

# CLARENCE SCHOOL NEWS

Volume 72 • Annual Report to the Community • May 2024

## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT to the Community



### Where Every Child Counts



#### Public Hearing on 2024-25 Proposed School Budget

6:30 PM Monday, May 13, 2024  
Clarence High School Auditorium  
9625 Main Street



#### Date, Time, and Location of Public Vote

Tuesday, May 21, 2024  
7:00 AM - 9:00 PM  
Clarence High School Gymnasium  
9625 Main Street



#### Voter Eligibility

To be eligible to vote, you must be:

- at least 18 years of age;
- a United States citizen;
- a resident of the District for at least 30 days immediately prior to the vote.



#### On the Ballot

- Proposition 1 - Proposed 2024-25 School Budget
- Proposition 2 - Bus and Vehicle Purchase
- Election of two (2) School Board Members

ANNUAL BUDGET VOTE  
TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2024 • 7 AM - 9 PM

## A Message from the Board of Education



James Boglioli  
President



Michael Fuchs  
Vice-President



Tricia Andrews



Kym Cannizzaro



Cindy Magera



Dennis Priore



Dawn Snyder

On May 21, the community will vote on a proposed spending plan for the upcoming academic year. The budget has been thoughtfully developed over the past several months, and it balances continued excellence, needed support for students, and a commitment to fiscal sustainability.

First and foremost, the proposed budget preserves all existing academic, athletic, and extracurricular offerings that make Clarence unique. As importantly, the spending plan also maintains the special education, mental health, and interventionist positions that were added in recent years with federal funds. By strategically absorbing the costs into the general fund budget over a multi-year period, the budget ensures that each child will have the resources they need to experience success.

Furthermore, the spending plan also makes a continued commitment to enhancing the safety and wellbeing of students and staff. Along with safety training and site enhancements, the budget allocates funds for the addition of a third School Resource Officer (SRO) who will focus their time at the elementary level. Acting as a bridge between school and local agencies, the SRO will proactively assist as a teacher, mentor, and expert in the field of law enforcement.

To sustain the items that matter most to our school community, the spending plan prioritizes cost effectiveness, administrative efficiency, and low per pupil spending. Staying at or below the New York State Property Tax Cap (a number calculated by a state-dictated formula taking into account factors like inflation, the local growth factor, PILOT Payments, and prior year exemptions) for the 14th year in a row, the budget maintains one of the lowest estimated tax rates in Upstate New York. Despite the reality that the District will not receive an increase in foundation aid from the State this coming year, the proposed 3.68% tax levy increase remains within the Property Tax Cap and requires only a simple majority vote for approval.

Along with the budget, residents will also be asked to vote on a proposition involving the purchase of 7 vehicles that are part of the District's vehicle replacement schedule. By purchasing 3 passenger buses, 2 passenger vans, and 2 maintenance trucks, the plan keeps expenses manageable while taking full advantage of State funding that covers two-thirds of the costs. It is also important to note that the 2 passenger vans will enable the District to transport small groups of students to a variety of events at a reduced cost due to fuel and mechanical efficiencies.

While voting for the propositions, members of the community will also have the chance to elect 2 Board of Education Trustees. The unpaid members of the governance team will serve as stewards for both the District's children as well as its tax dollars by establishing organizational direction, approving policies, and adopting an annual spending plan.

Beyond this publication, residents are encouraged to learn more about the District by visiting its website ([www.clarenceschools.org](http://www.clarenceschools.org)), its Facebook page, or by calling the District Office.



### BUDGET VOTE

**Tuesday, May 21, 2024 • 7 AM - 9 PM**

*Budget Hearing - May 13, 2024* - for more information go to [www.clarenceschools.org](http://www.clarenceschools.org)



# Proposition #1 - Proposed Budget

RESOLVED that the 2024-25 School District budget for the Clarence Central School District, in the total amount of \$97,183,922 be adopted.

Expenditures			
Components	2023-24	2024-25	Change
Instruction	\$71,456,749	\$73,483,203	\$2,026,454
Capital	\$14,364,326	\$15,417,970	\$1,053,644
Administration	\$7,337,270	\$8,282,749	\$945,479
Total	\$93,158,345	\$97,183,922	\$4,025,577

A budget is a financial expression of an institution’s mission:

*“The mission of the Clarence Central School District is to produce independent, lifelong learners who are responsible contributing members of a diverse society.”*

Mission Statement from the  
Clarence Central School District’s Strategic Plan

# Proposition #2 - Bus and Vehicle Purchase

The Board of Education is asking for authorization to purchase buses and similar vehicles not to exceed \$847,262.

This proposed bus purchase proposition is part of an ongoing school bus replacement program instituted in 1988 that recommends the annual replacement of approximately 10% of our buses. This provides safer and more efficient transportation of students, and reduces maintenance costs.



The District will borrow funds for bus purchases using a five year bond anticipation note and will receive reimbursement from New York State, which is distributed over the life of the loan.

Clarence Central School District buses log about one million miles per year while transporting over 5,000 Students across the District, and to several private and parochial schools.

It is the goal of our transportation department to provide safe transportation to all our riders. This bus replacement cycle, along with our well- trained staff, and award-winning bus maintenance program work together toward this goal.

# 2024-25 Budget At a Glance

Total Budget	\$97,183,922
Budget \$ Increase	\$4,025,577
Budget % Increase	4.32%
Tax Levy Increase	3.68%
Estimated Tax Rate	\$10.35
Student Enrollment	4,084

The 2024-25 Proposed Budget needs a simple majority approval of voters to pass.

## Points of Pride

- Ranked #2 Best School District in the Buffalo Area by Niche.
- Clarence High School is ranked #4 in the Buffalo, NY Metro Area by U.S. News & World Report out of nearly 70 area schools.
- Recognized by the NAMM Foundation as a “Best Community for Music Education”.
- 130 students were selected for county-wide honor ensembles.
- The High School Wind Ensemble was selected to perform at the Erie County Music Educators Association 2024 Conference.
- Named a 2022-2023 NYSPHSAA School of Distinction for Academic Excellence as a result of every team earning the scholar-athlete team designation.
- Teams won ten 2022-2023 Sectional Championships and the Class AA Softball State Championship.

## QUESTIONS?

Please contact  
Dr. Matthew Frahm,  
Superintendent of Schools,  
716-407-9102  
[mfrahm@clarenceschools.org](mailto:mfrahm@clarenceschools.org).

or  
Dr. Patricia Grupka,  
Assistant Superintendent for  
Finance & Operations  
716-407-9013  
[pgrupka@clarenceschools.org](mailto:pgrupka@clarenceschools.org)

You can also visit the budget  
section of our website at:  
[www.clarenceschools.org](http://www.clarenceschools.org)

Follow this path:  
Home > District Info >  
Budget Process 2024-25



## Clarence High School Class of 2023

Enrollment .....	1248
Faculty Members .....	121
Courses .....	120

### 2023 AP Program

AP Courses .....	22
AP Candidates .....	435
AP Exams .....	776
Grade 3 or Higher .....	79%

### 2023 SAT Results

ERW Average .....	584
State Average .....	522
Math .....	596
State Average .....	516

### 2023 Graduation Class

Graduates .....	337
Regents Advanced with Honors. . .	132
Regents Advanced .....	89
Regents .....	106
Career & Tech Certificates .....	57
Honor Roll All 4 Yrs .....	97
Military Enlistments .....	2
Project Lead the Way Certificates . .	39
National Honor Society .....	119
National Art Honor Society .....	12
National Technical Honor Society . . .	8
Seal of Biliteracy .....	85
Seal of Civic Readiness .....	64
Academy of Business & Finance . . . .	47
Academy of Visual & Performing Arts. .	9

## Voter Verification System

Voting inspectors will confirm a voter's eligibility by checking Erie County voter registration records. If you are eligible to vote in a school election but are not a registered voter, you may sign an affidavit attesting to your eligibility to vote.



## Proposed Budget/Instructional Component

The instructional component includes accounts for instruction and educational support services for the district's 4,084 students. Transportation (for 5,000 students), instructional computers, supplies, textbooks, special education services, and salaries and benefits for employees assigned to this category are reported here.

Instructional Expenses			
Account	2023-2024	2024-2025	CHANGE
Regular Education	\$36,587,096	\$37,944,744	\$1,357,648
Special Programs	\$11,962,622	\$12,580,702	\$618,080
Transportation	\$5,179,905	\$5,202,489	\$22,584
Benefits	\$17,727,126	\$17,755,268	\$28,142
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$71,456,749</b>	<b>\$73,483,203</b>	<b>\$2,026,454</b>

## Proposed Budget/Administrative Component

The administrative component of the budget provides for overall general support and management activities including the Board of Education, the superintendent's office, curriculum and staff development, personnel and business departments, and supervision and support in each of the six schools. Also included are expenses for legal services, liability and property insurance, and salaries and benefits for the administrative staff.

Administrative Expenses			
Account	2023-2024	2024-2025	CHANGE
District Office	\$2,266,883	\$2,432,354	\$165,471
Curriculum & Supervision	\$2,555,380	\$3,075,862	\$520,482
Liability & Property Ins.	\$1,020,611	\$1,181,397	\$160,786
Benefits	\$1,494,396	\$1,593,136	\$98,740
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,337,270</b>	<b>\$8,282,749</b>	<b>\$945,479</b>

## Proposed Budget/Capital Component

The capital component of the budget includes maintenance and upkeep of the district's facilities and property including electricity, gas, water, sewer and telephone services. It also includes principal and interest payments on capital projects and salaries and benefits for maintenance and custodial staff.

Capital Expenses			
Account	2023-2024	2024-2025	CHANGE
Operations & Maintenance	\$6,077,191	\$6,359,818	\$282,627
Debt Service	\$6,498,625	\$7,013,023	\$514,398
Benefits	\$1,788,510	\$2,045,129	\$256,619
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,364,326</b>	<b>\$15,417,970</b>	<b>\$1,053,644</b>

# Estimated Revenue for 2024-25

School districts are funded through State Aid, property tax and other revenue sources including sales tax and fund balance.

Estimated Revenue		
Source	2023-2024	2024-2025
Property Tax Levy	\$55,638,216	\$57,685,702
PILOTS	\$444,947	\$323,063
NYS, Federal, BOCES Aid	\$27,104,827	\$28,853,821
Other Revenues	\$7,970,355	\$7,821,336
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$2,000,000	\$2,500,000
Total	\$93,158,345	\$97,183,922

# History of Fiscal Conservatism

The chart below shows the last ten years of budget data for Clarence.

Budget Year	Spending Increase	Tax Levy Increase	Tax Cap
2015-16	3.8%	3.8%	Below Cap
2016-17	3.6%	2.7%	Below Cap
2017-18	2.7%	1.7%	At Cap
2018-19	3.6%	3.9%	Below Cap
2019-20	3.2%	3.2%	Below Cap
2020-21	2.9%	2.9%	At Cap
2021-22	1.5%	2.9%	At Cap
2022-23	-.36%	2.9%	At Cap
2023-24	4.4%	3.2%	At Cap
2023-24 Est	4.3%	3.7%	At Cap
10 YR. AVERAGES	3.0%	3.1%	



Follow the  
Clarence Central  
School District  
on social media!

<https://linktr.ee/clarencescd>

## Revenue Facts

- The property tax cap limits the annual increase in the tax levies of local governments and school districts.
- The average tax levy for the past ten years is 3.1%
- The average spending increase for the past ten years is 3.0%

## Budget Development

School officials provided multiple opportunities for public involvement during this budget process.

All budget meetings were open to the public:

- January 22
- February 12
- March 18
- April 16

Time was set aside for public comment on the budget at all regular monthly meetings.

All budget information is available on the website ([www.clarenceschools.org](http://www.clarenceschools.org))

## Absentee & Early Mail Ballots

Eligible voters who cannot get to the polls on the day of the vote due to illness, or travel outside the county or individuals who would like to vote early by mail, in advance of election day may request an absentee or early mail ballot. Applications are available online or may be picked up at the District Office, 9625 Main Street, during normal business hours. Call 716-407-9102 for more information.

## Directions to Polling Place

Enter the High School back parking lot from Gunnville Road near the tennis courts. Proceed to the far end of the lot and park in the designated area near the football field. Attendants will direct you to the appropriate building entrance. School officials caution that traffic may be particularly heavy from 3:30 PM when high school students are dismissed up to 8 PM.



# BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday, May 21, 2024 • 7 AM - 9 PM

CHS Gymnasium • 9625 Main Street

Budget Hearing - May 13, 2024 - for more information go to [www.clarenceschools.org](http://www.clarenceschools.org)





## Tax Impact

- Clarence has one of the lowest tax rates among Erie County suburban school districts.
- It is likely that the tax rate will be lower than projected if the total assessed value of the Town increases.
- The projected tax rate for 2024-25 is lower than it has been in over 20 years.

## Average Tax Rate/\$1,000 AV

2020-21 .....	\$13.88
2021-22 .....	\$12.92
2022-23 .....	\$12.98
2023-24 .....	\$12.93
*2024-25 .....	<b>\$10.35</b>
*Estimated	

- Tax Levy Limit for Clarence as Calculated by NYS: 3.68%
- Actual Tax Levy for Clarence in 2024-25 Budget: 3.68%
- Estimated Tax Rate: **\$10.35 per thousand of assessed value**



## Board of Education Candidates



### Michael Fuchs

My wife Julie and I moved to Clarence 25 years ago to start our family. We chose Clarence because we valued the strong sense of community and the outstanding school system. Over the years, we have been blessed with the exceptional education provided to our daughters and the opportunities afforded them from living in such an amazing community.

As a current Board of Education Vice President and past Board President, I am extremely proud of what we have been able to accomplish over my twelve years of service to the community. Working together we have restored positions previously lost, and provided much needed additional services to our students all while maintaining Clarence's status as one of the most cost effective districts in WNY.

I currently serve as CFO of Upstate Niagara Cooperative. As a board member, I will continue to leverage my background in strategic planning and financial oversight to ensure we provide for the necessary resources to accomplish our goals, while doing so in a cost-effective manner.

If I am fortunate enough to serve a fifth term on the board, I will strive to ensure we preserve the long-term excellence of our school system, which benefits everyone in the community.

To learn more please visit [www.fuchsforclarence.com](http://www.fuchsforclarence.com)

I greatly value your past support and would be humbled to serve this community for another term.



### Dennis Priore

For the past nine years it has been a pleasure to serve on the Clarence Board of Education, and to help it grow as one of the finest school districts in New York State.

We all know the challenges that the Pandemic had on all of us, especially our students, and our district utilized COVID funding to add counselors, Psychologists, social workers and a behavior specialist. Due to wise budgeting, we have been able to absorb these positions into our budget.

As the Erie County Association of School Boards Legislative Committee representative, I have lobbied our NYS representatives on funding and other issues that have greatly benefitted our District.

As a retired teacher and school administrator, I have the time and expertise to study our issues and offer suggestions. My wife Karen and I are the proud parents of two Clarence graduates who received a world class education with a healthy dose of sport and extra-curricular activities. I understand the balance we must maintain between a good school system and our community's ability to pay for it.

My work as a community volunteer encompasses church, school, and professional organizations, including the Erie County Association of School Boards, Buffalo Niagara Honor Flight, Clarence Youth Board, Clarence PTO's, and others.

I would be honored to have your vote on Tuesday May 21st, Because Great Schools Matter!

## PUBLIC HEARING for 2024-25 Proposed School Budget

**Monday, May 13, 2024 • 6:30 PM**

Clarence High School Auditorium • 9625 Main Street

# Strength in Support

Whether working with students directly or connecting families with community resources, staff at the Clarence Family Support Center (FSC) say their goal is for kids to be at their best.

"While our school's primary responsibility is the academic success of our students, promoting and developing positive social and emotional habits is a crucial element of learners achieving their long-term goals," said Evan Vahratian, FSC Coordinator.

The wide-ranging responsibilities of the FSC go well beyond hosting wellness resources for students, and facilitating hundreds of referrals to community organizations. Staff from the FSC connect with students by visiting classrooms to talk about concepts like bullying and kindness, and facilitate donations like dress shoes for the District's music and arts programs. The FSC is also used by student organizations, including the High School's Culture and Community Club, as meeting space. Additionally, staff at the FSC have created new community events, working with the Town of Clarence Conservation Council and Clarence Community Foundation, Inc. to start Headlamp Hikes at the Clarence Nature Center. The FSC also hosts a podcast that features student voices as well as health specialists in the community.

No matter the work, Vahratian said, staff at the FSC look to build meaningful community relationships that create positive impacts. He said the partnerships that have been developed in recent years reflect the community's commitment to supporting its young people.

"When the community and the schools are working together, there's a greater likelihood of students succeeding," Vahratian said.

For more information about the Clarence Family Support Center, visit [www.clarenceschools.org/departments/family-support-center](http://www.clarenceschools.org/departments/family-support-center) or scan the QR code.



## BUDGET VOTE

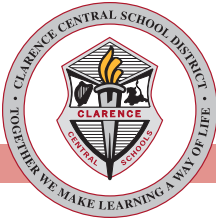
**Tuesday, May 21, 2024 • 7 AM - 9 PM**

CHS Gymnasium • 9625 Main Street

For more information go to [www.clarenceschools.org](http://www.clarenceschools.org)







# ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

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## Clarence Central School District

9625 Main Street  
Clarence, NY 14031  
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www.ClarenceSchools.org

## Annual Report to the Community

May 2024 - Volume 72

## Superintendent

Matthew Frahm, Ed.D.  
716.407.9102

## Clarence School District Budget Notice

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	\$93,158,345	\$97,183,922	\$95,105,450
Increase/Decrease for the 2024-25 School Year		\$4,025,577	\$1,947,105
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		4.32 %	2.09%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.1%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$55,638,216	\$57,685,702	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$ n/a	\$0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable**	\$ n/a	\$0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$ n/a	\$0	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$55,638,216	\$57,685,702	\$55,638,216
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$2,474,281	\$2,615,378	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$53,164,565	\$55,070,324	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$53,163,935	\$55,070,324	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval) - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$630	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$7,337,270	\$8,282,749	\$8,070,997
Program Component	\$71,456,749	\$73,483,203	\$71,960,323
Capital Component	\$14,364,326	\$15,417,970	\$15,074,130
* A contingency budget will meet all requirements pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law regarding expenses and tax levy.			

Description	Amount
Purchases of buses, transport vans, and repair vehicles	\$847,262

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings	\$310.20

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2024-25 by the qualified voters of the Clarence Central School District, Erie County, New York, will be held at Clarence High School Gymnasium in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, between the hours of 7:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the Clarence High School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

1. The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 42