

Classroom Chronicles

BUDGET EDITION

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Proposed 2025-26 Budget:
\$26,060,135

1.53% tax levy increase

What else is on the Ballot?

BOARD OF EDUCATION

One person to fill an open seat for a five-year term running July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2030.

■ Incumbent Mark Brody

CAPITAL PROJECT

Allow the district to expend \$14M for a Carbon Reduction/Geothermal Project at the EH/MS Complex. Project has zero net effect on reserves and taxpayer.

EQUIPMENT RESERVE USAGE

Allow the district to purchase facilities equipment, technology and classroom furniture through the previously established Equipment Reserve fund for a cost not to exceed \$170,000

ESTABLISHMENT OF EQUIPMENT RESERVE

Allow the district to reestablish an equipment reserve fund for facilities equipment, technology, vehicles and classroom equipment for a cost not to exceed \$500,000.

BUS LEASE PROPOSITION

Allow the district to lease buses two 70-passenger buses at a cost of \$64,000.

2025-26 Budget Vote and Board of Education Election

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025

- Noon to 8 p.m. at the East Hill Elementary Library
- Absentee and early mail ballots are due by 5 p.m. on May 20

Proposed 2025-26 budget does not exceed tax cap, improves facilities and helps reduce future costs

Canajoharie Central School District residents will vote Tuesday, May 20, on a proposed \$26,060,135 spending plan for the 2025-26 school year. The proposed plan calls for a 2.58% spending increase over the current year's budget.

If approved, the budget would increase the tax levy by 1.53%, which does not exceed the state mandated tax cap. Over the past four years, the district has averaged a 1.78% annual tax levy increase. Since the proposed tax levy increase falls below the district's legal limit as defined by the state's tax cap legislation, a simple majority (50% plus one) is needed to approve the budget.

For the 2025-26 school budget, the goals were to maintain student programming, keep jobs and not exceed the tax cap. With this budget proposal, we are able to attain all of those goals.

It should be noted that this is a status quo budget. However, as we move forward with increasing costs due to benefits, state mandates, contractual obligations, and not exceeding the tax cap, expenses will outweigh revenues.

In the very near future, we will have to look at cost reductions to balance the budget and, more importantly, ensure our students are getting what they need from their educational experience. That means there will be change. What that change looks like we do not know yet, but we are already exploring ideas to reduce costs while continuing to provide opportunities for our students.

"Without additional aid, volatility at the federal level and ensuring our tax increases are at a minimum, there will be no choice



Celebrating 100 days of school was a fun one at East Hill Elementary this year.

but to make changes in the future," said Superintendent Dr. Nick Fitzgerald.

Capital Project will have zero taxpayer impact

Residents will also be asked to vote on a \$14 million capital project proposal aimed at modernizing the East Hill Complex heating and cooling systems. Due to a \$1.4 million grant from NYSERDA, this project would have zero impact on taxpayers.

The project would update outdated equipment and address the lack of cooling at the elementary and middle schools.

The project includes Ground Source Heat Pumps for the Nellis Center and Air Source Heat Pumps for the rest of the East Hill Complex and removal of old equipment. These systems would provide better filtration, cooling capabilities, and lower energy costs.

This project would create a healthier learning environment, energy savings, and peace of mind for parents. It would also

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Voting options for 2025-26 explained

On Tuesday, May 20, Canajoharie Central School District voters will head to the polls to cast their ballots in person; however, voters have various options if they are unable to vote in person this year.

Voters may apply for an absentee ballot if they are a patient in the hospital or unable to appear personally at the polling place due to illness; required by duties, studies, occupation or business to be outside of the county on the vote date; on vacation outside of the county; detained in jail awaiting grand jury action; confined in prison after conviction of an offense other than a felony; detained in jail awaiting trial, and accompanying a spouse, parent or child outside of the county on the vote date. Absentee ballots are not automatically mailed to all registered voters. Voters on the sick and disabled list with their county Board of Elections will receive an absentee ballot automatically.

Early ballot voting is available due to the state Early Mail Voter Act, effective Jan. 1, 2024. Early voting is possible without any reasons needed for voting early. Similar to absentee ballot voting, you must fill out an application to vote early. There are separate applications for early voting and absentee ballot voting, but the application process and deadlines are the same for both.

All ballot applications are available at the CCSD District Office: 136 Scholastic Way, Canajoharie, NY 13317. Residents can also contact District Clerk Andrea Muhlebeck at 518-673-6302 to request a ballot application.

Applications must be received at the CCSD District Office by 4 p.m. May 13 if the ballot is to be mailed, or 4 p.m. on May 19 if you plan to pick up your ballot.

The completed ballot must be received by 5 p.m. on May 20 at the CCSD District Office.

Budget CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

enhance student achievement and create more opportunities for summer activities, enriching the lives of our community members — all without any financial impact.

Additional Propositions

Voters will also be asked to elect a Board of Education member (incumbent Dr. Mark Brody is running unopposed) and decide on a bus proposition to lease two 70-passenger buses for a cost of \$64,000. This proposition has no direct effect on the general fund budget due to the reserve

fund that was created. The district deposits the state aid reimbursements it receives each year into the fund to help offset future purchases and keep costs at minimal for new buses.

A proposal to use \$170,000 from the Equipment Reserve Fund to purchase facilities equipment, technology and updated classrooms, along with another proposition to establish a \$500,000 reserve fund for future district equipment needs are also on the ballot.

Polls will be open from noon to 8 p.m. Tuesday, May 20, at the East Hill Library. Please note that parking will be limited during dismissal from 2:15-3 p.m.

Canajoharie principals win awards for excellence

Two Canajoharie Central School District principals have been celebrated for their work by Capital Region educational establishments.

East Hill Elementary Principal Alicia D'Ambrosio has been named one of the Greater Capital Region Principals Center Board, Principal of the Year Award winners from the Capital Area School Development Association, and Canajoharie Middle School Principal Chris DePaolo was named the 2025 Administrator of the Year Award by the HFM BOCES School Library System (SLS).



"I am honored to be recognized as CASDA's Principal of the Year. This award is a reflection of the incredible students, staff, and community I have the privilege to work with each day," D'Ambrosio said. "Together, we strive to educate, empower, and achieve—and I'm proud to lead a school where those values come to life in everything we do. I would like to sincerely thank our Board of Education and Superintendent for their unwavering support and commitment to fostering strong leadership and student success throughout our district."

D'Ambrosio and her fellow winners will be celebrated at a special dinner on May 1.

DePaolo is set to be celebrated by the SLS in May.

"Library Media Centers play an essential role in supporting student learning by providing access to diverse resources and fostering critical thinking skills," he said. "With the integration of technology, Library Media Centers offer digital tools, databases, and multimedia resources that enhance instruction and prepare students for an increasingly digital world."

DePaolo also had praise for CMS Librarian Lauren Goldman

"She has done an outstanding job transforming the CMS Library Media Center into a vibrant, collaborative hub that fosters creativity, innovation, and essential 21st-century skills," he said.

"These awards represent the hard work of everyone at these buildings. They happen because a team works together toward common goals, making massive impacts on students," said Superintendent Dr. Nick Fitzgerald. "It's great to know that organizations outside of Canajoharie recognize the amazing work being done daily in our district."



Budget At-A-Glance

AT-A-Glance

Proposed 2025-26 Budget:
\$26,060,135

Adopted 2024-25 budget:
\$25,405,843

THE TOP 10 OF THE CLASS OF 2025

1. Odessa Schaffer
2. Elaina Wells
3. Mckenzie Ray
4. Alexandria Gyurik
5. Sullivan Stinson
6. Aiden Bowerman
7. Riley Battisti
8. Charis Perozzi
9. Nicholas Barlow
10. Parker Forrest

EXPENDITURES

	2024-25 BUDGET	2025-26 PROPOSED BUDGET	PERCENT CHANGE
General Support	\$4,403,022	\$4,539,821	3.11%
Instruction	\$16,994,838	\$17,039,376	0.26%
Pupil Transportation	\$2,070,767	\$2,113,112	2.04%
Debt Service	\$1,732,216	\$2,247,826	29.77%
Interfund Transfers	\$20,000	\$20,000	0.00%
Capital Project Transfers/Outlay	\$185,000	\$100,000	-45.95%
TOTAL	\$25,405,843	\$26,060,135	2.58%

REVENUES

	2024-25 BUDGET	2025-26 PROPOSED BUDGET	PERCENT CHANGE
State Aid	\$14,046,133	\$15,034,057	7.03%
State Aid – Building Aid	\$1,592,054	\$1,453,548	-8.70%
Property Taxes	\$8,107,485	\$8,231,530	1.53%
Fund Balance/Reserves	\$895,171	\$661,000	-26.16%
Other	\$680,000	\$680,000	0.00%
Capital Project Transfers	\$85,000	\$0	-100.00%
TOTAL	\$25,405,843	\$26,060,135	2.58%

Artistic Brilliance

Canajoharie High School Students Triumph in ART Finals

Congratulations to Olivia Sweet, who received an award certificate and monetary prize from Phyllis Lapi, GFWC art competition organizer. Olivia’s artwork entitled “The Forest” will be heading to New York state competition.

- Second place winners received award certificates and monetary prizes:
 - Tobias Hand – Watercolor
 - Layna Bissram – Printmaking
 - Zoe David-Thordisdottir – Mixed Media
- Third place winners received award certificates:
 - Roman LaPier – Pen and Ink
 - Carter Barry – Pencil/Graphite
 - Lia King – Ceramics
 - Tatum Stever – Acrylic Painting and Painting on Slate
 - Janessa McDonald – Mixed Media
- Honorable Mention received award certificate:
 - Olivia Sweet – Acrylic Painting
 - Abigail Lozier – Printmaking
 - Mikaylah Pollard – Ceramics

Overall, the success of these students not only highlights their individual talents but also reflects the dedication and excellence fostered within Canajoharie High School’s art program.



Photos by Michelle Egelston

Above, GFWC Award Winner Olivia Sweet with her winning piece.



Right: The other GFWC winners gather to celebrate their achievement.



NEWS FROM CANAJOHARIE CENTRAL SCHOOL



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	\$25,405,843	\$26,060,135	\$25,936,118
Increase/Decrease for the 2025-26 School Year		\$654,292	530,275
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		2.58%	2.09%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.95%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$8,107,485	\$8,231,502	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$0	\$0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$0	\$0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$0	\$0	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$8,107,485	\$8,231,502	\$8,107,485
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$0	\$0	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$8,107,485	\$8,231,502	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$8,107,485	\$8,231,502	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$2,171,817	\$2,306,067	\$2,300,067
Program Component	\$19,246,043	\$19,293,130	\$19,194,113
Capital Component	\$3,987,983	\$4,460,938	\$4,441,938

*In compliance with the state's tax levy limit law, the school district's contingency budget for the 2025-26 school year is based on subtracting \$124,017 from the current year's budget and would place restrictions on certain maintenance expenses, limitations on equipment purchases and no outside use of school facilities.

**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 Proposition	\$64,000
Equipment Reserve	\$170,000
Fund Balance for Reserve	\$500,000
Capital Project	\$14,000,000

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year	
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$440

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2025-26 by the qualified voters of the Canajoharie Central School District, Montgomery County, New York, will be held at East Hill Elementary School in said district on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, between the hours of noon and 8 p.m., prevailing time, in the elementary school, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

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

VOTE INFORMATION

WHO CAN VOTE

To vote, an individual must be at least 18 years old, a U.S. citizen and a resident of the district for at least 30 days prior to the vote.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

For an absentee ballot, residents must fill out an application. Call 518-673-6302 to obtain an application. To have a ballot mailed, the application must be received by 5 p.m. May 13. To pick up a ballot in person, the application must be received by 5 p.m. on May 19. All absentee ballots are due by 5 p.m. on May 20.

EARLY VOTING

For an early voting ballot, residents must fill out an application. Call 518-673-6302 to obtain an application. To have a ballot mailed, the application must be received by 5 p.m. May 13. To pick up a ballot in person, the application must be received by 5 p.m. on May 19. All absentee ballots are due by 5 p.m. on May 20.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2025 RETIREES

- Deborah Crewell
- Kelly O'Neil
- Brian Christman
- Larry Smith

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