

The Panther Post

#WithMontiPride

MONTICELLO CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT // BUDGET 2024-25 // VOLUME 10

VOTE:
Tuesday, May 21
 Polls open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Budget At-A-Glance

Proposed budget:
\$100,277,426

Proposed School Tax Levy:
\$44,709,648

Tax Levy Change:
\$1,132,993
2.60%

Proposed budget change:
\$2,390,731
2.44%

Also on the ballot:
Capital Improvement Project
 (see p. 10-11)

Election of Board of Education Members
 (see page 14)

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Budget Proposal

Residents to consider budget and capital improvement project on May 21

On May 21, residents of the Monticello Central School District will vote on a \$100,277,426 proposed budget for the 2024-25 school year, elect three members to the Board of Education and consider a capital improvement project that would modernize the district's deteriorating athletic facilities, secure classroom entrances at our elementary schools and make other necessary repairs at our buildings.

Through careful reductions, district keeps tax levy below allowable cap

The district's initial rollover budget (a budget that preserves all existing expenditures, without adding any new ones) would have caused a year-to-year budget increase of \$3,231,393. Due to changes at the state level in foundation aid calculations, the district is slated to receive a 0.3% increase in state aid. This increase is well below the 4.1% state aid increase that the previous foundation aid calculation would have granted, and also well below the current inflation rate of 3.8%. Given the meager increase in aid, combined with the increased costs of goods, services and benefits, a rollover budget would have been unsustainable without piercing the tax cap.

Despite cuts, no staff members will be laid off

In an effort to minimize taxpayer impact, while preserving student programming, the district worked aggressively to reduce the initial rollover budget by \$840,662. This was achieved through careful

reduction of supplies, BOCES services, and vacant positions through retirement and attrition. No existing staff members will lose their jobs due to these cuts. (See "Budget Highlights," p. 12). In addition to decreasing total expenditures, the district also worked to increase its revenue through reallocating some of its fund balance to support the budget.

Levy funds less than half the budget, does not pierce tax cap

The district's goal is always to minimize taxpayer impact, keeping any tax levy increases below the maximum amount allowed by New York State's tax cap calculation, and also keeping the portion of the budget funded by the tax levy below 50%. The proposed budget meets both of these goals, with the tax levy being below the maximum tax cap threshold, and funding 44.59% of the budget.

See Superintendent's Message, p. 3 and Budget Highlights, p. 12-15 for more information about the proposed budget.

2024 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT Vote May 21

- ✓ Securing Our Classrooms
- ✓ Modernizing our Athletic Facilities
- ✓ Building a District of Choice

See p. 10-11 for more information

VOTING LOCATIONS

- 📍 **Thompson/Monticello - District #1**
 Robert J. Kaiser Middle School
 45 Breaky Avenue • Monticello, NY 12701
 - 📍 **Rock Hill - District #4**
 Rock Hill Fire Department
 61 Glen Wild Road • Rock Hill, NY 12775
 - 📍 **Bethel - District #2**
 Duggan Community Center
 3460 Route 55 • White Lake, NY 12786
 - 📍 **Forestburgh - District #5**
 Forestburgh Town Hall
 332 King Road • Forestburgh, NY 12777
 - 📍 **Mamakating - District #3**
 Emma C. Chase School
 28 Pennsylvania Avenue • Wurtsboro, NY 12790
- If you have a question about where you should vote, call 845-794-7700, ext. 70523, or visit our budget webpage to use the PollFinder tool at monticelloschools.net.*

Community Corner

CALENDAR

MAY

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

- 19 – Sullivan County Youth Book Festival at Ethelbert B. Crawford Library in Monticello
- 21 – Budget Vote & Election, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.
- 22 – Board of Education Meeting, Official Election Results Available, 7:30 – 8 p.m.

JUNE

- 6 – Board of Education Meeting, 7:30 – 8 p.m.
- 6 – Board of Education Retiree Recognition 5:30 p.m., RJK cafeteria
- 7 – K-12 District Wide Visual Art Show, 5:30 – 7 p.m.
- 13 – Board of Education Meeting (Special Meeting), 6 – 7:30 p.m.
- 20 – Board of Education Meeting, 7:30 – 8 p.m.

JULY

- 2 – Board of Education Meeting (Reorganization Meeting @ 6 p.m.; Regular Meeting begins after), 6 – 6:30 p.m.
- 13 – Annual My Brother's Keeper Family Event: "We Need the Village" Conference (keep an eye on our website for more information as the date approaches!)
- 18 – Board of Education Meeting, 7:30-8 p.m.

AUGUST

- 8 – Board of Education Meeting, 7:30 – 8 p.m.
- 11 – Bagel Festival, Monticello Village, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- 22 – Board of Education Meeting, 7:30 – 8 p.m.

FIRST DAY OF 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR:

SEPTEMBER 5

For the 15th consecutive year, the Monticello Central School District was named as a Best Community for Music Education by the National Association of Music Merchants.



CONNECT WITH US!

Are you a community member who wants to stay in touch with the most up-to-date news and events from the district? Use the QR code, or visit our website to sign up to receive district news via email.



Hall of Distinction

The Monticello Central School District Hall of Distinction honors highly successful alumni, former Board of Education members and former employees who have achieved distinction, outstanding accomplishments or made significant contributions within their school, family, career, community and/or personal lives. The committee is currently accepting nominations for the induction class of 2025. A ceremony will then be held in the fall of this year to celebrate the newest inductees. More information and a nomination packet are available on the Hall of Distinction webpage located on monticelloschools.net under "About Us".

Looking to Give Back?

We are fortunate to be surrounded by a community that cares! We are frequently asked by many generous community organizations and individuals how they can contribute to support our students. Here are some current needs in our buildings:

➤ St. John Street Community School

The St. John Street Community School is seeking donations for its Field Day to be held on June 21. Donations of outdoor games and activities, or healthy snacks are appreciated. Donations can be dropped off at the main entrance (located in the back of the building). For more information, contact Christine at 845-796-5095, ext. 95902

➤ Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary School/Robert J. Kaiser Middle School/George L. Cooke Elementary School:

The Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary School, George L. Cooke Elementary School and Robert J. Kaiser Middle School are accepting donations for their programs that support students at risk for hunger. All three schools are in need of non-perishable food items.

KLR is also accepting donations of toiletries for its Rutherford Closet, which provides hygiene products or a change of clothes for students in need.

Donations may be dropped off during regular business hours at any school. For more information, please contact the school's main office.

➤ Emma C. Chase Elementary School:

The Emma C. Chase Elementary School recently took over the Cans for Kids program. Started several years ago by the Woods family, Cans for Kids enables community members to drop off refundable cans and bottles to collection bins placed around town. All proceeds from these collections support the Chase school. Bins are located on Sneed Street, Pine Street and First Street in the village of Wurtsboro, and there is also a bin at the Chase school.

Superintendent's Message

I hope this newsletter finds you well. This year, the Board of Education is asking resident voters to consider two propositions at its annual vote on May 21. The Board believes these propositions will enhance the programs provided to Monticello's students, staff, and community while also utilizing efficiencies in the public monies provided.



Like many school districts across New York, we are expecting a minimal increase in state aid for 2024–25. While this will not have any impact on the proposed capital project, a zero percent (0%) change in state foundation aid has forced us to reevaluate our programs. More importantly, Governor Kathy Hochul has made clear her belief that declining student enrollments should cause similar cuts in foundation aid to New York's public schools. While state foundation aid is flat this year, we anticipate cuts to foundation aid in future budgets.

Half of our annual revenues come from state aid. With no increase in foundation aid, and a minuscule increase in state aid overall (0.3%), we find ourselves in the difficult position of having to propose an increase in property taxes to bridge this gap.

We understand that no one wants to see an increase in taxes, and we, too, have experienced the effects of inflation. The proposed increases in our budget (2.4%) and tax levy (2.6%) are both below the current rate of inflation (3.8%). The proposed increase in the tax levy is below the calculated tax cap for 2024–25 (3.7%).

Despite these financial challenges, we remain committed to maximizing the efficiency of every dollar spent. We are diligently exploring ways to streamline operations and reduce costs without compromising the quality of education our students receive. Our goal is to ensure that every taxpayer dollar is used wisely and effectively to benefit our students and support our dedicated teachers and staff.

Speaking of teachers and staff, I want to emphasize our unwavering commitment to attracting and retaining the highest quality educators. Our staff members are the heart and soul of our school district, and we recognize the invaluable role they play in shaping the future of our community. Despite the financial constraints we face, we are dedicated to providing them with the support, resources, and compensation they deserve. **The only personnel cuts made in this proposed budget are through attrition: no staff members will be laid off in this proposed budget.**

The Board of Education is also committed to ensuring modern facilities that provide the Monticello Central School District with a world-class community of schools, as it seeks to become a district of choice.

To that end, the Board is asking resident voters to consider a \$31.8 million capital improvement project that, if approved, would result in facility upgrades at the George L. Cooke and Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary Schools; a complete renovation of Ed Kennedy Field at Monticello High School, including the installation of a new football/soccer field, 8-lane track, and a grandstand—with concession areas and bathrooms—that would hold up to 1,000 spectators. This proposed project would also include façade and roof improvements at the St. John Street School, and a new concession stand, bathroom, and storage shed at the high school softball field.

To finance this proposed project, the Board will allocate \$14 million currently held in voter-approved capital reserves. These can only be used through voter approval. One reserve—currently holding \$4 million—will expire in 2025; the other (\$10 million) will expire in 2029.

If approved and constructed according to its present design, approximately 53% of the project would generate building aid at a reimbursement rate of 61.8%. This means that for every \$100 spent in aidable construction, the district would receive approximately \$61.80 back in building aid the following year.

With the down payment of the capital reserves (\$14 million), and the anticipated returns on building aid (at 61.8%), the impact on the tax levy would be approximately \$0.024 per \$1,000 of a property assessed at full value. For example, a property valued at \$100,000 would see an approximate increase of \$2.40 in their taxes (not accounting for equalization rates, which are out of the district's control).

It should be noted that the proposed 2024–25 budget would not be affected by the capital project proposal, whether it is approved or defeated. The first fiscal impact of the proposed capital project, if approved, would only be felt by taxpayers in the 2026–27 budget.

We want to assure you that we are committed to transparency throughout this process. We welcome your questions, feedback, and input as we navigate these challenges together.

Thank you for your understanding, support, and commitment to our schools and our community. Together, we will continue to provide an exceptional education for our students.

With Monti Pride,

Matthew T. Evans, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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 @MonticelloCentralSchoolDistrict

#WithMontiPride

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR FALL AND WINTER SPORTS SEASONS

Alpine and Nordic ski teams slay the slopes



Monticello Alpine ski team members Diego Ferrer, Reese Kelly, Alexis Heins, Sam Rein and Andrew Weiner qualified for the NYSPHSAA championships in Lake Placid, which were held on Feb. 26 and 27.



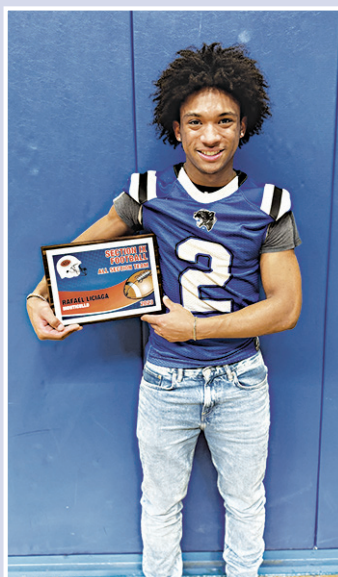
In addition, Nordic skiers Giovanni Gutierrez, Yousef Elsayed, and Kaitlyn Morse qualified for the state championships in Lake Placid.



After facing fierce competition, the Boys Alpine Ski team took home the Section IX team Championship at Hunter Mountain on Feb. 14.

MHS senior earns All-Section recognition in varsity football

Rafael Liciaga was named All-Section for varsity football by the Section IX Football Coaches Association.

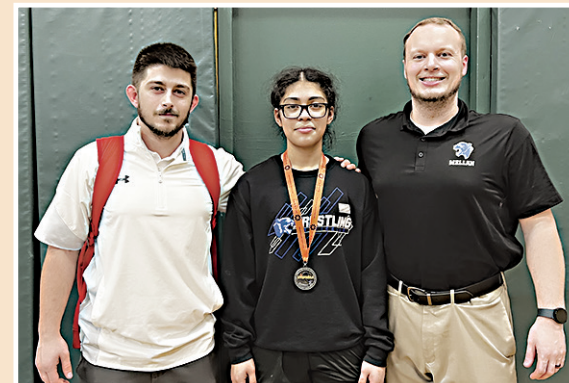


Amiah Neails named a Section IX top 50 girls' basketball player

MHS senior Amiah Neails was voted one of the top 50 girls basketball players in Section IX by the Girls Basketball Coaches Association of New York.



Wrestler Ashlin Garcia Mejia makes her mark in MHS history



MHS junior Ashlin Garcia Mejia secured her spot in Monticello history, and became the first female wrestler to ever place in the Section IX Championships after finishing second in the state competition.

Track and field athletes go for gold at indoor track and field championships

Several Monticello athletes won gold medals at the Indoor Track and Field Championships at SUNY Sullivan after successful performances in their respective categories. Congratulations to the following athletes:



At the varsity level, Jamel Little, Tobias Brown, De'Andre Armour, George Gachechiladze, Tahir Denton, Tyrese Shaw, and Eduardo Salinas secured gold medals in their events.



Tiara Harris, Kalene Harris, Diya Patel, Gabriela Almonte and Gabby Brumbaugh all took home gold medals as well.



Tyrese Shaw placed third in the intersectional relay at the NYSPHSAA Championships on March 2 at the Ocean Breeze Athletic Complex in Staten Island, NY.



Gregory Moore III, Chardae Davis and Landon Chambers each earned multiple gold medals at the modified indoor track and field championships.



Coach Chris Russo reaches milestone with 150th career win

On Feb. 9, boys varsity basketball coach Chris Russo captured his 150th coaching victory; the milestone achievement came after the Panther's win against Liberty at SUNY Sullivan.

It's game, set, match on the district's new tennis courts

Monticello held its first on-site tennis practices on March 12. Students enjoyed the beautiful weather while utilizing the newly constructed courts.



OUR GOALS:

OUR VISION

This Board aspires to build a world-class community of schools, and be a district of choice.

OUR MISSION

This Board's mission is to ensure that each learner is future-ready by providing empowering educational experiences.

This Board will provide a holistic education comprised of extensive curricular and extra-curricular experiences that empower each individual student to conquer challenges, develop talents, and discover passions, while sustaining rigor and achieving evidence-based academic growth.



The Robert J. Kaiser Middle School recently installed a new book vending machine that encourages students to read while rewarding student success. The machine runs on tokens that students can purchase using Monti Bucks – a form of special RJK currency that students earn by demonstrating positive behavior.



George L. Cooke Elementary School Librarian Kerry Sullivan has been hard at work renovating the library spaces to create an inviting environment for students to develop a love of reading and other fun activities.



Who doesn't enjoy telling stories around the campfire? Students in the Emma C. Chase Elementary School had the opportunity to participate in "Camp Chase Reads A Lot" – a fun and inviting space created by Librarian Patti Andersen to entice students to read for enjoyment. The children were particularly excited to read by flashlight.



Students at the Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary School showed off their STREAM (Science, Technology, Research, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) projects during the school's annual STREAM Night. Students chose a question, used the scientific method to answer that question, and created presentations highlighting the experience. After viewing their classmates' presentations, students and their families ventured throughout the building participating in a variety of fun STREAM activities.



Monticello High School celebrated some of its remarkable students during its quarterly Student of Distinction Award Ceremony on Feb. 12.

The Monticello High School Student of Distinction Award was created to recognize and award those students who have demonstrated behavior and/or achievement above and beyond expectations. Students are nominated by their teachers and are celebrated throughout the school year as shining examples of excellence. Congratulations to: Messiah Reddick (ELA), Kent Johnson-McKnight (Guidance), Rachel Zirt (Library), Kenneth Walz (Math), Didi San Miguel (Performing Arts), Ashlin Garcia Mejia (Physical Education), Joseph Lasher (Science), Benedict Arhinful (Social Studies), Hannah Titus (Visual Arts), Matthew Weinstein (World Language).



St. John Street preschoolers and their families enjoyed the school's annual Literacy Night on Thursday, March 21. Students cycled through classrooms where educators, and Jane Sorensen of the EPIC program, had set up a multitude of art and sensory experiences designed to spark students' love of reading.

This Board will strive to build authentic relationships rooted in trust, transparency and two-way communication with all constituents. We will actively seek avenues to partner with local organizations and agencies to increase our network of resources to improve and support life-long learning opportunities for our community.



student Zachary Roosa, about their experiences with the VITA program.

Students in the Monticello High School's Academy of Finance who participated in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, saved community members plenty of tax preparation fees. Now in its 17th year at Monticello, the program enables students to gain useful, real-life experience while giving back to their community. Participants in the program become IRS-certified and prepare tax forms for local residents at no cost. This year, Monticello's VITA program was featured on the March 7 episode of The Broadcast Retirement Network (BRN) show. BRN Host and CEO Jeffrey H. Snyder interviewed AOF Teachers Eric Shewmaker and Annette Schoellig, along with AOF



George L. Cooke Elementary School students and their families briefly left Planet Earth on Tuesday, March 19 for a trip to the stars during the school's annual STEAM night. This year's space theme had students getting excited to learn about math, science and technology with activities such as a moon walk through the "cosmos", experiments such as fizzy moon rocks and galaxy slime, and constellation art projects. Activities like these help spark a curiosity about the sciences, and having families along for the ride helps reinforce these concepts at home.



207 students and their family members – a new attendance record – set out for a night of math and movement at the Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary School's Math Night on Tuesday, March 12. The annual event brings educators, students and families together to explore the Math & Movement program – a multi-sensory approach to teaching math and reading that incorporates physical activity with visual stimuli created to make learning fun, active and memorable. The KLR gymnasium was filled with specially-designed floor mats and banners that enabled students to hop, walk, crawl or dance their way through mastering math and reading concepts. Out in the hallway, students played card games, solved riddles, rode scooters and participated in relay races that incorporated math skills.

The Emma C. Chase Elementary School PTO hosted a Valentine's Day dance. Students had a blast dancing the night away.



Robert L. Kaiser Middle School Principal, Sara Kozachuk, met with members of the Sullivan County Chapter of the Knights Order Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club (LEMC) who generously donated \$300 to a very deserving student at RJK Middle School. Gabriel Espinosa, President, stated that it was the club's goal to make one student feel special and know they are valued. The student will use the donation for an Amazon shopping spree to pick up some necessities (and, we hope, some treats, too!)

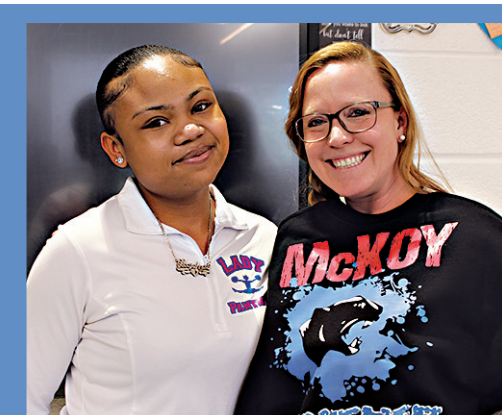


Cathie Paci of the Sullivan County Youth Bureau has been working with our high school students at the St. John Street Community School to assist with job hunts. She's been helping students with everything from identifying job prospects to building resumes, to walking them through the application process – critical skills for youth to have as they prepare for life beyond graduation.

This Board will foster an inclusive culture that sparks community pride, emphasizes kindness and respect and ensures that all students, staff and visitors are valued and supported in safe, secure, orderly and clean appropriately effective facilities.



Renowned children's author Stephen Shaskan visited the George L. Cooke Elementary School for a day of presentations and visits with both staff and students. The kids enjoyed hearing about the silly antics of Pizza and Taco, and each student went home with an autographed copy of their very own.



Monticello High School athletes once again showed their appreciation for staff members who helped them flourish over the years with Project Gratitude. Each season, athletes surprise one special staff member with a t-shirt bearing the athlete's name as a token of appreciation for their support.

In response to a rise in cell phone disruptions in classrooms, and student lateness impacting the culture and climate of the building, the educators at Robert J. Kaiser Middle School met to discuss and solidify expectations and consequences. Having all educators on the same page helps hold students to the same



standard across the board. As a result of this meeting, students are now expected to have their cell phones and earbuds off and stored in their bookbags during class, and to be physically inside the classroom when the bell rings. The school has also communicated home to students' families, asking them to help reinforce these expectations. Between family support, and school enforcement, the RJK staff is hopeful that these changes will maximize student learning, improve students' social skills and decrease distractions during the school day.



Once a month, Emma C. Chase Elementary School students who are caught by adults or teachers being extra kind, or "filling a bucket", are able to pick a prize from the prize cart as an incentive to keep spreading kindness throughout the building.



Students and staff members at the Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary School are BUSTED! This new initiative aims to encourage the KLR community to be kind, but also to keep an eye out for kindness. Students and staff can report incidents of kindness, encouragement or any other type of positivity, and the offender will have his or her "mug shot" taken and posted on the "BUSTED!" wall.



This Board will fortify its financial assets through long-term, strategic planning that aims to consistently maximize district improvements while minimizing taxpayer impact.



Grant-funded electric bus helps transportation department prepare for upcoming state mandates

In 2022, the New York State government passed legislation that would require zero-emission vehicles for all new school bus purchases by 2027 and require all operational school buses to be zero-emission by 2035. In an effort to prepare for this unfunded mandate, the district applied for, and received, a \$395,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to purchase one new electric bus and the associated charging station. The MCSD Transportation Department received the new bus in March of 2024, and while the bus is not yet being used to transport children, the staff is currently utilizing the bus to learn more about electric vehicles.

“Moving towards a fully zero-emissions fleet is uncharted territory, so having an electric bus and infrastructure in our fleet now is incredibly helpful,” Transportation Director Robin Sklar said. “This grant will provide us – at no cost to the taxpayer – hands-on experience managing electric vehicles, so that we can be better prepared when these new mandatory regulations eventually go into effect.”

The district's new electric bus and charging station was purchased and delivered at no cost to taxpayers.



Tennis courts complete

The district's new tennis courts, located at Monticello High School, were completed in time for the spring athletic season. These courts were included in the district's most recent capital project, which was approved by voters in 2018.

The new compound features five brand-new courts outfitted in Monticello blue, a spectator area, and is one of the very few tennis courts in Section IX to have lighting – ensuring games can last well into the evening hours.

To celebrate, the district held a ribbon cutting ceremony and ceremonial first serve just prior to the first scheduled boys varsity tennis home game. Senior Caleb Joyce hit the first official serve to a round of applause from district leaders, Board of Education trustees and community members.



Board of Education president Tim Crumley, flanked by district leaders and members of the community, cut the ribbon just prior to the first scheduled home varsity tennis match.



The compound features five tennis courts, a spectator area and lighting.



Varsity Tennis senior Caleb Joyce hit the ceremonial first serve.

Facilities Highlights

- Heating and ventilation systems at the Emma C. Chase Elementary School were updated during the summer of 2023. Similar upgrades are scheduled to begin this upcoming summer at the George L. Cooke Elementary School and Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary School. These upgrades were included in the capital improvement project approved by voters in 2018.
- The softball fields at the high school received new fencing, backstops, six new dugouts and a batting cage.
- New adjustable backboards were installed at the George L. Cooke Elementary School, and the installation of outdoor basketball hoops at the Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary School is in progress.



Monticello High School students are enjoying the breakout spaces in the new wing of the school, which were completed as part of the capital improvement project approved by voters in 2018.

2024 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Residents in the Monticello Central School District will consider a capital improvement project during the school budget vote on Tuesday, May 21 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at all district polling locations. The proposed project improves safety and security at the George L. Cooke and Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary Schools, replaces the district's deteriorating athletics facilities, and makes needed repairs and restorations at the St. John Street Community School and Monticello High School.

What does the capital improvement project include?

Corridor Storefronts and Classroom Improvements at the George L. Cooke Elementary School and Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary School

Our three operating elementary schools still retain the same "storefront" window design as they did when initially constructed. These single-pane windows allow individuals in the corridor a full view of the interior of the classrooms and are no longer considered best practice in terms of safety in the event of a crisis. These windows are also single-pane, and are not shatter-proof.

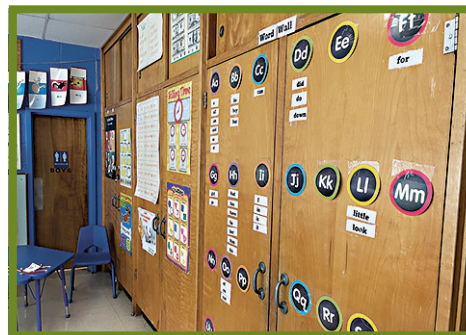
The proposed capital improvement project would replace the storefront



The original "storefront" window designs at Monticello elementary schools. The proposed capital improvement project would replace these entrances with more secure, fire-resistant and reinforced classroom doors.

entrances at the George L. Cooke Elementary School and Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary School with reinforced, fire-resistant classroom doors. In addition, each classroom would receive new flooring, ceilings with energy-efficient LED lighting, updated sinks and cabinetry and new storage casework. These changes will reinforce the security of our buildings, decrease our energy costs, and provide updated spaces for our teachers to create a positive learning environment for our students.

Similar improvements at the Emma C. Chase Elementary School were included in Task 4 of the capital improvement project approved by voters in 2018, and are scheduled to break ground in the summer of 2026.



The proposed capital improvement project would increase and improve classroom storage.

Partial Window Replacement (Monticello High School)

The windows in Monticello High School's library are beyond their useful life. The proposed capital project would finance a partial window replacement in this room, allowing for improved energy efficiency and temperature control.



Roof Coating and Façade Restoration (St. John Street Community School)

The St. John Street Community School is the district's oldest building, and is currently home to the district's preschool program. The building's roof and façade have fallen into disrepair over the years, and the capital improvement project would address these pressing needs, enabling us to continue to provide our youngest learners a high-quality foundation for academic success in a well-maintained building.



New Concession Stand/Storage Shed at Softball Field

This project would also include the construction of a new concession stand and storage shed—including restrooms—at the softball field at Monticello High School. In addition to usage by our softball teams, these fields are also frequently used by community youth sports organizations. The site presently has an old concession stand, and temporary port-a-johns for spectator and participant use.



Track and Football/Soccer Field Replacement at Ed Kennedy Field (Monticello High School), including:

- ▶ Sports Lighting
- ▶ 1,000 Seat Grandstand
- ▶ Synthetic Turf
- ▶ Press Box, Concession, Toilet and Locker Room Building
- ▶ Scoreboard
- ▶ Baseball/Softball Field – Toilet/Concession Building (Middle-High School)
- ▶ Walkway Construction

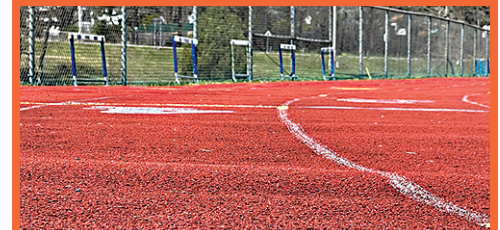
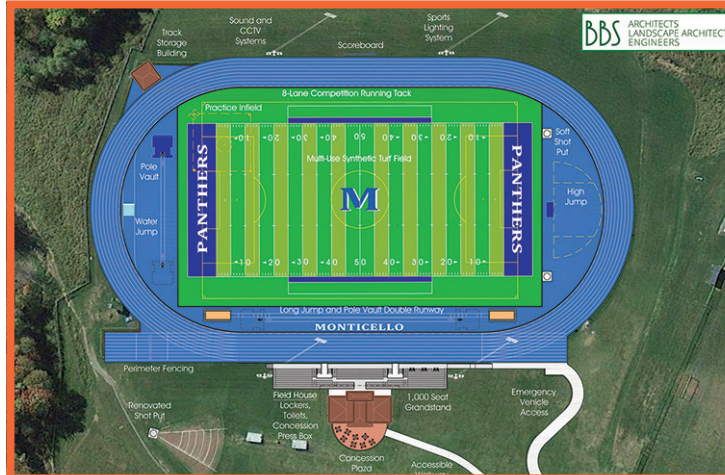
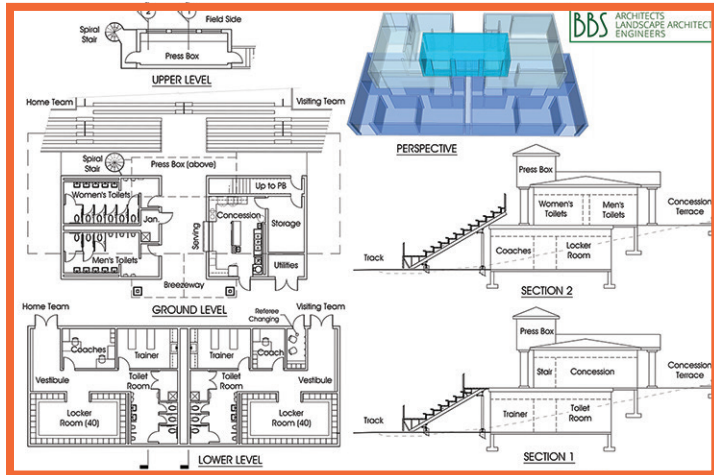
Monticello's athletics facilities are in need of a significant overhaul in

order to support student athletes, create a safe environment for spectators and players, and encourage community engagement.

Currently, our track and football field are only accessible by climbing down a steep hill. This hill can be challenging for individuals to navigate, limits emergency vehicle access and leaves our facilities susceptible to flooding and damage, with water run off pooling on our fields. There is no bathroom access,

continued next page

2024 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



Without proper drainage, the freeze/thaw cycle creates uneven surfaces on our track. Patchwork repairs of the track over the years has further exacerbated this problem of a bumpy and irregular surface for our athletes to compete and practice on.

and inadequate storage space. Spectator seating is limited to a small set of bleachers on the top of the hill, forcing most visitors to haul foldable seating down the slope. This inadequate seating also limits the district's ability to host graduation, homecoming, sectional meets and other similar community events on its fields. Parking can be challenging, and individuals who park in the overflow lot near the bus garage must walk in lot traffic to access the fields.

Patch repairs over the years have left our track and football/soccer field with uneven, worn-out surfaces, putting our athletes at a disadvantage when competing against athletes training in more optimal conditions.

The proposed capital project would construct a brand-new, modernized, and safe facility on top of our existing footprint, including a 1,000-seat grandstand, press box, sports lighting, bathrooms and field house. Our track would expand from six lanes to eight lanes, and our football/soccer field would be refitted with synthetic turf. An access road for emergency vehicles would allow first responders easy entry onto our fields, and an accessible walkway

would lead spectators from the parking lot to the grandstand. A second walkway would connect the lower parking lot (near the transportation center) to our gymnasium, enabling our students and spectators to safely access events.

What is the cost of the capital improvement project?

The total cost of the proposed capital improvement project is \$31.8 million.

Nearly half of the project will be financed by existing capital reserves totaling \$14 million. Capital reserves are funds that are set aside by school districts to finance capital improvement projects. They are established with voter approval and cannot be used for any other purpose than financing capital improvement projects. A \$4 million reserve was established by voters in 2015, and a \$10 million reserve was established by voters in 2019. These reserves must be utilized



Inadequate seating forces spectators to haul portable chairs and blankets down the field in order to enjoy a game.



With no access road, it is challenging for first responders to reach and transport injured students from the field to the parking lot.



Frequent flooding conditions at Ed Kennedy Field leads to many cancelled games and practices, leaving our athletes with less time on the field.

TAX IMPACT

Approximately two cents (2.4 cents) per \$1,000 in assessed property value

Approximately \$6 for a property owner with a home assessed at \$250,000

before they expire in 2025 and 2029, respectively.

The remaining \$17.8 million will be funded with serial bonds and paid back over 15 years. The expected impact is approximately two cents (2.4 cents) per \$1,000 in assessed property value. A property owner with a home assessed at \$250,000 could expect to pay \$6 per year to

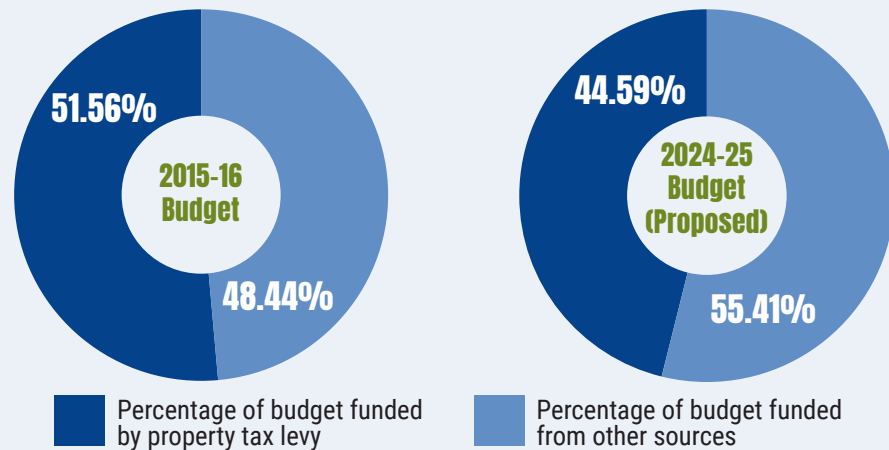
finance this project.

For more information, visit our website www.monticelloschools.net, or scan the QR Code.



BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

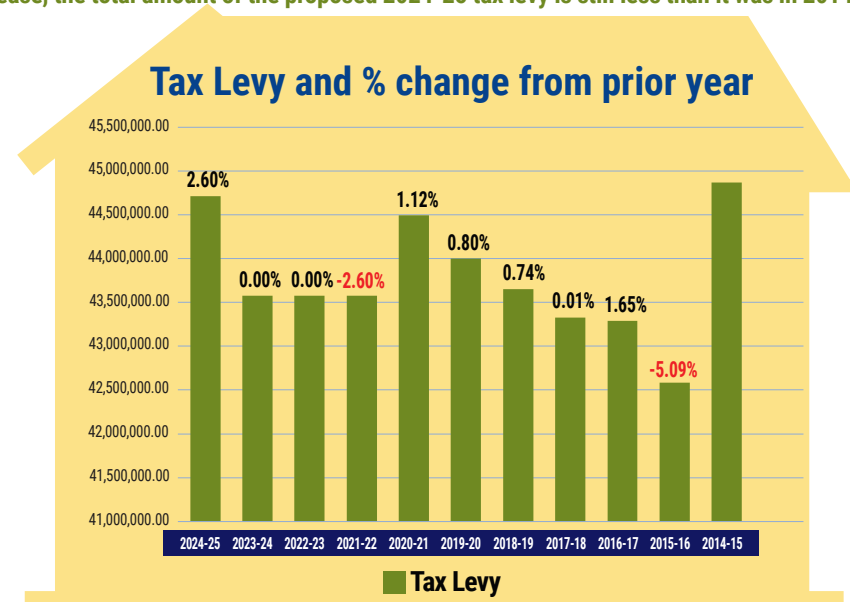
Taxpayer burden has decreased by 6.98% since 2015-16



The district has historically worked to progressively shrink the percentage of the budget funded by the taxpayers, while aggressively pursuing alternative revenue streams. In the 2015-16 school year, the tax levy funded 51.56% of the budget. In the proposed 2024-25 budget, the tax levy would fund 44.59% of the budget, a decrease of 6.98%

Historical Data

The district's proposed tax levy increase is the first increase in three years. Despite the requested increase, the total amount of the proposed 2024-25 tax levy is still less than it was in 2014-2015.



Included in the 2024-25 Budget Proposal:

- ➔ Vacant/Retiree Positions
("Vacant" positions are positions that are available, but not currently filled by a permanent employee. "Retiree" positions are positions that are currently vacant due to a staff member's retirement):
 - 4 FTE Special Education positions
 - 1 FTE English Language Arts Teacher
 - 1 FTE Speech Pathologist
- ➔ School Bus Replacements
- ➔ 5-Year Lease of 60 Jefferson Street Administrative Offices
- ➔ Transfer of St. John Street Alternative Program to Monticello High School
- ➔ Building and Department Requests

Reduced from the 2024-25 Budget Proposal:

- ➔ Vacant/Retiree Positions
("Vacant" positions are positions that are available, but not currently filled by a permanent employee. "Retiree" positions are positions that are currently vacant due to a staff member's retirement.) **No existing staff members will lose their jobs due to these reductions:**
 - 1 FTE Science
 - 1 FTE Spanish
 - 2 FTE Elementary
 - 2 FTE English Language Arts
 - 1 FTE Guidance
 - 1 FTE Math
 - 1 FTE Social Studies

Voters will see two separate propositions on the ballot on May 21

Proposition 1 asks voters to consider the proposed budget for the 2024-25 school year as outlined on p. 12-15 of this newsletter. **Proposition 2** asks voters to consider the proposed Capital Improvement Project, as outlined on p. 10 and 11 of this newsletter. These are two separate propositions, and the results of one proposition would not affect the results of the other.

This is the text that voters will see on the ballot on May 21:

Yes No
PROPOSITION 1
 Shall the budget of \$100,277,426, for the 2024-2025 school year be adopted and the requisite portion thereof in the amount of \$44,709,648, be raised by taxation on the taxable property of the Monticello Central School District?

Yes No
PROPOSITION 2
 Shall the Board of Education of the Monticello Central School District, Sullivan County, New York, is hereby authorized to construct improvements to and reconstruct School District buildings and related facilities, including reconstruction and improvements of athletic fields (including new storage and related buildings) together with original furnishings, equipment, machinery, apparatus, appurtenances, site improvements, and other incidental improvements and expenses in connection therewith, at a maximum estimated cost not to exceed \$31,800,000, and that \$4,000,000 of 2015 Capital Reserve Fund monies and \$10,000,000 of 2019 Capital Reserve Fund monies shall be used to pay a portion thereof, and that the remaining \$17,800,000 of said amount, or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be raised by the levy of a tax upon the taxable property of said School District and collected in annual installments as provided by Section 416 of the and, in anticipation of such tax, obligations of said School District shall be issued?

3-Part Budget Fiscal Year: 2024

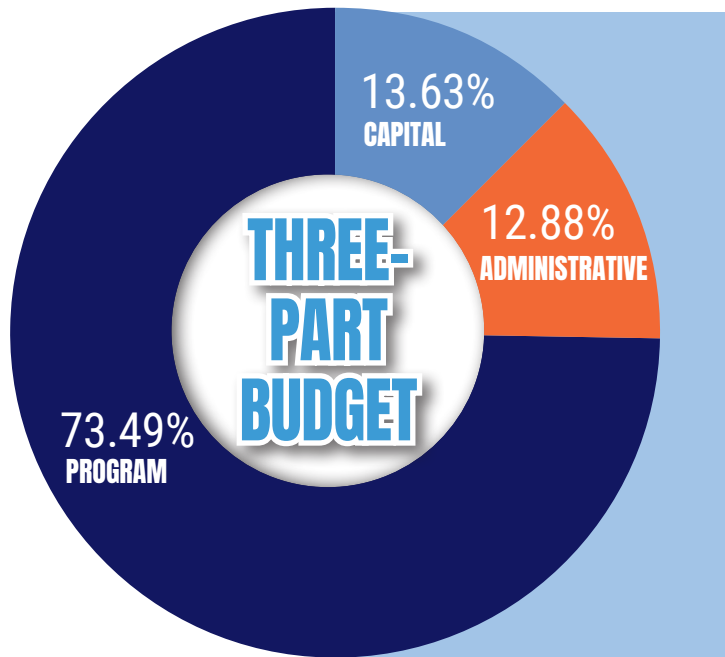
State Function	Description	2024-25 Proposed Budget	2023-24 Adopted Budget
ADMINISTRATION			
1010	Board Of Education	\$59,000	\$59,000
1040	District Clerk	\$55,625	\$53,000
1060	District Meeting	\$42,640	\$42,640
1240	Chief School Administrator	\$334,741	\$327,491
1310	Business Administration	\$988,701	\$911,814
1320	Auditing	\$84,500	\$84,000
1330	Tax Collector	\$48,200	\$47,500
1380	Fiscal Agent Fee	\$20,000	\$20,000
1420	Legal	\$260,000	\$260,000
1430	Personnel	\$288,233	\$249,840
1460	Records Management Officer	\$20,000	\$50,000
1480	Public Information and Services	\$150,847	\$181,674
1670	Central Printing & Mailing	\$110,000	\$55,000
1910	Unallocated Insurance	\$284,500	\$284,500
1920	School Association Dues	\$15,000	\$15,000
1950	Assessments on School Property	\$30,000	\$30,000
1981	BOCES Administrative Costs	\$1,429,364	\$1,380,116
2010	Curriculum Development and Supervision	\$1,022,325	\$961,834
2020	Supervision-Regular School	\$3,852,148	\$3,748,909
2070	Inservice Training-Instruction	\$80,000	\$80,000
2110	Teaching-Regular School	\$188,100	\$189,600
9000	Employee Benefits	\$3,552,914	\$3,472,104
Total Administration		\$12,916,828	\$12,504,022
CAPITAL			
1620	Operation of Plant	\$3,971,803	\$3,935,363
1621	Maintenance of Plant	\$2,189,702	\$2,051,324
1930	Judgments and Claims	\$5,000	\$5,000
1964	Refund on Real Property Taxes	\$40,000	\$40,000
5510	District Transportation Services	\$600,000	\$600,000
9000	Employee Benefits	\$1,719,964	\$1,750,895
9711	Serial Bonds-School Construction	\$4,278,888	\$412,300
9731	Bond Antic Notes-School Construction	\$0	\$2,620,175
9732	Bond Antic Notes-Bus Purchases	\$0	\$0
9785	Install Purch Debt-State Aided Hardware	\$603,441	\$647,221
9788	Leases	\$157,828	\$157,828
9950	Transfer to Capital Fund	\$100,000	\$100,000
Total Capital		\$13,666,626	\$12,320,106

State Function	Description	2024-25 Proposed Budget	2023-24 Adopted Budget
PROGRAM			
1420	Legal	\$2,000	\$2,000
1910	Unallocated Insurance	\$55,000	\$55,000
2070	Inservice Training-Instruction	\$134,500	\$133,166
2110	Teaching-Regular School	\$22,303,872	\$22,340,265
2250	Program For Students w/Disabilities-Med-Eligible	\$19,221,528	\$19,793,068
2280	Occupational Education (Grades 9-12)	\$2,268,720	\$2,098,150
2330	Teaching-Special Schools	\$380,500	\$424,000
2610	School Library & AV	\$359,943	\$364,078
2630	Computer Assisted Instruction	\$2,180,865	\$2,069,421
2805	Attendance-Regular School	\$141,608	\$146,290
2810	Guidance-Regular School	\$996,673	\$968,058
2815	Health Services-Regular School	\$600,803	\$582,921
2820	Psychological Services-Regular School	\$305,824	\$291,528
2825	Social Work Services-Regular School	\$808,811	\$810,945
2830	Pupil Personnel Services-Special Schools	\$314,535	\$388,639
2850	Co-Curricular Activities-Regular School	\$257,000	\$224,150
2855	Interscholastic Athletics-Regular School	\$843,457	\$800,135
5510	District Transport Services-Med-Eligible	\$4,477,303	\$4,001,709
5530	Garage Building	\$109,875	\$90,608
8070	Census	\$27,040	\$34,756
9000	Employee Benefits	\$17,729,115	\$17,268,680
9901	Transfer to Special Aid Fund	\$175,000	\$175,000
Total Program		\$73,693,972	\$73,062,567

BUDGET COMPONENT SUMMARY

	2024-25 Proposed Budget	% of Budget	2023-24 Adopted Budget	% of Budget
Administration	\$12,916,838	12.88%	\$12,504,022	12.77%
Capital	\$13,666,626	13.63%	\$12,320,106	12.59%
Program	\$73,693,972	73.49%	\$73,062,567	74.64%
Total	\$100,277,436	100.00%	\$97,886,695	100.00%

For more information about the 2024-25 proposed budget, please visit our website www.monticelloschools.net



By law, school districts must divide their proposed budgets into three portions – administrative, capital and program – and compare them to the current year’s amounts. Monticello’s three-part budget breaks down as follows:

	Proposed 2024-25	Budgeted 2023-24
ADMINISTRATIVE Amount:	\$12,916,828	\$12,504,022

The administrative component includes all administrative salaries, benefits and office and program costs for directing and supervising all instructional activities of the district.

	Proposed 2024-25	Budgeted 2023-24
PROGRAM Amount:	\$73,693,972	\$73,062,567

The program component includes salaries and benefits for classroom teaching personnel, instructional materials, supplies and services, interscholastic sports, extracurricular programs and transportation.

	Proposed 2024-25	Budgeted 2023-24
CAPITAL Amount:	\$13,666,626	\$12,310,106

The capital component includes all costs for facility maintenance operations, including salaries and benefits of plant operations staff, supplies, utilities, capital expenditures, debt service and purchase of transportation vehicles. Contractual leases that were included in the program budget for installment purchases and leases are now included in the capital budget.

REVENUES ▶ Where the money comes from

REVENUE	Proposed 2024-25	Budgeted 2023-24
Charges for Services	\$200,000	\$200,000
Other	\$4,143,011	\$3,926,034
Interest Income	\$300,000	\$15,000
Medicaid	\$250,000	\$250,000
State Aid	\$49,947,852	\$49,919,006
Fund Balance	\$726,915	\$0
Tax Levy	\$44,709,648	\$43,576,655
TOTALS	\$100,277,426	\$97,886,695

EXPENSES ▶ Where the money goes

EXPENSES	Proposed 2024-25	Budgeted 2023-24
Employee Salaries	\$41,971,612	\$41,647,975
Benefits	\$23,001,993	\$22,491,679
BOCES	\$15,760,048	\$17,707,960
Program Support	\$10,422,444	\$8,104,652
Equipment	\$935,297	\$950,297
Materials and Supplies	\$2,705,875	\$2,713,778
Debt Service	\$5,040,157	\$3,837,526
Transfer to Capital and Special Aid Funds	\$275,000	\$275,000
Lease of 60 Jefferson St. Admin Offices	\$165,000	\$157,828
TOTALS	\$100,277,426	\$97,886,695

Q. WHAT HAPPENS IF VOTERS REJECT THE PROPOSED 2024-25 SCHOOL BUDGET ON MAY 21?

Under New York State Education Law, if voters defeat their school district budget in May, a district has three options.

- It can:
- ✓ Resubmit the same proposal for a revote;
 - ✓ Submit a revised proposal for a revote; or
 - ✓ Adopt a contingent budget.



If it resubmits a proposal and the proposal is rejected a second time, it must adopt a contingent budget.

According to state law, a contingent budget prevents the district from spending money on particular expenses, including community use of school facilities (unless all costs are reimbursed to the district); new equipment

purchases, non-essential maintenance, capital expenditures (except in emergencies) and certain field trips and student supplies. Therefore, the district would need to remove \$1,376,984 worth of buses, equipment, training, supplies and materials, as well as unrepresented employee salary increases if it adopted a contingent budget.

BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES

VOTE ONE FOR EACH SEAT:

Seat 1 Todd Grodin	Seat 2 Timothy Crumley	Seat 3 Meghan Stalter
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Board of Education candidate statements are available on the budget webpage on the district’s website www.monticelloschools.net

What are EQUALIZATION RATES and why are they used?

A tale of two houses, two towns, one school district, and two tax bills

Town A and Town B are different towns within the same school district. The house in Town A and the house in Town B recently sold for the same amount. So, the two houses have the same market value and should pay the same amount in school taxes.

However, Town A and Town B use different assessment practices, which means that the houses have different assessed values – and assessed values are used in the computation of property tax bills. Therefore, for the houses in Town A and Town B to pay the same in taxes, the tax rates (per \$1,000 of assessed value) must be different for each town.

The process of equalization is used to determine these tax rates. Essentially, full market value serves as a common denominator, or equalizer, in the process of setting tax rates.

Equalization rates indicate the ratio of the assessed value to market value in the municipality. They are used in an effort to fairly apportion the share of taxes when a taxing jurisdiction, such as a school district, contains multiple municipalities. They are designed to ensure that owners of properties with similar full market values pay an equivalent amount of taxes.



TAX BILL – HOUSE IN TOWN A

Full Market Value:	\$250,000
Equalization Rate:	74.00
Assessed Value:	\$185,000
Town Tax Rate:	\$27.03 per \$1,000
Total Taxes Due:	\$5,000



TAX BILL – HOUSE IN TOWN B

Full Market Value:	\$250,000
Equalization Rate:	100.00
Assessed Value:	\$250,000
Town Tax Rate:	\$20.00 per \$1,000
Total Taxes Due:	\$5,000

In this example, House A and House B pay an equivalent amount of taxes due to the different tax rates.

Remember: Assessed value × Tax Rate = Total Tax Bill

$$\frac{\text{Assessed value} \times \text{Tax Rate}}{1,000} = \text{Total Tax Bill}$$

In the example given, **properties in Town A are assessed at 74 percent of full market value** (an equalization rate of 74) and **Town B properties are assessed at full market value** – an equalization rate of 100.

School districts calculate the total full market value of all properties in each municipality. Equalization rates allow them to determine the share of the tax levy to be paid by each town, a necessary step to calculating tax rates for each town. The process is designed to:

- Fairly apportion the tax levy among the municipalities in a school district ; and
- Ensure that the amount of taxes paid by owners of similar properties in the district is similar – regardless of the town and its assessment practices.

Board of Education

Timothy Crumley, *President*
 Adrianna Mayson-Greco, *Vice President*
 Wendy Galligan-Weiner
 Todd Grodin
 Jennifer Holmes
 Helen Jersey
 Victoria LaRusso
 Ashley Rielly
 Lynka Rivera

Student Board Members

Kaitlyn Weiss
 Sophia Vandermark

District Administration

Superintendent of Schools
 Matthew T. Evans, Ed.D.

Assistant Superintendent for Business

Lisa Failla

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Theresa Carlin

District Public Information Officer

Courtney Bonfante

*Produced in cooperation with the
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**BUDGET
 EDITION
 2024**

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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MONTICELLO CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT // BUDGET 2024-25 // VOLUME 10 // PAGE 16

School District Budget Notice

VOTE!

**May 21
 8 a.m.
 to 8 p.m.**

**Voting Locations:
 See page 1**

**Capital
 Improvement
 Project
 (see p. 10-11)**

For more information
 about the 2024-25
 proposed budget,
 please visit our website
www.monticelloschools.net

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2023-24 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2024-25 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$97,886,695	\$100,277,426	\$98,900,442
Increase/Decrease for the 2024-25 School Year		\$2,390,731	\$1,013,747
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		2.44 %	1.03%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.12%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$43,576,655	\$44,709,648	
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)	\$43,576,655	\$44,709,648	\$43,576,655
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$2,755,458	\$2,840,956	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$40,821,197	\$41,868,692	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$40,821,197	\$41,868,692	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$12,504,022	\$12,916,828	\$12,475,141
Program Component	\$73,062,567	\$73,693,972	\$73,498,675
Capital Component	\$12,320,106	\$13,666,626	\$12,926,626

* According to state law, a contingent budget prevents the district from spending money on particular expenses, including community use of school facilities (unless all costs are reimbursed to the district); new equipment purchases, non-essential maintenance, capital expenditures (except in emergencies) and certain field trips and student supplies. If the district adopted a contingent budget it would need to remove \$1,376,984. All replacement buses will be removed plus a reduction in materials and supplies, in service training, and unrepresented employee salary increases.

** Separate Propositions that are NOT included in the Total Budgeted Amount

Description	Amount
Capital Improvement Project	\$31,800,000

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$400
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The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2024-25 by the qualified voters of the Monticello Central School District, Sullivan County, New York, will be held at Robert J. Kaiser Middle School, Dr. Duggan Community Center, Emma C. Chase Elementary School, Rock Hill Fire Department and Forestburgh Town Hall in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., prevailing time in the Robert J. Kaiser Middle School, Dr. Duggan Community Center, Emma C. Chase Elementary School, Rock Hill Fire Department and Forestburgh Town Hall, 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.