



**Special Persons Night**  
**Tuesday, May 19, 6 p.m.**  
 A celebration of learning for students and their special people at Watervliet Elementary School!



**Remember to Vote on May 19**  
 2026-27 School Budget Vote & Board of Education Election, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.



**Class of 2026 Graduation**  
 Watervliet High School Class of 2026 Commencement is Friday, June 26.



News from

# Watervliet CITY SCHOOLS

## School budget vote set for May 19

Proposal maintains all educational opportunities, academic support for students, tax levy increase below 'cap'

*On Tuesday, May 19, Watervliet City School District residents will vote on a proposed **\$46,319,000** budget for the 2026-27 school year. Voters will also elect two candidates to the Board of Education. Voting will take place from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. at two polling locations: Watervliet Elementary School and the Watervliet Elks Lodge (see page 4).*

The budget proposal calls for an increase of 5.07%, or approximately \$2.2 million compared to the current year. This would allow the district to maintain all personnel, programs and services, support the diverse learning needs of students, and make essential updates to the district's technology infrastructure.

The year-to-year budget increase is driven by rising operating costs, employee pension contributions, and health insurance expenses, all of which outpace revenue growth.

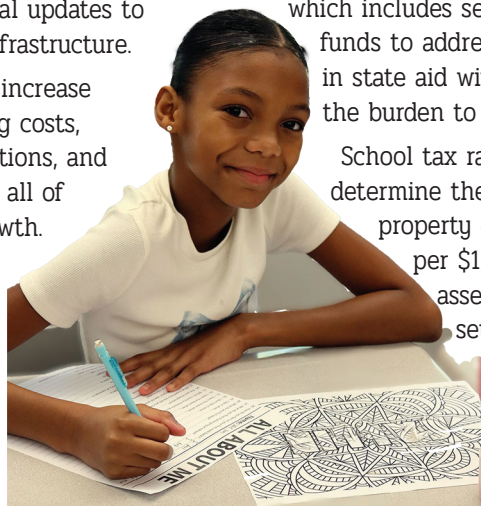
The school district anticipates an increase in state aid of \$412,985 over the current year, which is about \$721,000 less than previously projected in January under the

Governor's Executive Budget proposal. The reason for this change is because state Foundation Aid is calculated, in part, on enrollment and the needs of student populations. The initial state aid run in January was based on projected enrollment data that was recently adjusted down to reflect the district's current enrollment numbers.

The 2026-27 budget proposal would yield a 1.47% tax levy increase, which is below the district's maximum allowable tax levy limit of 1.99% under the state's tax "cap" formula. This is possible because of the district's strategic approach to long-term fiscal stability, which includes setting aside funds to address disparities in state aid without shifting the burden to taxpayers.

School tax rates, which determine the amount property owners pay per \$1,000 of assessed value, are set when the

City provides its final tax assessment data to the



## BUDGET At-a-Glance

Proposed Budget	Budget Increase	Tax Levy Increase
<b>\$46.3</b> million	<b>5.07%</b> +\$2.2M	<b>1.47%</b> projected

district in August.

### Streamlining Operations, Strengthening Program Support

The retirements of a longtime administrator and several veteran teachers present an opportunity for the district to create new leadership positions for oversight of district operations and for a dedicated coordinator for the prekindergarten and EVOLVE programs.

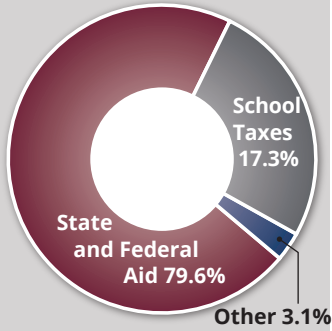
### Budget focused on student needs

The fiscal plan also provides resources to meet academic needs and to support student health and safety, which include:

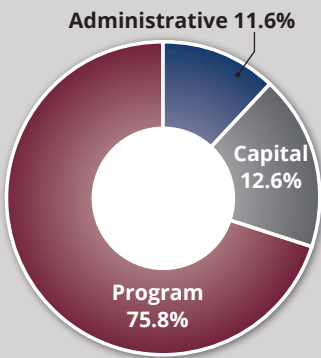
- A restorative practices specialist to promote a safer, supportive, culturally responsive and equitable environment for grades 6-12 learners.
- Part-time athletic trainer services to help prevent injuries on the field and keep student athletes in top condition to compete safely.
- Expansion of a successful elementary reading program to grades 3-5, that

- continued on page 3

## 2026-27 Revenue Sources



## 2026-27 Projected Expenses



## Where Watervliet's education dollars come from

Source of Revenue	2025-26 Budget	Proposed 2026-27 Budget	\$ Change
Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)	\$235,000	\$260,000	\$25,000
Interest and Penalties on Taxes	30,000	33,000	3,000
Consumer Utility Tax	390,000	440,000	50,000
Charges for Services (includes tuition revenue)	503,000	348,000	(155,000)
Use of Money and Property	16,000	16,000	—
Miscellaneous	233,000	355,000	122,000
Total State Aid	34,619,000	36,686,000	2,067,000
Total Federal Sources	189,000	196,000	7,000
Interfund Transfers	—	—	—
School Taxes	7,867,000	7,985,000	118,000
Appropriated Fund Balance	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$44,082,000</b>	<b>\$46,319,000</b>	<b>\$2,237,000</b>

We invite you to visit our website at [watervlietcityschools.org](http://watervlietcityschools.org) for more information about the proposed 2026-27 school budget, including a glossary of budget terms.

## How Watervliet's education dollars are spent

Budget Expense Category	Proposed Administrative 26-27 Budget	Proposed Program 26-27 Budget	Proposed Capital 26-27 Budget	Proposed Total 26-27 Budget	Total 2024-25 Budget	\$ Change
Board of Education	\$20,000	—	—	\$20,000	\$11,000	\$9,000
Central Administration	309,000	—	—	309,000	295,000	14,000
Finance	518,000	—	—	518,000	520,000	(2,000)
Staff	233,000	—	—	233,000	224,000	9,000
Central Services	795,000	—	1,646,000	2,441,000	2,276,000	165,000
Special Items	430,000	—	—	430,000	418,000	12,000
Administration & Improvement	1,591,000	—	—	1,591,000	1,646,000	(55,000)
Teaching-Regular School	—	10,635,000	—	10,635,000	10,111,000	524,000
Special/Occupational Ed Programs	—	9,329,000	—	9,329,000	8,484,000	845,000
Instructional Media	—	571,000	—	571,000	545,000	26,000
Pupil Services	—	2,383,000	—	2,383,000	2,204,000	179,000
Pupil Transportation	—	2,770,000	—	2,770,000	2,568,000	202,000
Employee Benefits	1,471,000	9,444,000	483,000	11,398,000	10,776,000	622,000
Debt Service	—	—	3,554,000	3,554,000	3,895,000	(341,000)
Interfund Transfers	—	—	137,000	137,000	109,000	28,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,367,000</b>	<b>\$35,132,000</b>	<b>\$5,820,000</b>	<b>46,319,000</b>	<b>\$44,082,000</b>	<b>\$2,237,000</b>

2026-27 Budget, from page 1

helps students build strong literacy skills and become confident, capable readers.

- Technology infrastructure updates for computers and educational software programs to enhance learning and student engagement, and phone system upgrades.

The 2026-27 proposed fiscal plan continues to take into account the enrollment and the revenue from the tuitioning agreement between the Green Island and Watervliet school

districts. It offers an opportunity to expand high school elective options, such as a new zoology course in science, that will provide students with more diverse learning experiences.

“Our budget proposal invests in strengthening academics, streamlining operations and enhancing support for students,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Donald Stevens. “Most of all, it aligns with our mission to educate, inspire and challenge every student, every day.”

### Watervliet 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	\$44,055,400	\$46,319,000	\$46,201,000
Increase/Decrease for the 2026-27 School Year		\$2,237,000	\$2,145,000
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		5.1%	4.9%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.63%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$7,840,400	\$7,985,000	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	-	-	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$26,600	-	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	-	-	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$7,867,000	\$7,985,000	\$7,867,000
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	-	-	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$8,012,350	\$8,177,248	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/ or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$7,867,000	\$7,985,000	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$145,350	\$192,248	
Administrative Component	\$5,139,000	\$5,367,000	\$5,367,000
Program Component	\$32,952,000	\$35,132,000	\$35,014,000
Capital Component	\$5,991,000	\$5,820,000	\$5,820,000

\* If the proposed budget is defeated on May 19, the Board of Education will have three options: present the same budget to voters a second time; present a revised budget to voters; or adopt a contingent budget. If the budget is again defeated, the board must adopt a contingent budget. Under the tax levy limit law, school districts can levy a tax no greater than that of the prior year, or a 0 percent increase, in a contingent budget. The Watervliet City School District would be required to eliminate an additional \$118,000 in proposed spending for the 2026-2027 school year.

\*\* 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
	-

**Under the Budget Proposed for the 2026-27 School Year**

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings<sup>1</sup>

PLEASE NOTE: The Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings for the City of Watervliet and Town of Colonie was not available at the time the school budget newsletter was sent to print. When the NYS Taxation and Finance Department makes the data available, we will post it on the Budget & Taxes web page.

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2026-27 by the qualified voters of the Watervliet school district, Albany County, New York, will be held at Watervliet Elementary School and the Watervliet Elks Club in said district on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., prevailing time in the Watervliet school(s), at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

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



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Student Support Services*  
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Communications Service.*

## Postal Customer

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**TIME SENSITIVE — SCHOOL ELECTION MATERIAL — PLEASE EXPEDITE DELIVERY**  
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## Voting information

- ✓ **You are eligible to vote if you** are a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old, registered with the Albany County Board of Elections, and a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote date.
- ✓ **Absentee ballots:** Residents who wish to vote by absentee ballot may pick up an application at the district office. Qualifications for voting by absentee ballot include: will be out of the county on the day of the vote; unable to appear in person due to permanent illness or disability.
- ✓ **Early Voting:** Eligible voters may apply for an early voter ballot for the school budget and board of education election by completing an application, which can be requested from the District Clerk.

## Polling sites for the Tuesday, May 19 vote

For the school budget vote and Board of Education election on May 19, eligible voters will cast their ballots at one of the two locations below:

- ✓ **District 1 – Watervliet Elks Lodge, 501 4th Avenue**  
All locations in the district south of the northernmost wall of the Arsenal and the entire area of Mannsville.
- ✓ **District 2 – Watervliet Elementary School, 2557 10th Avenue**  
All locations in the district north of the northernmost wall of the Arsenal.  
*Questions about the polling sites? Call the district office at 518-629-3201.*

## Also on the ballot:

- ✓ **Board of Education election:** Voters will elect two candidates to serve on the Board of Education, beginning July 1. **For candidate information, please visit [www.watervlietcityschools.org](http://www.watervlietcityschools.org)**

## International Night 2026

Students, families, teachers and staff celebrated diversity and the many vibrant cultures represented in our schools and community during the district's third annual International Night at WJSHS in March. This year's celebration had the biggest turnout yet with approximately 600 participants who explored 40 countries, sampled world cuisine and engaged in activities such as dance, games, and crafts and enjoyed musical performances from around the globe.

