

news from Glens Falls

CITY SCHOOLS

VOLUME 13 ■ ISSUE 2 ■ 2024-25 BUDGET PROPOSAL



Budget facts:

2.64%

Proposed tax levy increase

• SEE PAGE 5 •

\$56,941,691

Total spending proposal for
2024-25 school year at GFSD

• SEE PAGE 4 •

Sanford St.

All voting will take place at
Sanford Street School

• SEE PAGE 6 •

May 21

School budget vote and Board
of Education elections, Noon—
9 p.m. at Sanford St. School

• SEE PAGE 2 •



Budget vote at Sanford St. School on May 21

Building student achievement + success in 2024-25

With the goal of enhancing learning outcomes for all students, the Board of Education has adopted a \$56.9 million budget proposal for the 2024-25 school year that enhances current programs and student supports while staying within the property tax cap.

If approved by the voters on Tuesday, May 21, the spending plan would increase the tax levy by 2.64 percent, which is the district's maximum allowable without a super majority vote. The proposed budget would increase the tax levy by \$619,628 over the current year budget.

Voting takes place from noon to 9 p.m. in the Sanford Street School gym on May 21st.

The spending plan includes:

- A new teaching position for Math Academic Intervention and Support at the Middle School
- Purchase of 2 small buses, 1 small wheel chair bus, 1 big bus, and 1 big wheel chair bus to replace older vehicles in the fleet
- Four Safety Monitor positions at the HS/MS to assist with transitions, large group areas, and overall supervision
- A Core Values Advocate position focused on Middle School student support and restorative practices



Lots of school spirit at the Black Bears Block Party this fall!

- Expanded mental health services for students that include telehealth options
- Additional coaching positions for student-athlete safety, and to provide more opportunities for participation (Volleyball, Unified Bocce, etc.)
- Partnerships with Common Thread Community Collaboration and Needham Safety Risk Management to further enhance school climate
- Tennis court resurfacing at Morse Athletic Complex

An additional proposition on the ballot would create a capital reserve fund to be used for general improvements, reconstruction, renovations, or additions to the district's buildings and site property. If authorized, it would be funded with unallocated fund balance (savings) over the next ten years, with total deposits not to exceed \$10 million.

See inside for more details on the 2024-25 plan.

Board of Education candidates

The Board of Education of the Glens Falls City School District is made up of nine members who are elected by qualified voters of the district. They serve without pay for five-year terms. The Board of Education, in serving its role as trustee of the district's five schools, is responsible for the development of the policy through which the Superintendent administers the educational program, the students, and the staff.

The Board encourages all citizens to take an active role in the development of our schools. It is the philosophy of the Board that the schools are the responsibility of the entire community if the schools are to continue and provide a program of quality education for the young people of our district.

This year, there are three candidates running for **two open seats** on the Board of Education, with terms beginning July 1, 2024.

Kathryn (Katie) Johnson, of 12 E. Beacon Street, is seeking her first term on the Board of Education. She is a School Counselor at Hudson Falls Central School District.



"I am running for a seat on the Glens Falls City Schools Board of Education because I would like to be an advocate for all children and staff

in our School District. I believe that all children deserve to receive the best educational and emotional support possible. I am hoping to help balance the needs of academic achievement with those of the whole child. We also need to empower our educators and reward them for the jobs they do everyday, as more and more demands are placed on them and they spend the majority of our children's days with them. I look to involve the parents in our community in decisions regarding the education of their children. We know our children the best! I hope to encourage and support open communication between families and the District to best support our students, staff, and families."

Noel Luciano Quivey, of 212 Ridge Street, is seeking her first term on the Board of Education. She is an Associate Director of Curriculum at CommonLit.



"I am a proud graduate of Glens Falls High School and parent of two future GF students with 15 years of experience in education, 12 of

which were in the classroom. During my career I taught ELA, theater, served as a department chair, and worked with students and teachers from grades 5-12. I now work in nonprofit literacy development and have a true passion for teaching and learning. My time in the classroom taught me that a thriving school is one in which students, families, and staff work in harmony. I would be thrilled to have the opportunity to give back to my community and bring the knowledge gained through my experience as a Glens Falls student, parent, and years of teaching to the board."

Megan O'Brien, of 221 Sanford Street, is seeking her first term on the Board of Education. She is an Organizing Manager at New York State United Teachers (NYSUT).



"I believe passionately in public education and the opportunities it can provide. I am a product of public education, and my parents were both public school

teachers in the area for many years. My son is currently a student at the Middle School, and attended Jackson Heights Elementary. For over 20 years I have had the privilege of advocating for educators and school staff, and I feel that my knowledge of education policy and finance would be an asset as a board member. Our district plays a tremendously important role in the greater Glens Falls community, and has been a very positive environment for my child. As a board member, I would work to support and strengthen that positive environment for all stakeholders by being vigilant, deliberative, and curious, and always willing to listen and learn."

Free swim lessons a huge hit!

As an equity and wellness initiative, GFSD offered a learn-to-swim program for all 1st-4th grade students in Abe Wing, Big Cross, Jackson Heights, and Kensington elementary schools.

A whopping 209 kids registered for the lessons, which were held at the Glens Falls High School Pool on Wednesday and Thursday evenings during March. There was no cost for families, and swimsuits and towels were provided to any child whose parents requested. Instructors were mostly Glens Falls High School students, with lifeguards and chaperones on hand to make it a great experience for all children. The district is focused on equity for all students, and providing free swim lessons is one more way to boost their well-being, safety, and growth as school community members.



Student Voice: The Solar Eclipse

By Sophia Tavares and Mattea Rice

For the recent solar eclipse on April 8th, our NSIME (Near Space Institute of Middle Earth) club went on a field trip. We arrived at the school at 7:30 a.m. to pack into our vans and hit the road. Our goal was to launch a weather balloon which could provide data and pictures of the eclipse. The original plan was to drive to Potsdam, NY to launch the balloon and watch the eclipse. However, the weather was not as good as we'd like it to be as there were many clouds, so we kept driving east. On the drive there, we passed by an Amish community which we found extremely interesting. We also drove through a wind-turbine farm which we were all intrigued by. Though it was a long drive there, we eventually came to an abandoned mall north of Plattsburgh where we planned to launch our balloon.

Our launch was very eventful. We were behind schedule, so we were rushing to launch the balloon. It was very windy, and the balloon moved around extremely quickly. We were unsure if the launch would be successful, but we hoped for the best. After we launched the balloon we swiftly piled into our vans and we drove to the Missisquoi Wildlife Refuge in Swanton, Vermont which was 2 miles south of the Canadian border. Here, we parked and set up our telescopes to view the eclipse.

Viewing the solar eclipse was an unforgettable experience which we will take with us for the rest of our lives. As totality approached we watched the shadow of the moon moving toward us in the high clouds over the Adirondacks. Our telescope showed us beautiful views of the eclipse, and even pointed out a rare pink solar flare. This solar flare was not only visible on the telescope, but it was also visible to the unaided eye during totality, like a pink sapphire ring. The telescope also picked up a few sunspots, some of which were also visible through the solar eclipse glasses. Before and after totality you could see a rainbow halo around the sun in the thin ice clouds that were present that day.

After this amazing experience, we unfortunately hit some technical difficulties. Our tracker on the balloon was giving us some odd information. Our main tracker was not functioning properly, so we had to rely on our back-up tracker. As we were driving, we began to worry. Our balloon seemed to be at 20,000 feet, which was way below what we had planned. If that was true, our balloon would have floated all the way to the Atlantic Ocean!! If the balloon had gone into the Atlantic Ocean, it would have been unretrievable. Thankfully the altitude data coming back to us was false, and the balloon had landed in New Hampshire. When hearing the news, Mr. Brechko planned to pick up the balloon that night. This idea was quickly cut short when we caught up with the horrible eclipse traffic. We were unsure if we'd ever be able to retrieve our balloon! Once we turned around, it was smooth sailing all the way back to the school. We arrived around 11:30 p.m., tired and worried about whether our balloon was going to be found or not. After 15 hours on the road, our journey finally came to an end.

Mr. Brechko's friend Ernie managed to go to New Hampshire and retrieve the balloon for us. That Friday we were able to view our findings. Unfortunately, the findings were very scarce. No data came back because of issues with the computer, and only ONE of the 4 cameras ended up functioning. Due to our late launch, our balloon was in the clouds at the time of the eclipse. Although we got no pictures of the actual sun, we still got some amazing images of the sun's shadow over the Earth, and pictures from the edge of space at 90,000 feet.

Overall, our trip was rocky and unpredictable. We ended up driving over Lake Champlain, around the high peaks, and the green mountains. It was a journey to be remembered for a lifetime, and we were lucky to experience such an amazing sight.



10 GF students went on an adventure "to be remembered for a lifetime" to view and document the full solar eclipse on April 8, 2024



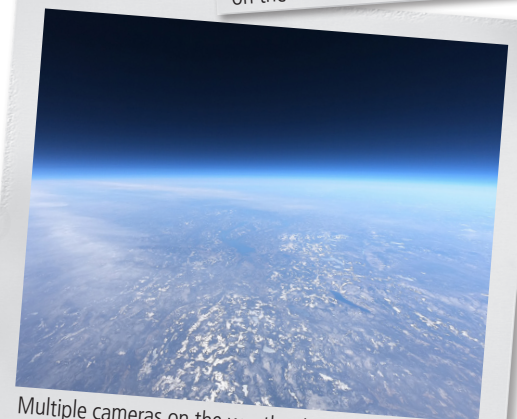
GFMS Science Teacher Jason Brechko led the expedition



Students inflate the weather balloon in windy conditions



A perfect image of totality, captured on the NSIME field trip



Multiple cameras on the weather balloon's payload captured images like this one, of New England at 90,000 feet of elevation



The GFMS 5th Grade Battle of the Books team clinched second place in their division this year!

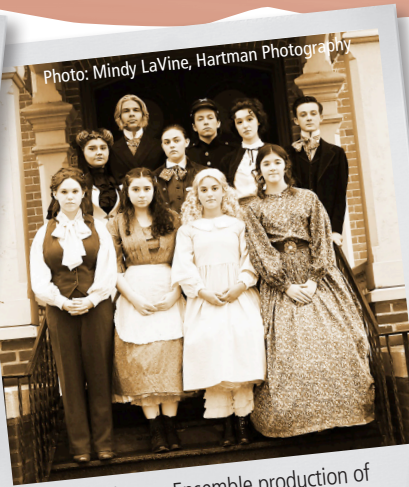


Photo: Mindy LaVine, Hartman Photography
The GFHS Theatre Ensemble production of "Little Women" earned 9 regional HSMTA nominations from Proctors Theater!



Crime scene fingerprinting, artificial intelligence, engineering design, and stop motion animation were all explored at Girls STEM Day in March



Nearly all of GF Na...
our 27-0 Boys Bask...
the Cool Insuring A...

The 2024-25 budget proposal in three-part format

All public schools in New York State are required to report appropriations in three official categories: program, capital, and administrative. The following data shows how Glens Falls' budget breaks down under this formula:

THE PROGRAM BUDGET INCLUDES:

The salaries and benefits of all teachers, guidance counselors, aides, monitors, psychologists, nurses, social workers, and speech therapists. Also included are textbooks and equipment, library costs, transportation, co-curricular programs and interscholastic athletics.

PROGRAM BUDGET 2023-24: \$40,055,980

PROGRAM BUDGET 2024-25: \$42,794,217

THE CAPITAL BUDGET INCLUDES:

Operations and maintenance costs, including salaries and benefits for custodial staff, debt service on buildings, utilities, cleaning supplies, tax certiorari, and court-ordered costs.

CAPITAL BUDGET 2023-24: \$12,367,599

CAPITAL BUDGET 2024-25: \$8,977,246

THE ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET INCLUDES:

The salaries and benefits of administrators, supervisors and administrative clerical staff, public information and printing, curriculum and staff development, school board-related costs, tax collection, and legal services.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET 2023-24: \$4,711,547

ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET 2024-25: \$5,170,227

THE THREE-PART BUDGET AS A PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE

ADMIN.	CAPITAL	PROGRAM
9.08%	15.77%	75.15%

Summary of Proposed Expenditures

	Adopted 2023-24
Salaries	\$26,005,698
Equipment	1,116,811
Contractual	3,961,623
BOCES	5,165,662
Materials & Supplies	1,196,026
Debt Service	2,269,325
Employee Benefits	11,824,981
Interfund Transfers	5,595,000
Total Expenditures	\$57,135,126

Summary of Proposed Revenues

	Adopted 2023-24
State Aid	\$22,809,391
Tax Levy	23,431,072
Other	3,208,500
Appropriated Fund Balance	
Capital Project/Debt	5,495,000
Employee Retirement Service Reserve	514,981
Unassigned Fund Balance	1,676,182
Total Revenues	\$57,135,126



tion was on hand to cheer
ketball State Champions at
arena on March 16th



GF Wrestling won its first Sectional
Championship since 1976, and the
Section 2 Division II Team Championship



The HOPE Committee's Holiday Boutique helped
more than 100 GF Nation families have a
brighter holiday season with gifts and clothes



Congratulations to the top ten students in
the Class of 2024 for their hard work, love of
learning, and determination to succeed!

Proposed 2024-25	Dollar Variance	Budget Variance
\$27,709,152	\$1,703,454	6.55%
986,058	(130,753)	(11.71%)
4,670,389	708,766	17.89%
6,067,665	902,003	17.46%
1,179,598	(16,428)	(1.37%)
3,759,025	1,489,700	65.65%
12,369,804	544,823	4.61%
200,000	(5,395,000)	(96.43%)
56,941,691	(193,435)	(0.34%)

Projected 2024-25	Dollar Variance	Budget Variance
\$25,303,949	\$2,494,558	10.94%
24,050,700	619,628	2.64%
3,587,426	378,926	11.81%
492,609	(5,002,391)	---
613,507	98,526	19.13%
2,893,500	1,217,318	72.62%
56,941,691	(193,435)	(0.34%)

What are the key factors affecting the budget?

Overall, a consistent consumer price index increase of 4.1% resulted in increases for contractual services and supplies throughout the budget. Two other areas resulting in increases in expenditure codes were transportation and debt service.

"The \$645,508 increase to **transportation** equipment expenditures is due to the fact that we are budgeting for five new buses within the budget. The district will fund the outright purchase of the new buses utilizing state aid received on previous year's bus purchases and available fund balance. The purchase of the five new buses will include one large 64 passenger bus, one large 59 passengers bus equipped with wheel chair accessibility, two small 28 passenger buses, and one small 21 passenger bus equipped with wheel chair accessibility," says Assistant Superintendent for Business Anthony Cammarata.

"The 65% increase in **debt service** is a planned increase, which aligns with the district's long-range capital plan. The proposed 2024-2025 year is the first year of a long-budgeted principal and interest payment for a serial bond that finances the current capital improvements project. Moving into the 2024-2025 school year, we realize a budget to budget increase of \$1,489,700 due to the new debt service payments to pay for the December 2021 voter-approved capital improvements, which is offset by the large revenue increase in state building aid that the district will receive for the project."

Most of the current project involves renovations at the Middle School, including ceiling tile and door replacement, renovation of the Large Group Instruction room into a 21st century classroom space, and refurbishing science classrooms. Replacement of the High School's track and turf sports field have been completed, and the next phase of the project includes renovations to the High School's chorus/music rooms, fitness room reconstruction and expansion, and parking lot resurfacing.

"We are also budgeting \$100,000 for the LED lighting improvements we plan to make at Jackson Heights elementary," Mr. Cammarata noted.

Where do I vote?

All Glens Falls City School District voters, including parts of the town of Queensbury within Glens Falls City Schools—regardless of where they live—will cast their votes at **Sanford Street School**.

Voting on the school budget and Board of Education elections takes place from noon to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, May 21.

To be eligible to vote, a resident must have lived in the school district for at least 30 days prior to the May 21, 2024 election, be a citizen of the United States, be at least 18 years of age, and be registered to vote with the school district.

What if I can't get to the polls on Tuesday, May 21st?

Residents who will not be able to go to the polling location on May 21 may apply for an **absentee ballot** at the district office (15 Quade Street, Glens Falls). If the absentee ballot is to be mailed to the voter, the application must be submitted at least seven days prior to the vote. If the absentee ballot is to be picked up by the voter in person, applications will be accepted until May 20.

Absentee ballots must be received by the district clerk by 5 p.m. on May 21.

Where can I find more details on district financials?

Budget books—which include detailed information on the District's NYSED Report Card, Required Budget Notice, Property Tax Report Card, Salary Disclosure Notice, and Exemption Reporting for Taxing Jurisdictions—are available to any district resident at Crandall Public Library, all school buildings, and the district office.

Each item in the budget books is also available online at www.gfsd.org, under "About Us -> School Budget."

STATE-REQUIRED SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET NOTICE

	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	\$57,135,126	\$56,941,691	\$55,680,843
Increase (decrease) for the 2024-25 school year		(\$193,435)	(\$1,454,283)
Percentage increase (decrease) in proposed budget		(0.34%)	(2.5%)
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.12%	
A. Proposed levy to support the total budgeted amount	\$23,431,072	\$24,050,700	
B. Levy to support library debt, if applicable	N/A	N/A	
C. Levy for non-excludable propositions, if applicable	N/A	N/A	
D. Total tax cap reserve amount used to reduce current year levy	N/A	N/A	
E. Total proposed school year tax levy (A + B + C - D)	\$23,431,072	\$24,050,700	\$24,050,700
F. Total permissible exclusions	\$587,569	\$672,963	
G. School tax levy limit, excluding levy for permissible exclusions	\$22,843,503	\$23,377,788	
H. Total proposed school year tax levy, excluding levy to support library debt and/or permissible exclusions	\$22,843,503	\$23,377,788	
I. Difference: G-H (negative value requires 60.0% voter approval)	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$4,711,547	\$5,170,227	\$4,957,627
Program Component	\$40,055,980	\$42,794,217	\$41,866,970
Capital Component	\$12,367,599	\$8,977,246	\$8,856,246

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2024-2025 by the qualified voters of the Glens Falls City School District, Warren County, New York, will be held at the Sanford Street Elementary School gymnasium in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

** The contingency budget is based on the following projected assumptions:*

- 1. The tax levy cannot increase from the prior year.*
- 2. Non-contingent expenses such as equipment are excluded.*
- 3. The ratio of the administrative component to the sum of the administrative and the program component cannot exceed certain parameters.*

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

Basic STAR Exemption Impact

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings

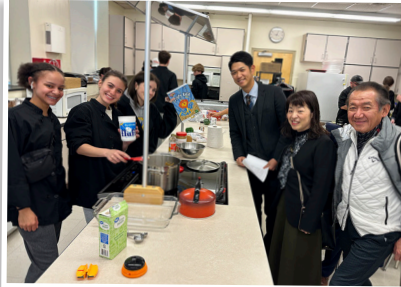
Under the budget proposed for the 2024-25 school year

\$527

GF and Saga students exchange knowlege and friendship



Glens Falls was proud to host 17 students and 5 adults from our Sister City, Saga, Japan, for a week in March! Middle and High School students stayed with host families, attended classes, took in an Adirondack Thunder game, and enjoyed learning about American teenage life during their visit. A delegation of 20 Glens Falls students will travel to Saga in June of 2025 to reciprocate the exchange. Special thanks to Milly Koh and the Sister Cities Committee of Glens Falls for this special opportunity! *(Photos courtesy of Phil Menard)*



What's actually on the ballot?

Many times when we enter a voting booth thinking we are voting on a simple yes-no question, we are greeted by a long paragraph of legal jargon. This is necessary to ensure that all of the essential elements of a proposal are included. Voters will be deciding on three ballot items on Tuesday, May 21, 2024. The actual ballot language is as follows:

Annual elections to Board of Education

To elect two (2) members of the Board of Education for a term of five years, commencing on July 1, 2024.

2024-25 School Budget

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Glens Falls City School District in the County of Warren is hereby authorized to expend the sum of \$56,941,691 and to levy the necessary tax, therefore, for the school year July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

Proposition 1: Capital Reserve Fund

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Glens Falls City School District be authorized to (1) create a Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of financing the construction of, and general improvements, reconstruction, renovations or additions to, the District's buildings and grounds, including site work and the acquisition of original furnishings, equipment, machinery or apparatus required for the purpose for which such buildings and grounds are to be used; (2) fund said reserve to the ultimate amount of \$10,000,000; and (3) annually deposit into the Capital Reserve Fund such portion of the unallocated fund balance or budget appropriations as determined by the Board of Education. The probable duration of the Capital Reserve Fund is ten (10) years.

Amanda Simmes begins Asst. Superintendent role



Congratulations to Mrs. Amanda Simmes, who officially took over as Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction this week, following Tammy Silvernell's retirement. Amanda joined GF Nation in 1999, teaching at Big Cross Elementary. She then served as an instructional coach for several years before becoming principal at Jackson Heights. She has significantly helped student achievement the last few years as Director of Student Learning and Achievement. She holds degrees from the College of Saint Rose (B.A.),

SUNY Plattsburgh (M.S.), and Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study). Even more good things are to come for Glens Falls students with Amanda at the helm!

Kristy Moore receives regional leadership award



Join us in a round of applause for Mrs. Kristy Moore, Director of MTSS, who has received the Excellence in District Administrative Leadership Award from CASDA (Capital Area School Development Association)! Kristy's efforts to help keep our students in school, by removing barriers to attendance, are laudable and seeing success.

During the awards ceremony, Dr. Dengler noted Kristy's "approachable demeanor, excellent communication skills, and willingness to go above and beyond to address concerns that has earned her the respect and admiration of colleagues and families." Working

on everything from the community call to action on attendance, to the GF Bike Swap, to neighborhood connection dinners, we thank her for her HUGE personal investment in our kids and families!

Board of Education

Timothy Graham, Pres.
Matthew Levin, VP
Sara DiLandro
Kelly Culliton
Catherine Fitzgerald
Laura Kennedy
Karin Maurer
Randy Rath
Jason Rivers
Superintendent
Dr. Krislynn Dengler

News From Glens Falls City Schools is produced by
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Glens Falls CITY SCHOOLS

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2023-24 BUDGET *news from* **Glens Falls** CITY SCHOOLS

mark your
calendar



VOTE
on May 21!



**SCAN HERE FOR PRE-K
AND KINDERGARTEN
REGISTRATION DETAILS!**



Kindergarten Registration Scheduled in May; Universal Pre-Kindergarten waiting list available

The Glens Falls City School District has a vibrant academic program for our youngest students, designed to foster a love of learning that carries them all the way to graduation and beyond. We welcome new families into this educational journey!

If your child lives within the Glens Falls City School district boundaries and will be **4 years old** by December 1, 2024, then they're eligible to enter the Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) lottery! UPK is a free, full day, academic-year program focused on teaching the fundamentals of literacy and beginning math—all in a creative and stimulating environment, and taught by highly qualified and caring educators. UPK students also receive free breakfast and lunch meals at school!

Please note: Students who are age-eligible to enroll in traditional kindergarten (5 years old by December 1, 2024) are not eligible for UPK. Transportation to and from the program is the parents' responsibility. We have UPK classrooms at each elementary school: Big Cross, Jackson Heights, and Kensington Road.



Entry into the UPK class is determined by lottery each spring. Families will be notified by mail of the lottery results in mid-May. The district is currently accepting UPK applications for students to be placed on the waiting list to be able to join a class.

Questions can be directed to Amanda Simmes, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction at 518-792-0107 ext. 2003.

If your child will be **5 years old** by December 1, 2024, then we're ready to welcome them to kindergarten! Registration for new kindergarten students will be held during the final week of May. Kindergarten Round-Up and screening appointments will be held on the following days:

Kensington Road School: May 23, 2024

- Call Assunta Moore at 518-793-5151 to make your appointment

Jackson Heights School: May 29, 2024

- Call Stacy Frandsen at 518-792-1071 to make your appointment

Big Cross Street School: May 30, 2024

- Call Bobbi Harris at 518-792-2619 to make your appointment