

news from Glens Falls

CITY SCHOOLS

VOLUME 12 ■ ISSUE 1 ■ 2023-24 BUDGET PROPOSAL



Budget facts:

2.57%

Proposed tax levy increase

• SEE PAGE 5 •

\$57,135,126

Total spending proposal for 2023-24 school year at GFSD

• SEE PAGE 4 •

Sanford St.

All voting will take place at Sanford Street School

• SEE PAGE 6 •

May 16

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

• SEE PAGE 3 •



Budget vote at Sanford St. School on May 16

Building student achievement + success in 2023-24

With the goal of enhancing learning outcomes for all students, the Board of Education has adopted a \$57.1 million budget proposal for the 2023-24 school year that expands current programs and services and stays within the property tax cap.

If approved by the voters on Tuesday, May 16, the spending plan would increase the tax levy by 2.57 percent, which is the district's maximum allowable without a super majority vote. The proposed budget would increase the tax levy by \$586,475 over the current year budget.

The 2023-24 budget includes a substantial transfer, in the amount of \$5,495,000, from the General Fund to the Capital Fund, to help fund the voter-approved (December 2021) \$32.1 million capital project. These funds come from the district's previously established (2009) capital reserve fund (\$250,000) and savings on hand (\$5,245,000), and is part of the district's capital plan for ensuring the project has no tax impact.

Voting takes place from noon to 9 p.m. in the Sanford Street School gym on May 16th.

The spending plan includes:

- A new teaching position for Math Academic Intervention and Support at the elementary level.



Lots of school spirit in the student section at a football game this fall

- Purchase of two existing school buses at residual value.
- Purchase of two new 65-passenger school buses to replace the oldest vehicles in the fleet.
- Comprehensive strategic planning to focus district resources, time, and attention on our most important goals and objectives.
- Structured, evidence-based, multi-year professional development for faculty and staff to align, focus, and implement district goals.
- A brand new driver education program at GFHS.
- A Director of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) position to support our students with challenges to their academic and social-emotional development.

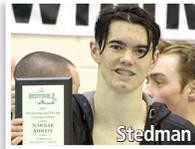
See inside for a look at how the Glens Falls educational program provides a safe, positive, and stimulating environment to foster self-growth and the ability to succeed in a changing world.

Return on Investment in GF Nation

- **8** of Glens Falls' fall sports teams achieved scholar-athlete designation: Volleyball, Girls Tennis, Girls Swim & Dive, Girls Soccer, Field Hockey, Cross Country, Golf, and Football. Likewise, **8** of our winter sports teams achieved scholar-athlete status: Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Boys Swim & Dive, Alpine Ski, Nordic Ski, Indoor Track, Boys Ice Hockey, and Girls Ice Hockey. To be honored, the team's average GPA for most of the roster must be 90 or higher.



- Swimmers **Julian Stedman** and **Carson Rath** were named Section 2 and New York State Scholar Athletes. Julian was the winner of the Section 2 Division 2 Scholar Athlete Award.



- Glens Falls Artists have 14 of the 100 selected works in this year's Hyde High School Regional Juried Show: **Jamana Awan, Jillian**



Wendling, Natalia Steves, Charlotte VanAken, Sterling Towers, Holly Walton, Rebecca Corey, Jill Brown, Morrison Northrop, Lily Haggerty, and Makayla Kulka. The exhibit showcases the talent of young artists from Warren, Washington, Saratoga, Hamilton, and Essex counties.



- Glens Falls Football lineman **Cole Bennett** earned the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame Scholar Athlete Award for his academic achievement, school and community leadership, and football performance.

- Actor/Singers **Sophia Plante, Sophia Rice, Macklin McGarth, and Shane LaBounty** captured four of just 20 Best Actress/Actor nominations across 30 high school shows in the region-wide High School Musical Theater Awards competition out of Proctor's in Schenectady. They were nominated for their incredible performances in the GFHS musical, *"The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee."*



- Student-athlete **Ciara Hirsch** earned the Section 2 Girls Basketball Scholar Athlete Award for outstanding achievement in the classroom, community, and basketball.



- The Middle School's inaugural Vex Robotics team competed in the State championships, and won the Judges Award at Regionals in March. Team members are **Saij Velez, Mason Combs, Reed Braymer, Kaden Schaffer, Addison Deeb, Jaiden Higley, Henry McPhee, Maddelyn Ash,** and their coach, 5th Grade Teacher **Kelsey Crosby.**



What's actually on the ballot?

Voters will be deciding on four ballot items on Tuesday, May 16, 2023. The actual ballot language is as follows:

Annual election to Board of Education

To elect one (1) member of the Board of Education for a term of five years, commencing on July 1, 2023.

2023-24 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 \$57,135,126 and to levy the necessary tax, therefore, for the school year July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

Proposition 1: Authorize Expenditure of Capital Reserve

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education is hereby authorized to expend the funds from the previously established 2009 Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$250,000, plus interest earned, for the purpose of funding the cost of the replacement of the artificial turf on the High School Athletic Field.

Board of Education candidate

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.

This year, there is one candidate running for one open seat on the Board of Education. All Board members serve "at large" and represent the entire district.

Sara DiLandro, of 2 Roosevelt Avenue, is seeking her first term on the Board of Education.



"Since 2019, after 15 years as a K-6 educator, I have focused my time and energy on various volunteer efforts that support a strong school district and community at-large. I have a vested interest in the success of the district, both as a current parent and as a GFHS class of 1999 alumni. I am currently the Co-President of the Kensington Road School PTA and Vice

President of the Glens Falls Middle School PTSA. I am also the board president of the GFCSO Backpack Program, having transformed its scope since 2020, including becoming registered as a non-profit 501c3 organization. I look forward to bringing my passion for education and my love for this community to the board."

Reading challenges combine fun and fluency

A mermaid with jellyfish friends, mad scientists, and the entire cast of *The Wizard of Oz* have been spotted in Glens Falls' elementary schools this spring. And they all have one goal—sparking the habit of reading!

“Reading has become a priority in our post-COVID classrooms, and we are determined to help build routines that will encourage reading outside of the school day for every child,” said Jackson Heights Principal Carrie Mauro. “We wanted to come up with a program that is both fun, but also challenges our students to find that next level in their academic journey.”

With these goals in mind, each school put their own creative twist on the annual Pick A Reading Partner (PARP) program that focuses on literacy each spring.

Jackson Heights' *Wizard of Oz* effort was spearheaded by first grade teacher Patty Parmelee and school support staffer Shirley Rice. The goal was to read 100 books over three months, with incentives along the way. At the 25 book mark, students met the Scarecrow, who commemorated their hard work by handing out delicious Smarties. At 50 books, the Tin Man congratulated students for how much heart they put into their work. At 75 books, the Lion rewarded their courage with a special badge. And once the 100th book was read, students walked the “Yellow Brick” hallway to the Emerald City to meet the Great Oz.

To encourage literacy across content areas, elective classes offered students activities and projects tied to the *Wizard of Oz*. Art classes made unique headbands that students wore during celebration assemblies. In music class, students learned a variation of a song from the original movie that ties into the program called ‘If I Only Had A Book’. Even physical education games were built around themes the story highlights.

Big Cross and Kensington had elaborate programs as well. Big Cross Principal Debbie Hall dressed up as a fisherman each week to give students clues on her ocean-themed adventures, and appeared as a mermaid on a specially-designed cart for the culminating celebration. PARP leaders Amanda Burt and Kim Lewis joined Miss Hall as her jellyfish friends.

At Kensington, our “mad scientist” students held book studies to investigate the style of author Matt McElligott, who visited the school and sketched three new monster characters with student input. The Building Site Team and leaders Annemarie Dumar, Emily McPhee, and Jen Brewer coordinated fun activities and displays, and the PTA purchased a *Mad Scientist Academy* book for every student.



Jackson Heights teachers and staff members brought excitement to the PARP kickoff assembly as the characters from the *Wizard of Oz*



Principal Debbie Hall, with jellyfish friends and a special “mermaid squad” escort, helps celebrate Big Cross students’ achievements



Kensington students and teachers dressed as mad scientists to welcome author/illustrator Matt McElligott, who spent the day sketching new monsters with students and answering questions about writing

Photo: Mindy LaVine, Hartman Photography



The GFHS Theatre Ensemble production of "Spelling Bee" earned five regional High School Musical Theater Award nominations from Proctors!



First-graders at Jackson Heights made "Recycle Robots" out of all kinds of recycled materials as part of their unit on Earth Day



Art Club and Drama Club turned the HS auditorium into a spooky haunted house for students and families to enjoy in October



The Strolling String State Plaza Concert Month

The 2023-24 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 2022-23: \$38,462,837

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

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 2022-23: \$8,065,960

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

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 2022-23: \$4,056,002

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

THE THREE-PART BUDGET AS A PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE

ADMIN.	CAPITAL	PROGRAM
8.25%	21.65%	70.11%

Summary of Proposed Expenditures

	Adopted 2022-23
Salaries	\$24,760,960
Equipment	621,551
Contractual	3,733,739
BOCES	5,009,615
Materials & Supplies	1,174,386
Debt Service	4,047,475
Employee Benefits	11,137,073
Interfund Transfers	100,000
Total Expenditures	\$50,584,799

Summary of Proposed Revenues

	Adopted 2022-23
State Aid	\$23,078,894
Tax Levy	22,844,597
Other	2,708,500
Appropriated Fund Balance	
Employee Retirement Service Reserve	415,627
Capital Reserve - Est. 200	---
Fund Balance for Capital Project	---
Unassigned Fund Balance	1,537,181
Total Revenues	\$50,584,799



s performed on the Empire
course for Music in our Schools



GFHS' Job Fair and Career Expo brought 35 employers into the gym, and 12 local business leaders into classroom talks



Elementary students with and without disabilities had fun together in the Special Olympics' Young Athletes sports program



The Middle School's inaugural Vex Robotics team competed in the State championships, and won the Judges Award at Regionals in March

Proposed 2023-24	Dollar Variance	Budget Variance
\$26,005,698	\$1,244,738	5.03%
1,116,811	495,260	79.68%
3,961,623	227,884	6.10%
5,165,662	156,047	3.11%
1,196,026	21,640	1.84%
2,269,325	(1,778,150)	(43.93%)
11,824,981	687,908	6.18%
5,595,000	5,495,000	5495%
57,135,126	6,550,327	12.95%

Projected 2023-24	Dollar Variance	Budget Variance
\$22,809,391	(\$269,503)	(1.17%)
23,431,072	586,475	2.57%
3,208,500	500,000	18.46%
514,981	99,354	23.90%
250,000	250,000	N/A
5,245,000	5,245,000	N/A
1,676,182	139,001	9.04%
57,135,126	6,550,327	12.95%

What are the key factors affecting the budget?

“The \$495,260 increase in the **equipment** expenditure line is due to the fact that we are budgeting for two new 65 passenger buses (\$160,000 each) and the residual buy-out of two existing 65 passenger buses, from May 2017 voter approved bus lease (2022-2023 was the 5th year),” says Assistant Superintendent for Business Bobby Yusko. “We are also budgeting \$100,000 for the LED lighting improvements we plan to make at Jackson Heights elementary. Finally, there are miscellaneous increases throughout the other equipment lines in the budget for \$2,260, which rounds out the total year to year increase of \$495,260.”

The 43% decrease in **debt service** is a planned decrease, which aligns with the district’s long range capital plan. The current 2022-2023 year is the final year of a long-budgeted principal and interest payment for a serial bond that financed previous capital improvements. “Moving into the 2023-2024 school year, we realize a budget to budget decrease of \$1,291,500 due to the full repayment of the bond,” says Mr. Yusko. “We also see a decrease of \$488,650 in the annual debt payment for May 2017 voter-approved capital improvements.”

The **interfund transfer** budget of \$5,595,000, consists of two parts. \$100,000 is an amount that we carry on an annual basis for transfers to the Federal Fund. The remaining \$5,495,000 is to help fund the December 2021 \$32.1 million voter-approved capital improvements, which will be ramping up this Spring.

\$250,000 of the \$5,495,000 will come from the previously established, voter-approved capital improvement reserve, which will help to pay for the cost of the new turf athletic field.

The remaining \$5,245,000 will come from fund balance already on hand to ensure the project has no impact on the existing tax levy. This is aligned with the original capital plan the district communicated leading up to the December 2021 vote. “As we look ahead to the 2024-2025 budget, there will be a planned budget decrease of \$5,495,000 in the interfund transfers appropriation specifically for capital related items, because a transfer like this will not be necessary,” Mr. Yusko 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 16.

To be eligible to vote, a resident must have lived in the school district for at least 30 days prior to the May 16, 2023 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 16th?

Residents who will not be able to go to the polling location on May 16 may apply for an **absentee ballot** at the district office. 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 15.

Absentee ballots must be received by the district clerk by 5 p.m. on May 16.

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 2022-23 school year	Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 school year	Contingency Budget for the 2023-24 school year
Total budgeted amount, not including separate propositions	\$50,584,799	\$57,135,126	\$56,565,126
Increase (decrease) for the 2023-24 school year		\$6,550,327	\$5,980,327
Percentage increase (decrease) in proposed budget		12.95%	11.82%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		8.0%	
A. Proposed levy to support the total budgeted amount	\$22,844,597	\$23,431,072	
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)	\$22,844,597	\$23,431,072	\$22,844,597
F. Total permissible exclusions	\$501,193	\$587,569	
G. School tax levy limit, excluding levy for permissible exclusions	\$22,343,404	\$22,843,503	
H. Total proposed school year tax levy, excluding levy to support library debt and/or permissible exclusions	\$22,343,404	\$22,843,503	
I. Difference: G-H (negative value requires 60.0% voter approval)	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$4,056,002	\$4,711,547	\$4,216,547
Program Component	\$38,462,837	\$40,055,980	\$39,980,980
Capital Component	\$8,065,960	\$12,367,599	\$12,367,599

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2023-2024 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 16, 2023 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 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 2023-24 school year

\$547

Growing our culture of safety: Progress made

Since September, the district has made significant progress towards growing the culture of safety at Glens Falls City Schools. Key changes to protocol and infrastructure include:

Secure entry into GFHS & GFMS

- Beginning on September 15th, we instituted **single points of entry** in the morning (Door A at GFHS, and Doors N and L at GFMS), and **backpack checks** for all students upon arrival. To balance concerns of missing academic time, line backups, and large-group congregations, we shifted in mid-September to frequent, randomized bag checks at arrival, plus randomized locker checks during the day. Each building used an internal randomization system to prevent unintentional bias towards any student.

- In February, the *Evolv* advanced walk-through **concealed weapons detection system** was installed at Doors A, N, and L that scans for the shape of weapons and individual firearm components. Unlike traditional



Weapons detection system in the High School foyer

metal detectors or wands, the system can distinguish between threats and everyday items like a cellphone, coins, or keys. Students and adults walk through upon entry to the HS/MS building, and have their bag checked by hand only if the system alerts to an item that needs further inspection.

- The Raptor Visitor Management system was installed in late September at all five school buildings. This system **scans visitors' drivers licenses** when they enter a building, performs an instant sex offender check, and verifies visitors' identities before they are allowed to proceed into school. All schools have a **secure vestibule entryway** for people entering the building.

Partnerships with law enforcement and the City of Glens Falls

- GFPD School Resource Officer John Norton** has been an integral team member for several years, focusing not only on daily security, but long-term relationship-building, threat assessment, and student support. In January, **Warren Co. Sheriff SRO Pete Casertino** joined the district team to enhance those efforts district-wide and provide intra-agency connection with law enforcement. **School Security Officer Rebecca Lowry** joined the team at the High School in November. Each of these team members are on the district's Safety Council, which meets monthly to implement best practices and improve readiness/response. School administrators, the Glens Falls Fire Department, and New York State Police officers also participate on the Safety Council.

- The Middle and High Schools' annual **lockdown drill with canine units** involved 12 officers from three agencies in October. Five dogs conducted a sweep

of lockers, hallways, and locker rooms as part of the drill, and officers gained in-building experience with the schools' layout and structure.

- In November, GFPD added another **crossing guard** to the Middle School side of Grant Ave. for afternoon dismissal. The City of Glens Falls has approved a **traffic safety study** around the HS/MS that began in April.

Expanded technology systems

- In February, our emergency protocols were enhanced to allow **any adult to call for an immediate, automated lockdown** by dialing a code into any classroom's land line phone. A lockdown



Multi-agency Safety Council monthly meeting, April

app is currently being tested by school administrators to activate emergency status, and enhance reunification procedures in the event of a relocation.

- The district's *GoGuardian* system flags a student's Chromebook for **violent or self-harm searches and content**. Our leadership teams continually review the robust AI parameters for identifying students at risk, and refine our response protocols to reach students who may be in crisis.

- To further the district's **cybersecurity defenses and awareness**, we participate in Cyber Incident Response facilitated tabletop exercises with agents from Homeland Security and other agencies. Network safety audits are also performed continually.

- A confidential **student tip line** was instituted in September to allow for anonymous (if desired) information to be shared with school leaders.

- In October, **student ID cards** and lanyards were given to high school students, with the expectation that all students wear them in the building. The barcode on each ID is scanned for attendance and hall passes.

- Coming soon: installation of an **emergency radio signal repeater** that will enhance police, fire, and EMS radio transmissions inside the HS/MS complex.



SRO + Trooper building walkthrough / radio check

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

mark your
calendar



VOTE
on May 16!

Kindergarten Registration set for June; UPK spots open

ART EXPO is May 18th

The 18th annual Glens Falls High School ART EXPO will take place the evening of Thursday, May 18th, from 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM in the main hallways of the high school building.

Every art student, grades 9 through 12, will be showing at least one piece of art they created during the school year.

The exhibition will include works in drawing, painting, ceramics, photography, 2D & 3D design, creative crafts, and computer art. The Seniors' Portfolio Exhibit—always a crowd favorite!—will also be on review.

The fun doesn't stop at viewing all the art work, either. There will be a bake sale, a ceramic ice cream bowl sale, a silent auction, an art sale with proceeds benefitting the Permanent Student Art Collection, and much more.

Again this year, some selected art pieces from the Middle School and elementary schools will be included in this exciting evening. The public is cordially invited and admission is free!



Jamana Awan



Jillian Wendling

Do you have a little learner in your life who is ready for Kindergarten? Or Universal PreK? We're ready to welcome them into GF Nation!

Registration for new Kindergarten students takes place during the final week of June. Kindergarten Round-Up and screening appointments will be held on the following days:



Big Cross Street School: June 26, 2023

• call **Bobbi Harris at 518-792-2619** to make your appointment

Kensington Road School: June 27, 2023

• call **Assunta Moore at 518-793-5151** to make your appointment

Jackson Heights School: June 28, 2023

• call **Stacy Frandsen at 518-792-1071** to make your appointment

Many more Kindergarten registration details are at: bit.ly/3tXWEk5

Universal Pre-Kindergarten waiting list

The UPK lottery was held in April, but the district maintains a waiting list for any available seats in the program. Some classes are not yet full, so please call Debbie Robbins at 518-792-1212 if your family would like to explore the UPK program.