



# CANASTOTA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET NEWSLETTER

Canastota Central School District

Budget Newsletter 2025

## BUDGET BASICS

**\$39,632,455**

Amount of the  
proposed  
2025-2026 BUDGET

**3.25%**

Increase in local tax  
levy share in this budget.

**3**

Gasoline buses to be  
purchased under this  
proposed budget.  
*see page 3 for more details*

**\$1,227,000**

Approve authorization to  
increase the Capital  
Project.  
*see page 3 for more details*

### A NOTE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

We are pleased to present the 2025-26 school budget proposal for your consideration. The District has been fortunate to control spending and minimize tax increases while managing increased operational costs in recent years, and has developed a plan that allows us to stay within our allowable tax levy limit for the 2025-26 school year. The proposed budget calls for a 3.25% overall increase in the tax levy for 2025-26. This increase stays well below our allowable tax cap of 4.8%. While our normal practice is to increase the levy up to the cap, we felt that a lesser tax increase was appropriate this year in light of the turbulent and uncertain economic climate all community members are currently experiencing.

As we move into the new year, we remain committed to investing in the core, foundational educational program. We are extremely pleased that, for the third year in a row, we are a District "In Good Standing" according to the State Education Department. This is a testament to the fact that we are improving as a district, and the hard work of our staff and students is paying off. Moving into 2025-26, our priority will be to build upon the solid foundation that has been established to perpetuate the practices that have resulted in improved academic performance.

In the area of innovative programming, we look forward to the continued development of our groundbreaking programs that emphasize regional community partnerships. The emphasis on matching local employment and economic needs with the skills and interests of our students has allowed us to develop programming options that serve as a model for our region in terms of offering practical and in-demand educational experiences. In the coming weeks and months, we will outline the various new and emerging programs that our students can now participate in. These opportunities include business and community-based partnerships for the 2025-26 academic year, supported by our stackable micro-credential platform as well as our own New Visions Career Academy.

In addition to academic and programmatic enhancements, our budget plan continues our commitment to providing the necessary support services to pave the way for students to be successful. Our budget maintains the newly implemented Satellite Mental Health Office and School Patrol Officer program, both outstanding, cost effective partnerships with Madison County, and continues our Pre-K/UPK partnership through Madison-Oneida BOCES. Additionally, we are committed to providing support to students, families, and staff members by continuing to invest in counseling services and additional administrative support at the building level by adding a full-time assistant principal for Roberts Street Middle School. This position will be key in our goal to promote an orderly, disciplined learning environment for our students and staff.

*...continued on page 12*

**BUDGET VOTE**  
2025-26 Proposed Budget



**BOARD OF  
EDUCATION  
ELECTIONS**

**Tuesday, May 20**

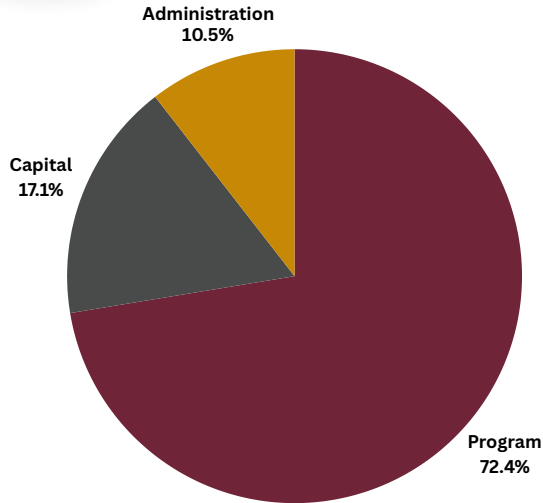
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**HIGH SCHOOL TUNNEL**



# CANASTOTA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET SUMMARY

## PROPOSED EXPENDITURES



### Program Budget Component

This budget category covers all salaries and benefits for teachers and supervisors who primarily focus on teaching, as well as transportation and support staff. It encompasses instructional costs, including supplies, equipment, textbooks, co-curricular activities, interscholastic athletics, staff development, and transportation operating expenses. This part of the budget allocates funds for 204 employees and their associated benefits.

### Administrative Component

This budget category covers expenses related to office and administrative costs, salaries, and benefits for certified school administrators who dedicate 50 percent or more of their time to supervisory duties operating and support staff. It also includes costs associated with operational support staff, data processing, public information, legal fees, property insurance, and school board expenses. This section of the budget allocates funds for 20 employees and their corresponding benefits.

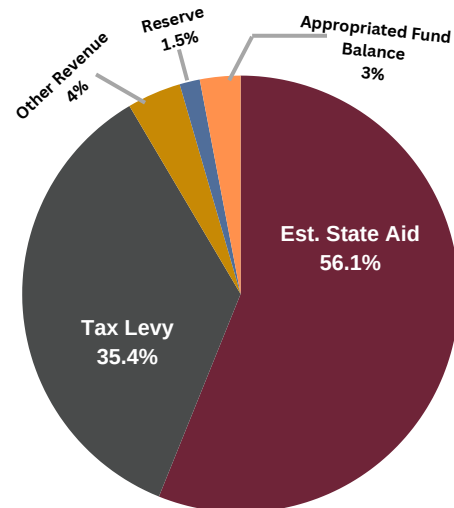
### Capital Budget Component

This section of the budget allocates funds for 16 employees and their associated benefits. It also includes costs for all building maintenance, upkeep of grounds, utilities, purchase of buses, debt payments, and insurances.

Expense Category	2025-26 Proposed
Program	\$28,711,201
Capital	\$6,784,557
Administration	\$4,136,697
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$39,632,455</b>

## REVENUE SUMMARY

Revenue Category	2025-26 Proposed
Est. State Aid	\$22,232,482
Tax Levy	\$14,017,697
Other Revenue	\$1,590,500
Reserve	\$600,000
Appropriated FB	\$1,191,776
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$39,632,455</b>





# CANASTOTA CSD BUDGET PROPOSITIONS

## PROPOSITION 2

Shall the Board of Education INCREASE THE MAXIMUM ESTIMATED COST OF THE CAPITAL PROJECT approved by the District Voters on December 5, 2023 from \$30,000,000 to **\$31,227,000**

### Why is this being requested?

The contract costs for the project exceeded the original authorization.

### Why did costs come in higher than projected?

Several factors contributed to the contract cost increases

- NYS SED delayed project approval date
- Bidding in April opposed to February when the market is more robust for competition
- Escalating cost due to stable, unprecedented changes at the Federal Level
- Unpredictable trade policies and tariffs

### What will happen if the proposition is NOT approved by voters?

Items impacting the gymnasiums and cafeterias will need to be reduced if the district must stay within the original \$30,000,000 authorization

### What will happen if the proposition IS approved by voters?

Items that would be reduced in the gymnasiums and cafeterias will stay in the project scope, and the authorization will increase to \$31,227,000

### How will we pay for this?

The district currently has \$1,227,000 in its Debt Service Reserve Fund. The Office of the State Comptroller's office provides guidance on what these funds can be used for. Money in a Debt Service Reserve can be used to pay down debt, OR used to offset the cost of a capital infrastructure project.

### Is there a cost to the taxpayers to increase the authorization?

NO, this project would continue to have a local share cost of \$0. The project leveraged capital reserve funds to offset the local share (net cost after building aid) costs. The new monies from the Debt Service Reserve will act in the same way as the capital reserve. The local share will remain.

## PROPOSITION 3

Shall the Board of Education be authorized to purchase and finance three gasoline-powered student transport vehicles? (1-59 passenger, 2-65 passenger)

### Why is this being requested?

Replacing buses annually allows the District to maintain an appropriate replacement schedule, keep the fleet up to date, reliable, and safe for student transportation, while maximizing a revenue stream.

### How do we pay for the buses?

NYS aids buses at a 90% ratio. This means the District receives back 90 cents for every dollar spent. For example, if we spend \$590,000 for (3) buses and finance the cost over 5 years, the annual cost to the district is \$118,000; we receive aid on that expense in the amount of \$106,200. The local cost is 10% or 11,800 annually for the (3) new buses.





# CANASTOTA CSD BUDGET COMPONENTS

## BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTIONS

The Canastota Central School District Board of Education will have three vacancies available.

The three candidates receiving the most votes will receive three-year terms on the Board, beginning in July 2025 and concluding on June 30, 2028. All Board of Education positions are considered to be “at-large”.

The following candidates, in ballot order, have completed the necessary requirements to appear on the ballot for the election on May 20th.

- Debbie New
- Kristen Muir
- Douglas Scott Blanchard
- Zachary Stevens

## WHO CAN VOTE?

A qualified voter is one who is:

- A citizen of the United States of America.
- Eighteen years of age or older.
- A resident within the School District for a period of thirty (30) days preceding the annual vote and election.
- Not otherwise disqualified to vote by applicable law.

The School District may require that all persons wishing to vote at the budget vote and election provide one form of proof of residency, as specified in Education Law Section 2018-c.

Such a form may include a driver’s license, a non-driver’s identification card, a utility bill, or a voter registration card. Upon offer of proof of residency, the School District may also require that all persons offering to vote provide their signature, printed name, and address.

Apartment dwellers who meet these qualifications are eligible. No prior registration is required, and residents do not have to be registered voters. (Education Law § 2012)

## CANASTOTA CSD BUDGET COMPONENTS

	Actual 2024-25		Proposed 2025-26
Teaching Regular School	10,117,425		10,836,735
Special Needs Programming	5,206,700		5,106,200
Media and Computer Services	925,631		967,951
Pupil Services	775,000		805,860
Inservice and Curriculum Development	476,000		392,758
Co-Curricular & Athletics	720,795		742,800
Interfund Transfer	200,000		290,000
Transportation Services	1,602,300		1,709,750
Employee Benefits	7,677,138		7,859,147
<b>Total Program</b>	<b>27,700,989</b>		<b>28,711,201</b>
Operation of Plant	1,159,500		1,208,094
Maintenance of Plant	883,500		893,500
Refund of Taxes	-		-
Employee Benefits	602,661		621,777
Debt Service	3,759,835		3,961,186
Transfer to Capital (Capital Outlay)	100,000		100,000
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>6,505,496</b>		<b>6,784,557</b>
Board of Education	37,850	25,488	37,741
Central Administration	237,500		244,248
Finance	571,800		564,338
Central Services	486,200		497,500
Curriculum Development	95,035		105,258
BOCES	275,677		281,659
Instructional Administration	1,263,994		1,386,092
Employee Benefits	958,201		1,019,861
<b>Total Administrative</b>	<b>3,926,257</b>	<b>25,488</b>	<b>4,136,697</b>
<b>Total Budget Appropriation</b>	<b>38,132,742</b>		<b>39,632,455</b>
	<b>Adopted 2024-25</b>		<b>Proposed 2025-26</b>
Salary & Benefits	23,864,345	25,488	24,890,195
Contractual	9,057,331		9,269,274
Debt Service	3,759,835		3,961,186
Materials & Supplies	958,052		893,800
Transfer to other Funds	300,000		390,000
Equipment	193,179		228,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>38,132,742</b>	<b>25,488</b>	<b>39,632,455</b>

## ABSENTEE + EARLY BALLOTING

Qualified voters who wish to vote using an absentee and early ballot can request an application from the District Clerk at 315-697-6302.

Completed applications for absentee and early ballots must be received by the District Clerk no later than 4 p.m. on 5/13/2025 to receive an absentee and Early ballot by mail.

Any applications received after 5/13/25 must appear in person at the District Clerk’s office, 120 Roberts Street, to pick up an absentee or early ballot. To receive a ballot in this fashion, a completed absentee or early ballot application must be on file no later than 5/19/25, and the District Clerk must receive the ballot by 5 p.m. on 5/20/25. Completed absentee ballots received after this time cannot be accepted.



## MEET THE CANDIDATES



### **Debbie New**

For over 42 years, I served the Canastota Central School District as a teacher, coach, and class advisor. I had the privilege of teaching 5th through 9th grade, with a special focus on Global for 9th graders. After retiring in 2010, my passion for education never wavered as I continue to substitute teach across multiple districts, staying connected to classrooms and students. Beyond the classroom, my commitment to Canastota runs deep. My late husband, Don, and I made this district our home in 1968, where we raised our five children, all of whom are graduates of Canastota School. Today, our 17 grandchildren remind me daily why strong schools matter. I proudly served three terms on the Board of Education (2015 to 2024), and while I initially stepped away last year to

focus on my husband's health, I now have the time, energy, and passion to reengage. Canastota has always been my home, and our school district has always been my heart. My top priority will always be what is best for Canastota students. I will continue to work alongside the Board, administration, teachers, support staff, and families to ensure that our children have the resources, opportunities, and support they need to succeed and thrive.



### **Kristen Muir**

My name is Kristen Muir, a proud alumni of the class of 1999, who married a class of 2002 graduate. My husband, Justin, and I believed in CHS so much that, upon military retirement, we chose Canastota to raise our family in the district that has shaped us into who we are today. We are very proud of our children's (Lucianna, alum Joey, junior, and Cole, freshman) ability to become educated, kind people because of their time spent in CCSD. I obtained my Bachelor's Degree in Human Services from Cazenovia College and my Master's in Social Work from the University of Southern California. I am currently employed by the Westmoreland CSD as a social worker. I am incredibly fulfilled by my job; working with children and families to ensure their success in school

is something I take very seriously. I am also the Section 504 Chairperson, and the Child Study Team liaison for the high school. These positions allow me to work with a team of individuals that are invested in the student's success. I look forward to serving as a strong voice for the children, families, taxpayers and staff of our district and would be humbled by your support!



## MEET THE CANDIDATES



### ***Douglas Scott Blanchard***

A lifelong resident of the Canastota School District, where he graduated in 2012. He earned his BA in English from SUNY Geneseo and his MEd in Literacy Education from SUNY Cortland while he was substitute teaching for Canastota. Since then, Scott has taught English for seven years in the Utica City School District, including two years at Proctor High School and five years at JFK Middle School. He currently serves as Assistant Principal at Donovan Middle School. Scott is dedicated to serving the community that made him who he is today, and he has volunteered on multiple boards over the years, including the Canastota Recreation Commission, Lenox Planning Board, and Community Action Partnership Board of Directors. As a new father, he is determined to work hard to keep this District a great place to raise kids. Scott wants to continue to serve as an advocate for teachers, parents, students, and community members, as he believes this partnership is essential to the District's success. Scott is proud to be endorsed by the Canastota Teachers' Association.



### ***Zachary Stevens***

My Name is Zachary Stevens and I am humbly asking for your support. As a lifelong Canastota Resident deeply rooted in our community, I am dedicated to contributing positively to the education landscape that has been instrumental in shaping not only my life but also the lives of my family. Having graduated in 1999 from CHS and subsequently obtaining an associate's degree in business administration, I have cultivated a wealth of experience in both family business endeavors and corporate environments. Throughout the years, I have been actively engaged in various community roles, serving on numerous boards. The Roles have instilled in me the value of teamwork, leadership and community engagement. The decision to run for board of education stems from my desire to reciprocate the boundless opportunities and support that Canastota has extended my family and me. In light of the evolving educational landscape influenced by federal and state level changes, I believe that an unwavering commitment to advocacy, transparency and collaboration is paramount in steering our school system towards continued success. If elected, I pledge to approach all decisions with meticulous consideration, ensuring that the interests of all our students, educators and community members are at the forefront.

*\* The candidate bios are provided for informational purposes only, and do not imply any endorsement by the Canastota Central School District. The information provided in these candidate bios comes directly from each candidate. Any views and opinions expressed in the candidate bios are solely those of the candidates, and do not reflect the official position of the Canastota Central School District*



## CLASS OF 2025 VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN



### ***Cara Kitchen, Valedictorian***

Cara Kitchen, the Valedictorian of the Class of 2025, has distinguished herself through exceptional academic performance, exemplary leadership, and a strong commitment to service—both within her school and the broader community.

Throughout her high school years at Canastota Central School District, Cara has been an active and engaged student, participating in a wide range of organizations, including the National Honor Society, Leadership Cabinet, Student Government, Junior Chamber of Commerce, Science Club, Athletics, International Club, and SADD. She has also served as Class President, where her leadership has helped foster a positive and inclusive school environment.

Cara has received numerous accolades in recognition of her achievements and service. She was named a Center State Conference Scholar Athlete, received the Lions Club Community Service Gold Award, and has served as the Student Representative to the Board of Education. She is also a National Honor Society Scholarship semi-finalist, having advanced in a highly competitive

national selection process. In addition, Cara earned her EMT certification through the GLAS/CCSD Business Partnership, a testament to her dedication to public service and her ability to balance demanding academic and training commitments. Cara's unwavering drive, leadership, and service-minded approach have made her a role model among her peers and a proud representative of the Canastota Class of 2025. She leaves behind a legacy of excellence and is well-prepared for continued success in her future endeavors.

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### ***Emma Savicki, Salutatorian***

Emma Savicki, the Salutatorian of the Class of 2025, has been a dedicated student throughout her academic journey at Canastota Central School District. Known for her strong work ethic, creative spirit, and leadership, Emma has maintained an impressive academic record while actively participating in numerous school activities.

Emma has been involved in a range of extracurricular pursuits, including competitive dance, high school musicals, and cheerleading. She is a member of both the National Honor Society and the National Art Honor Society, where she also serves as the Senior Class Secretary.

Her academic excellence has been recognized through several honors and awards, including Outstanding Achievement in Advanced Drawing and Painting, Highest Average in Pre-Calculus, Excellence in Chemistry, and the RIT Science and Math Award. Emma's passion for the arts, commitment to academic excellence, and involvement in leadership roles have made her a respected member of the Canastota student body. While her post-secondary plans are still to be determined, there is no doubt that Emma's drive and well-rounded achievements will lead her to continued success beyond graduation.

CLASS OF 2025



## CELEBRATING 18 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE!

On April 14th, the 18th Annual Lions Club Young Leaders in Service Dinner was held, continuing a proud tradition launched through the dedication and vision of Lion Kerry Brown. Since its inception, the program has honored 258 outstanding students, who have collectively contributed an incredible 29,615 hours of service to our community. These young leaders exemplify what it means to give back with heart, purpose, and compassion. Whether volunteering at local events or supporting meaningful causes, their impact is felt throughout the district and beyond.



### FBLA SHINES AT NYS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Middle Level and High School FBLA members recently competed at the NYS Leadership Conference, earning top finishes across several categories, including Business Plan, Public Speaking, and Website Design. A special shoutout to Luca DiSanto, who took 2nd place in the Business Plan competition and is headed to Nationals in Anaheim, CA this June!



### DRIVER AWARENESS WITH OFFICER MIKE

Our junior class recently attended an engaging and informative session on driver safety, led by Officer Mike. Topics included what to expect during a traffic stop, safe driving do's and don'ts, and the responsibilities of both drivers and officers.

The presentation provided valuable real-world insights and helped prepare students to be responsible and confident drivers.





## **SPRING SMILES & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS!**

*A Season of Fun, Family, and Learning at PSES & SSES*

This spring, students at PSES and SSES were busy building memories and community spirit through a series of exciting events. At the Eggstravaganza, children rotated through a variety of activities—from playful games and hands-on crafts to enjoying healthy snacks. With support from FACE, MOBOCES, the PTA, and CCE of Chenango County, the day was bursting with energy, creativity, and connection.

Families then came together for Lights, Camera, Action... BINGO!—a high-energy evening of fun hosted by RSES/SSES PTA and Site Coordinator Denise. The room echoed with laughter as students and their families played BINGO, tested their Disney trivia skills, and munched on fresh popcorn. It was a night filled with prizes, friendly competition, and lots of smiles.

To round out the season, the Great Swamp Conservancy paid a visit to our schools, teaching students about tree planting and care. The presentation didn't stop at just the science—students joined in with songs and dancing, bringing learning to life in the most joyful way.

From snacks to science, and crafts to community, it's been a season of meaningful moments—and we're so thankful for all who helped make it happen!





## SINGING, SNACKING & SMILING AT RSMS!

At RSMS, students have been enjoying a variety of engaging activities that bring learning, creativity, and wellness together in fun and meaningful ways. Students recently brought the energy and enthusiasm during karaoke time, where they stepped up to the mic to sing their hearts out. From pop hits to fan favorites, the night was filled with laughter, applause, and encouraging cheers as students celebrated confidence and self-expression.

In another hands-on activity, students joined Ms. Carrie Forward from CCE/SNAP Ed and Site Coordinator Denise for an interactive nutrition lesson and snack demonstration. The focus was on healthy, low-sugar options—specifically a crowd-pleasing recipe for cranberry oatmeal protein balls. Students loved learning about balanced snacks and had a blast creating (and tasting!) their own nutritious treats.

From music to mindful munching, RSMS continues to foster a vibrant, supportive environment where students can grow, explore, and connect.





## NFL RUNNING BACK LATAVIUS MURRAY VISITS CANASTOTA



On April 14, students in our Sports Management & Entertainment Marketing and Exercise Science classes had a unique opportunity to learn from Latavius Murray, a 10-year NFL veteran and 2015 Pro Bowler.

Latavius shared stories from his professional football journey, with a focus on training, injury prevention, and rehabilitation—offering real-world insight into the field of exercise science. He also spent time signing autographs, posing for photos, and connecting directly with students, making the visit especially memorable.

A graduate of Onondaga Central School and UCF, Latavius was drafted in 2013 by the Oakland Raiders and went on to play for multiple NFL

teams including the Vikings, Saints, Ravens, Broncos, and Bills. beyond the field, Latavius is also the founder of the Jon Diaz Community Center in Nedrow, which focuses on health, wellness, and addressing social determinants of health for all ages. We thank Latavius for his time, inspiration, and the meaningful connections he made with our students.

## SADD HOSTS MOCK CRASH DEMONSTRATION

Ahead of prom weekend, Canastota High School's SADD group presented a powerful Mock Car Crash to highlight the dangers of impaired and distracted driving.

Students witnessed a realistic crash scene, emergency response, and even the presence of a Grim Reaper to symbolize lives lost too soon. After the demonstration, students explored the Mercy Flight helicopter and spoke with pilots about emergency medical services.

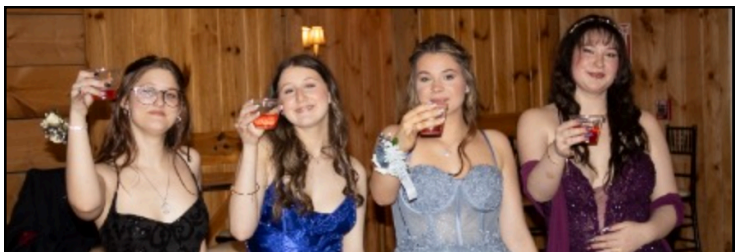
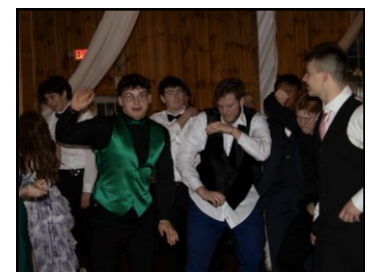
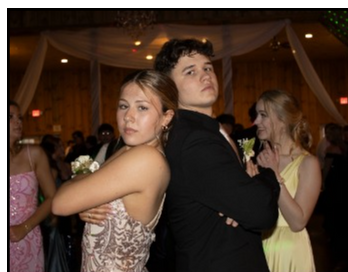
Special thanks to our local first responders and agencies for partnering with us to deliver this life-saving message — and to our SADD students for leading with purpose.



## PROM 2025: A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Prom was a truly memorable evening as students gathered to celebrate in style. From elegant entrances to a packed dance floor, the night was filled with fun, friendship, and lasting memories.

A heartfelt thank you to the students, staff, families, and volunteers who helped make the event so special — your efforts brought the magic to life!





LORAN CROSBY, Board President  
MAUREEN WOOD, Board Vice President  
COURTNEY BAZAN COLVIN, Board Member  
SCOTT BLANCHARD, Board Member  
MARC CIANCIOLA, Board Member  
JENNIFER KITCHEN, Board Member  
GREGORY OWENS, Board Member

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Canastota, NY 13032

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SHAWN BISSETTA, Superintendent  
TRACY LEONE, Business Manager

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED

On the operational side, once again, the budget plan calls for maintaining reserves at an adequate and responsible level while holding the local tax levy to a minimal increase. From an operations/infrastructure standpoint, we are utilizing a detailed succession schedule for the replacement of equipment and buses. This planned replacement schedule ensures the stabilization of long-term costs to the district and assists us in maintaining a safe and efficiently operating environment. It is important to note that our bus proposition calls for the purchase of traditional gas buses; we are not moving to zero-emission buses at this time for a variety of both cost and operational reasons.

Our upcoming capital project, approved by taxpayers in December 2023 with no additional local tax impact, will allow for the continued maintenance and enhancement of our facilities, and paves the way for us to accomplish this in a more efficient manner over the coming years. You will notice on this year's ballot that the District is asking voters to approve a proposition that will allow for the utilization of District reserves specifically for the capital project. You will not be surprised to learn that construction prices have substantially escalated between the time of the project's approval in December 2023 and when the construction bids were opened in April 2025.

To complete as much of the work in our original plan as possible, we are requesting the use of \$1,227.000 million from the debt service reserve specifically to support this project. Again, it's important to note that this approved resolution will not increase taxes. A major reason why we have established these types of reserve funds is specifically so that we do not have to increase taxes to get essential work completed. We look forward to the renovations our facilities will undergo in the coming years under this transformational project!

We appreciate your interest in our school district and would be happy to address any questions related to the 2025-26 budget proposal.

Sincerely,

*Shawn Bissetta*

## Canastota Esports: On the Road to the Playoffs!



This spring, Canastota's Esports program is making waves—and pixels! Our dedicated student teams have been sharpening their strategy, communication, and gameplay skills all season long, and now they're heading to the big stage. On Saturday, April 26 and Sunday, April 27, several of our top-performing Esports teams will compete in the New York State Esports League Playoffs at the state-of-the-art ELITE Gaming Arena in Syracuse. This is a major milestone for our district's growing Esports initiative, offering students a chance to test their skills in a professional environment while gaining valuable experience in teamwork, problem-solving, and competitive digital literacy. We're incredibly proud of the sportsmanship and commitment these students continue to demonstrate, both in practice and on the virtual battlefield!