REVENUES
State Aid (all sources)	\$34,616,508	\$35,174,675	29.4%
Use of Fund Balance	\$715,241	\$1,123,987	0.9%
Payments in Lieu of Taxes	\$3,624,000	\$3,905,000	3.3%
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$3,719,550	\$3,676,827	3.1%
Property Tax Levy	\$73,948,637	\$75,877,248	63.3%
Total Revenues	\$116,623,936	\$119,757,737	100%

Where the money goes...

Proposed Expenditures	2025-26 BUDGET	2026-27 PROPOSED	% CHANGE
Instruction (50.6% of budget)	\$59,690,488	\$60,537,948	1.42%
Employee Benefits (27.7% of budget)	\$30,863,257	\$33,151,978	7.42%
Student Transportation (5.4% of budget)	\$6,458,626	\$6,501,252	0.66%
Interfund Transfers (0.7% of budget)	\$1,100,000	\$884,000	-19.4%
General Support (8.0% of budget)	\$9,314,226	\$9,603,650	3.11%
Debt Service (7.6% of budget)	\$9,197,339	\$9,078,909	-1.29%
Total Expenditures	\$116,623,936	\$119,757,737	2.69%

2026-27 budget questions and answers

- Q. Is there a bus purchase proposition on this year's ballot?**

A. Yes. A school bus purchase proposition will be on the ballot on May 19. The bus proposition would allow the district to replace aging school buses. The plan is to purchase nine large 70-passenger diesel buses at a cost not to exceed \$1,633,239. Approximately 65% of the borrowing cost for the purchase is covered by state aid, resulting in a final maximum cost to the district of roughly \$579,800 for the nine vehicles. The district is not planning to add to its fleet of electric school buses in 2026-27 due to ongoing performance and charge management issues impacting service miles. The district currently has an EV fleet of 10 large buses. The EV buses have been out of service, on average, 66 days each during the school year. The district remains committed to clean fuel vehicles and will resume EV bus purchases when vehicle cost, charging efficiency, and service costs improve enough to support a larger EV bus fleet.
- Q. What else should I look for on this year's ballot?**

A. For the school district, there are three things residents will be voting on: the 2026-27 school district budget referendum, the bus purchase referendum, and the Board of Education election (four candidates are running for three open seats on the Board of Education -- see more on p.6). The Bethlehem Public Library holds its budget vote and trustee election on the same day as the school district and shares the same ballot. Voters should refer to the library's website for any library-related information.
- Q. If the district is reducing \$1.3 million in staffing costs in the proposed budget, why is there still a 2.69% increase in spending?**

A. Reductions in spending are offset by contractual costs and inflation-driven increases. As a people-centered business, salaries and benefits of school employees account for approximately 78% of the district's budget. Salary costs increase through contractual agreements and the automatic step increases that are granted as employees gain experience. Even when the district eliminates positions, these built-in increases push budget expenses up (in 2026-27, salary expenses are expected to rise by 3.2%). While inflation is increasing the cost of everything from transportation and energy to classroom materials, the biggest cost driver in the proposed budget is health insurance. Since 2024-25, health insurance costs have significantly outpaced the rate of inflation, rising 26.2% over two years. Next year alone, health insurance costs are projected to increase by 15.8%, or \$2,868,390. This increase accounts for nearly 90% of the \$3,133,801 (or 2.69%) year-to-year budget increase. There are also moderate increases in spending in other areas. See p. 7 for a list of new items in the budget.



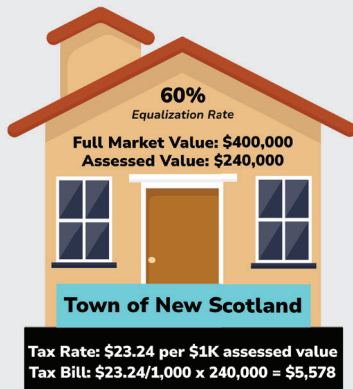
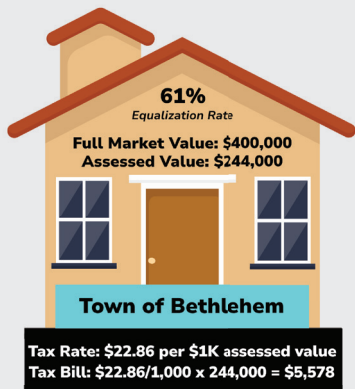
TAX IMPACT EXPLAINED

TAX LEVY VS. TAX RATE

The **tax levy** is the total amount of money the school district collects from all taxpayers combined. If approved by voters, the tax levy in 2026-27 will be \$75,877,248, a 2.61% increase over the current year. The **tax rate** is the amount (per \$1,000 of assessed value) a homeowner will pay in school property taxes. Estimated tax rates for 2026-27 are projected to increase by 2.37% for town of Bethlehem residents and 5.68% for town of New Scotland residents. Tax rates are estimates only.

WHY DO TAX RATES DIFFER BY TOWN?

With property taxes, homes are taxed based on assessed value, but not every town measures value the same way. New York state uses **equalization rates** to ensure taxes are fair across towns. In the proposed budget, the school district needs to raise \$75,877,248 in taxes. Equalization rates enable the district to establish tax rates that allocate the amount equitably among residents so tax bills are similar for homes with a similar full market value. View example below:



School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	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	\$116,623,936	\$119,757,737	\$ 117,829,126
Increase/Decrease for the 2026-27 School Year		\$3,133,801	\$1,205,190
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		2.69%	1.03%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.63%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$73,948,637	\$75,877,248	
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)	\$73,948,637	\$75,877,248	\$73,948,637
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$3,016,883	\$3,214,928	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$70,931,754	\$72,662,320	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$70,931,754	\$72,662,320	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$10,123,707	\$10,907,637	\$10,521,121
Program Component	\$88,939,235	\$90,856,747	\$89,804,025
Capital Component	\$17,560,994	\$17,993,352	\$17,503,979

*A contingency budget would result in a reduction of approximately \$1.9 million 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	\$1,633,239
Under the Budget Proposed for the 2026-27 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 2026-27 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 19, 2026 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 19, 2026.

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

DID YOU KNOW? 10-year tax rate history by town

School tax rates fluctuate from year to year and from town to town. Equalization rates, set by New York state, are intended to keep tax bills similar for properties of similar value (see example at left).

In the past 10 years, the BCSD school tax rate in the town of Bethlehem has increased seven times and decreased three times, for an average annual increase of 0.68%. In the town of New Scotland over the same period, the BCSD school tax rate has increased six times and decreased four times, for an average annual increase of 0.57%. Tax rates for 2026-27 will be finalized in August. Tax rate estimates, which are subject to change between now and August, can be viewed below.

Estimated Tax Rates

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

	2025-26 FINAL	2026-27 ESTIMATED	% CHANGE
Town of Bethlehem	\$22.33	\$22.86	2.37%
Town of New Scotland	\$21.99	\$23.24	5.68%

Tax rates for 2026-27 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 61% (down from 64%). The equalization rate for the Town of New Scotland is currently at 60% (down from 65%). 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.



International destination: Bethlehem Middle School

Educators from South Korea visited BCMS on Jan. 23 to observe teaching practices in classrooms in art, science, engineering, social studies, ELA and Spanish. The visit, coordinated through an international partnership, highlighted hands-on learning and cross-cultural exchanges. The international visitors were impressed by the high level of student and teacher engagement, according to Deputy Superintendent Dr. David Hurst, who served as a friendly tour guide.



Unified celebration brings strikes, spares and smiles

Nearly 100 students and staff crowded Del Lanes afterschool on Mar. 13 to celebrate another successful season of Unified Bowling. Unified Sports are team-based sports that pair athletes with intellectual disabilities with peers without disabilities. The celebration has become a much-anticipated, joyful afternoon of spirited, not-so-serious competition!



When "Pie Day" came early to Hamagrael

Celebrating the mathematical constant pi (3.14159...) on Mar. 14 is known in some circles as "Pi Day." Hamagrael celebrated a whole other type of Pie Day in December, when students competed for the chance to "deliver" a whipped cream pie to their teachers. Not to worry, the teachers (as teachers do) came prepared with coveralls, caps and goggles!



District Choral Festival is an ode to joy

On Mar. 10, BCMS choral groups were joined by fifth graders from across the district for the first of two Choral Festival concerts (the second featured the BCHS and BCMS choirs). The groups practiced and performed under guest conductor and composer Francisco Núñez, with support and guidance from our amazing Music Department teachers. The energy was off the charts. Scan the QR and check it out!



May the Olympic force be with you

Elsmere students in Mrs. Davis's class and Mrs. Buffaline's class had extra reason to cheer on the Winter Olympics. The students became pen pals with U.S. bobsledder Frank Del Duca through Mrs. Davis's connection with the bobsledding community. Students sent cards, drawings and lots of questions to Del Duca as they learned about the physics of sledding (gravitational pull, drag, velocity, friction and more). They cheered him on as he led the U.S. delegation of athletes as flag bearer at the Opening Ceremonies in Italy. What a memorable experience for these students!



Record-setting READ helps Ronald McDonald House

Slingerlands students recently raised a record-setting \$20,473 for Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Capital Region as part of the READ for Ronald McDonald House campaign. It is the largest amount any school has raised in the program's 12-year history! The school celebrated its efforts with a Dr. Seuss read-aloud, and cheered on their principal, Mr. Baker, as he ate a hearty dish of green eggs and ham.



Eagle HEARTS Principal Reagan

On Feb 14., students at Eagle Elementary School threw a surprise party for their principal, Dianna Reagan, who will be retiring in June after 37 years of service to the district. It was a great party! Reagan will be joined in retirement by more than two dozen other long-time employees, all of whom will receive a district send-off on May 28.



Courage, leadership, and kindness, celebrated

BCHS senior Paisley Sims (pictured above left, with Dr. Stella Safo) was honored with the Paul and Suzanne Murray Martin Luther King, Jr. Courage Award from Siena University for leadership in building an inclusive school community. School counselor Kate Burkart said Sims has made an extraordinary impact on her peers: "Whether inviting a new freshman to sit with her at lunch or encouraging a transfer student to get involved, Paisley's kindness ripples through the student body."



Backpack Program gets a surprise Brownie boost

Each week, several high school students stuff between 60-100 backpacks that are delivered to schools around the district to help families address food insecurity on weekends. The packs include nutritious snacks and easy-to-make meals for students. On Apr. 17, each backpack included a surprise box of Girl Scout cookies thanks to the efforts of Brownie Troop 5067, whose members sold 146 additional boxes of cookies specifically to give back to the school community they love. The young scouts even traveled to the high school to help the older students fill the backpacks!



Eagles Esports team ranked #1 in nation

The BCBS Eagles Esports team has been named the #1 Esports team in the nation by USA Today. The nationwide news publication regularly ranks the top 25 high school teams in partnership with PlayVS, the home of scholastic Esports competition. The BC team has been holding down the #1 spot since March. You can follow their progress on USA Today's high school sports page.



Odyssey of the Mind team headed to World Finals

After a first-place finish at the NYS Odyssey of the Mind tournament, a team of BCBS students has earned a spot at the Odyssey World Finals at Iowa State University. The team of Rayne Beiter, Jeremy Cintron Ortiz, Nex Cridlig, Nicholas Folio, Bridger Lewis, Erica Piccolo, and Stephanie Piccolo constructed a balsa wood structure weighing only 15 grams that could hold an eye-popping 634 pounds. Good luck at Worlds!



Core values take center stage on Community Day

Academics. Character. Community. Wellness. The district's core values were on full display during the most recent Superintendent's Conference Day, when nearly 600 employees took part in a morning of community service. It was the second consecutive year that part of the day was set aside for community improvement projects. Wellness activities and professional learning rounded out the day.



ON THE BALLOT BOARD ELECTION

Becky vonWedel



Becky vonWedel of Selkirk is seeking a first term on the Board of Education. A district resident for 19 years, vonWedel is a Membership Specialist at New York State United Teachers (NYSUT). Becky vonWedel is also a parent of three children, who are all graduates of Bethlehem Central High School.

Meredith Moriarty



Meredith Moriarty of Delmar is seeking a fourth term on the Board of Education. A district resident for 14 years, Moriarty is an attorney and partner at Smith Hoke, PLLC. Meredith Moriarty is also a parent of three children: a student at Bethlehem Central High School, and two at the middle school.

ELECT THREE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

In-person voting at BCBS in Gym A Tuesday, May 19 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Holly Dellenbaugh



Holly Dellenbaugh of Delmar is seeking a fourth term on the Board of Education. A district resident for 19 years, Dellenbaugh is a self-employed writer and editor. Holly Dellenbaugh is also a parent of three children, including two recent graduates of Bethlehem Central High School.

Sara Bailey



Sara Bailey of Glenmont is seeking a first term on the Board of Education. A district resident for a total of 23 years, Bailey is a co-director of the Astra Center for Innovative Education. Sara Bailey is also a parent of three children, all students at Glenmont Elementary School.



VOTE DAY ACTIVITIES May 19 at BCBS

Kids Vote Too! 4:30p-7p
Senior Art Show, 5p-7p
BC Jazz Night, 6:30p-7:30p

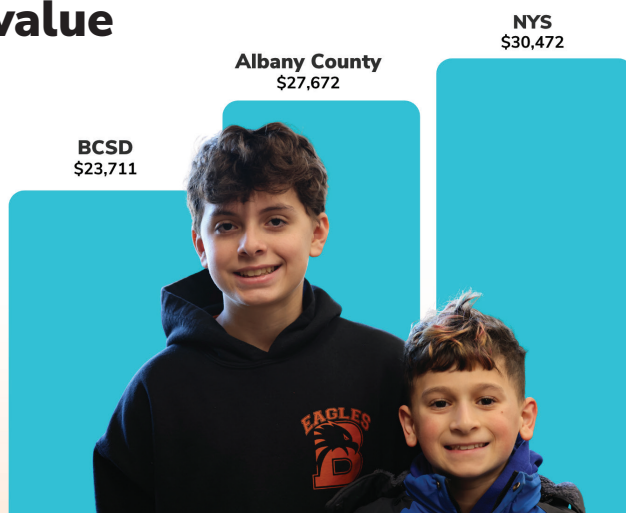
MEET THE CANDIDATES

A Meet the Candidates Night will be held on Wednesday, May 13 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.

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 \$3,961 LESS than the average per pupil spending by districts in Albany County and \$6,761 LESS than the average per pupil spending of districts in New York State.

Source: NYS Education Department (NYSED) Report Card





A plan that prioritizes student opportunities within the tax cap ...

WHAT'S NEW IN THE PROPOSED 2026-27 BUDGET

Instructional

- Reduces 6.0 FTE instructional positions to match enrollment needs. Reductions are being made through attrition (retirements), not layoffs.
- Adds 2.0 FTE reading teachers to improve reading and writing skills at the elementary level.
- Adds an elementary instructional coach to provide additional support to K-5 teachers.
- Adds funding for Kindergarten Kickstart, a summer program for incoming K students who may need additional foundational skills.

- Adds a 0.5 FTE physical therapist to meet student needs.

Student Support & Opportunities

- Reduces 9.0 FTE support staff positions to meet enrollment and student needs. Reductions are being made through attrition (retirements) and elimination of vacant positions. No layoffs are included in the budget.
- Replaces worn gymnastics springboard and safety mats to ensure athlete safety.
- Replaces worn soccer goals to ensure athlete safety.

- Adds six afterschool clubs requested by students: MS Lego Club, MS Math Counts Club, HS English Honor Society, HS Pickleball Club, HS Cinematography Club, & HS Garden Club.
- Adds modified flag football at the middle school.
- Adds funds for music instrument repairs, a P/T music accompanist and maintenance improvements to the kiln in the high school art room.

Transportation & Facilities

- Includes a \$100,000 capital outlay to continue with installation of the

Avigilon Door Status Monitoring System throughout the district. The alarm system immediately alerts staff if an exterior door is propped open or is ajar during the school day. A capital outlay project is included every year as part of the proposed budget.

- Adds tablet docking stations to all buses (year 1 of 2) to improve drivers' access to mapping and student attendance software.
- Adds emergency evacuation chairs to help move students in wheelchairs down flights of stairs more efficiently in the event of an emergency.

BCHS students launch fundraiser to honor the late Madame Michèle Atallah

Students at the high school have launched a fundraising effort to overhaul the school's garden courtyard, dedicating it to the late Madame Michèle Atallah, a beloved French teacher who passed away last fall. The courtyard, which is adjacent to the Counseling Center at the school, would be opened for student use. The students are seeking community support and donations to honor Atallah's legacy and impact on the school community. Visit the district website at bethlehemschools.org or scan the QR code to learn more.



BC Eagles give fans reasons to "believe" during exciting winter postseason

No one enjoyed this year's long winter more than BC sports fans! Teams and individual student-athletes excelled in postseason competition. Some of the 2025-26 winter season highlights can be found below:

Girls Basketball: Won the Section II championship and finished the season as 2026 New York State Class AA Finalists after entering the post-season as an underdog. It was the team's first sectional championship since 2016. The team kept fans cheering through several exciting postseason games and through the state championship game, in which the Eagles lost to a very strong #1-seeded North Tonawanda.

Boys Swim & Dive: Won the Section II championship and finished the season undefeated. It was the first undefeated season since 1997 and the first sectional win since 2001.

Winter season Section II individual winners:

- **Makaya McCann** Section II Class AA Tournament MVP (Girls Basketball)
- **Jacob Hershberg** Section II Champion 100 Butterfly & 100 Backstroke (Boys Swim & Dive)
- **Mikolaj Wloszczynski, Ewan Izzard, Ian Savage and Jack Keating** Section II Champions 200 Freestyle (Boys Swim & Dive)
- **Ewan Izzard, Bhargava Janga, Jacob Hershberg and Eli German** Section II Champions 200 Medley (Boys Swim and Dive)
- **Carter Martin** Section II Class A Champion (Bowling)
- **Jonathan Radcliffe** Section II Champion in 55m dash (Indoor Track & Field)
- **Charleigh Eick** Section II Champion (Girls Wrestling)
- **James Nalbene** Section II Champion (Boys Wrestling)

Nine winter teams were named NYS Scholar-Athlete teams. They are Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Girls Bowling, Boys Swim & Dive, Boys Indoor Track & Field, Girls Indoor Track & Field, Boys Wrestling, Girls Wrestling and Gymnastics.





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
- Claire Aliggay, Student Member
- Rose Pastore, Student Member

Superintendent of Schools

Jody Monroe

Deputy Superintendent

David Hurst, Ph.D.

Chief Business and Financial Officer

John McPhillips

Non Profit Org.
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PAID
ALBANY, NY
PERMIT # 730

ECRWSS POSTAL CUSTOMER

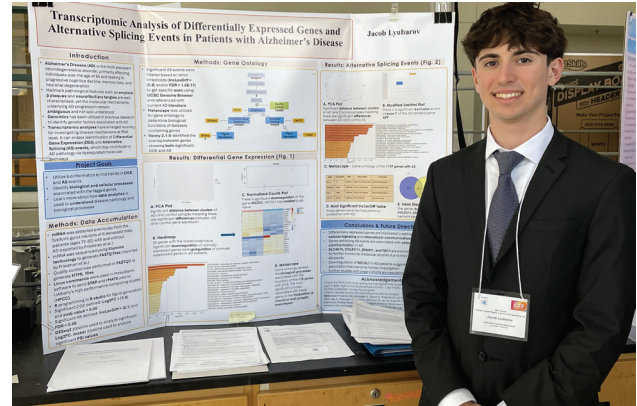
Students making a difference

BC senior wins Alzheimer's Disease research award

BCHS senior Jacob Lyubarov recently earned the Linda Austin DNA Science & Technology Award at the Regeneron Greater Capital Region Science and Engineering Fair. His project, "Transcriptomic Analysis of Differentially Expressed Genes and Alternative Splicing Events in Patients with Alzheimer's Disease," used bioinformatics to analyze a public dataset of mRNA from Alzheimer's and non-Alzheimer's brains.

Inspired by his great-grandmother, Lyubarov's research reported genes not previously linked to the disease. Lyubarov credited mentors Claudia Lennon, a scientist at UAlbany's RNA Institute, and Jennifer Gonyea, BC's K-12 science supervisor, for helping him prepare for the Regeneron science fair.

"Following months of rigorous work at UAlbany, Jacob's bioinformatics research identified genes that warrant further study in relation to Alzheimer's progression," said Gonyea. "His passion for scientific research took root in ninth grade and has only intensified since."



ANNUAL BUDGET & BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTION IS TUESDAY, MAY 19

- Proposed budget for the 2026-27 school year
- Three members of the Board of Education
- Bus purchase proposal



Budget Vote is Tuesday, May 19

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 19 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.