



OUR SCHOOLS IN ACTION

Budget Issue 2025

BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday, May 20, 2025



INSIDE THIS ISSUE: RETURN ON YOUR INVESTMENT

Amherst Central School District is grateful for the community's continued support. Your return on investment can be measured by the broad range of opportunities afforded to our students and their successes. Throughout this issue, you will find examples of how your support is reaping great returns for our students.

BUDGET VOTE

Amherst Central High School
4301 Main Street
May 20 from 7 a.m. - 9 p.m.

www.AmherstSchools.org

Our Budget Message

The Amherst Central School District presents a fiscally responsible tax cap compliant budget proposal to our community. The development of this budget began several years ago as part of a multi-year, long-range forecast; an approach that allows the school board to consider not only the immediate needs for the district, but also to anticipate the impact these decisions may have in the future.

The 2025-26 budget includes:

- A New York State tax cap compliant levy limit of 2.33%. The tax cap levy increase is \$939,336.
- An estimated tax rate increase of \$0.30 thousand of assessed valuation, based on prior year town-wide assessments.
- A budget-to-budget increase of 3.66%.

We present this budget proposal to the community with confidence that it meets the school district's mission to prepare all students to excel in a dynamic world while being responsive to the needs of our taxpayers. Stay informed at amherstschoos.org/get-to-know-acsd/budget-and-election-2024-25. Please take the time to visit the high school on May 20 and vote.

Respectfully,

Paul Steimle, Board of Education President



*Paul Steimle
Board of Education
President*

Ex-Officio Student Board Member

In September 2024, Gov. Kathy Hochul signed into law a bill that requires school districts in New York State to have at least one ex-officio student representative on the Board of Education as of July 1, 2025. Under the law, the ex-officio student member can join board members at all public meetings and hearings and participate in other board activities at the discretion of the board. The ex-officio student will not vote, count toward establishing a quorum, attend executive sessions or attend any meeting or hearing that is not open to the public. The term of office is one year, commencing July 1 and ending June 30. The student must have attended Amherst Central High School at least 1 year prior to selection.

For the 2025-26 school year, the Board of Education agreed on the following procedure to select the student for this role: interested students will complete an application, the Superintendent of Schools will interview candidates and make a recommendation to the Board of Education. The Board will revisit the selection process for the following school year.

Amherst Central School District BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday, May 20, 2025
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

at the Amherst Central High School
South Gymnasium

Please enter through the doorway off the driveway to the far left of the school (not the front entrance of the school).

Budget At A Glance

2025-2026 Proposed Budget

\$81,672,000

Budget-to-Budget Increase

\$2,887,000

Tax Levy Increase

2.33%

Estimated Tax Rate Increase

\$0.30 per thousand assessed valuation

What's on the Ballot?

Residents will vote on the following propositions:

Proposition 1 – School Budget

The Amherst Central School District budget of \$81,672,000 for the 2025-2026 school year.

Board of Education Candidates

The election of two members to the Board of Education to serve three-year terms.

Read the candidate biographies on page 5.



Nicholas
DeMarco



Lorry
Goldhawk (i)

Capital Outlay Project

The 2025-26 budget includes \$100,000 for an Amherst CSD Capital Outlay project. The scope of the outlay project will be installation of window safety film at Amherst Middle School.

Three Part Summary & Definition

All public schools in New York State are required by law to report their spending in three categories: administrative, capital and program.

	2024-2025	2025-2026	DOLLAR CHANGE	% Change
Administrative Expenditures	\$7,200,878	\$7,503,771	\$302,893	4.21%
Capital Expenditures	\$10,441,543	\$10,746,789	\$305,246	2.92%
Program Expenditures	\$61,142,579	\$63,421,439	\$2,278,861	3.73%
TOTAL	\$78,785,000	\$81,672,000	\$2,887,000	3.66%

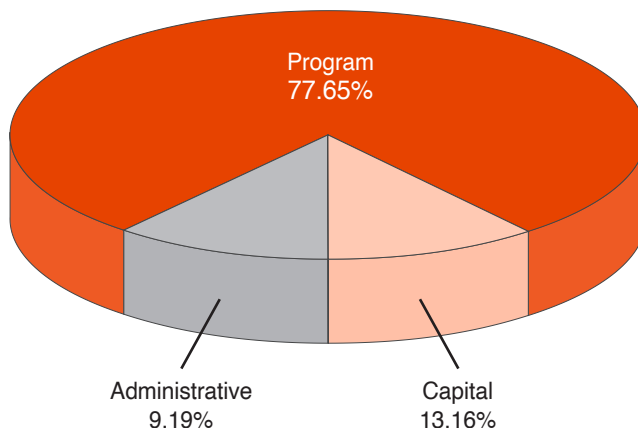
Three-Part Budget Definitions

Administrative Budget Component: Includes expenses for office and administrative costs; salaries and benefits for certified school administrators who spend 50 percent or more of their time performing supervisory duties; data processing; public information; legal fees; property insurance; and school board expenses.

Capital Budget Component: This covers debt service on buildings and leasing costs; tax certiorari and court-ordered costs; and all facility costs, including salaries and benefits of the custodial staff; service contracts, maintenance supplies and equipment; and utilities.

Program Budget Component: This portion includes salaries and benefits of teachers and supervisors who spend the majority of their time teaching; such instructional costs as supplies, equipment and textbooks; co-curricular activities and interscholastic athletics; staff development; and transportation operating costs.

Proposed 2025-26 Three-Part Budget



Where Does the Money Come From?

REVENUE SUMMARY	2024-2025	2025-2026	CHANGE
Property Tax	\$40,296,810	\$41,236,146	\$939,336
In Lieu of Tax	\$660,000	\$645,000	-\$15,000
County Sales Tax	\$4,550,000	\$4,700,000	\$150,000
Community Ed	\$78,500	\$78,500	\$0
Interest Earnings	\$474,500	\$301,000	-\$173,500
State Aid	\$24,326,051	\$26,125,876	\$1,799,825
Building Aid	\$4,527,187	\$4,415,518	-\$111,669
Other Revenues	\$2,665,164	\$2,983,560	\$318,396
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$0
Use of Reserves	\$206,788	\$186,400	-\$20,388
TOTAL	\$78,785,000	\$81,672,000	\$2,887,000

Where Does the Money Go?

EXPENDITURE SUMMARY	2024-2025	2025-2026	CHANGE
Personnel	\$35,883,466	\$36,728,861	\$845,395
Benefits	\$16,060,534	\$16,599,371	\$538,837
General Support	\$3,047,519	\$3,210,852	\$163,333
Instruction	\$6,624,717	\$6,970,578	\$345,861
BOCES	\$5,354,767	\$6,021,423	\$666,656
Transportation	\$4,417,772	\$4,804,782	\$387,010
Debt Service	\$5,396,225	\$5,336,133	-\$60,092
Contingency	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$0
TOTAL	\$78,785,000	\$81,672,000	\$2,887,000

Contingency Budget

A contingent budget would require the elimination of all equipment purchases, no community use of District facilities without payment of full operating costs, no Community Education Programming, no salary increases for non unionized employees, an additional fund balance and reserves appropriation of \$434,711, and no increase to the 2025-26 tax levy.

Five Year Budget History

YEAR	BUDGET	LEVY
2020-21	3.79%	2.39%
2021-22	3.03%	3.14%
2022-23	6.19%	-0.69%
2023-24	10.60%	2.02%
2024-25	4.30%	2.33%
AVERAGE	5.58%	1.84%

Tax Levy & Rate

	2024-2025	2025-2026	CHANGE
Property Tax Levy	\$40,296,810	\$41,236,146	\$939,336
Assessment	\$3,103,266,174	\$3,103,266,174	\$0
Tax Rate per \$1,000*	\$12.985290	\$13.287982	\$0.302692

*Rate based on prior year assessed value.



Learn more at amherstschools.org

PROPOSED BUDGET INFORMATION



Amherst Central School District Budget Notice

OVERALL BUDGET PROPOSAL

	Budget Adopted for the 2024-25 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2025-26 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2025-26 School Year
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$78,785,000	\$81,672,000	\$81,088,875
Increase/Decrease for the 2025-26 School Year		\$2,887,000	\$2,303,875
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		3.66%	2.92%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.95%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$40,296,810	\$41,236,146	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$0	\$0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$0	\$0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$0	\$0	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$40,296,810	\$41,236,146	\$40,296,810
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$857,185	\$979,528	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$39,433,403	\$40,256,618	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$39,433,403	\$40,256,618	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$0	0	
Administrative Component	\$7,200,878	\$7,503,771	\$7,426,079
Program Component	\$61,142,579	\$63,421,439	\$63,101,172
Capital Component	\$10,441,543	\$10,746,789	\$10,561,624

*Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2025-26 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.

A contingent budget would require the elimination of all equipment purchases, no community use of District facilities without payment of full operating costs, no Community Education Programming, no salary increases for non unionized employees, an additional fund balance and reserves appropriation of \$434,711, and no increase to the 2025-26 tax levy.

Note: The District has agreed to a three year extension of our current contract with our contract transportation provider, First Student. 2025-26 is the second year of that three year extension.

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2025-26 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$451

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2025-26 by the qualified voters of the Amherst Central School District, Erie County, New York, will be held at the Amherst Central High School in said district on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time in the Amherst Central 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 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

Nicholas DeMarco

Nicholas DeMarco has lived in Amherst since 2021. He was fortunate to have the opportunity to move to the place where his wife Shannon was born and raised and where they wanted to raise their two boys, Duke and Nico. Duke is currently in first grade at Smallwood Drive School, and Nico will be beginning Kindergarten there in 2026. His wife is a special education teacher in the Amherst Central School District. He is an attorney who recently opened the law firm, Rossi & DeMarco, PLLC, which represents individuals and businesses throughout Western New York in a variety of matters. He graduated from St. Bonaventure University in 2011 with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and minor in Journalism/Mass Communications. In 2014 he graduated from SUNY Buffalo Law School.



Mr. DeMarco is currently an assistant coach for his son Duke's AA-Junior baseball team with Central Amherst Little League. He has also served on several non-profit and volunteer boards. This includes being a member of the Board of Directors for the Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park since 2021, serving as attorney for the St. Bonaventure Cemetery Board of Directors since 2024, and previously serving on the St. Bonaventure National Alumni Association Board from 2011 to 2017.

Lorry Goldhawk

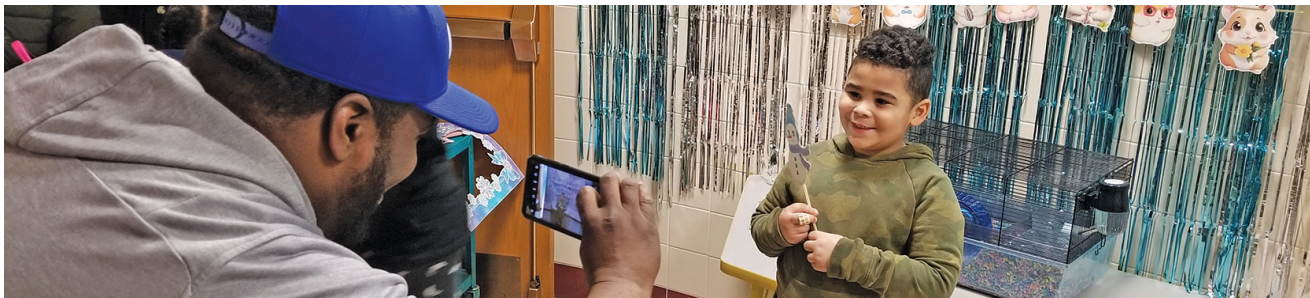
Lorry Goldhawk has been a Human Resources consultant since 2008, working for other HR consulting firms prior to forming her own business. Prior to her consulting work, Lorry worked in Human Resources at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute, where she handled faculty-level recruitment, immigration applications and processing, and internal consulting projects. Lorry has additional experience as Director of Recruiting for a local financial services company, and as Operations and Testing Manager for a management and HR consulting firm.



Mrs. Goldhawk received two Bachelor's degrees (BS Management/HR/Marketing and BA Psychology) from the University at Buffalo. She also holds two human resources certifications and served in several capacities on the Board of the Buffalo Niagara Human Resources Association.

Mrs. Goldhawk has served as a Board Member since 2014 and is active with the Erie County Association of School Boards, where she serves on various committees and is a member of the Executive Board. She will serve as the President of ECASB starting July 2025.

A native of Western New York, and an Amherst resident since 2003, Mrs. Goldhawk and her husband, Matthew, have two children; a son who is graduating from ACHS in June 2025, and a daughter who graduated from ACHS and is working on her nursing degree at Niagara University.



Family Literacy Night at Windermere Boulevard Elementary was a busy event celebrating a new initiative called One School, One Book where all students had a shared reading experience. Each student received a copy of the book "Winter According to Humphrey" and they were able to take it home to read with their families. Literacy Night capped the program with an evening devoted to fun activities for families to enjoy together.



A Community Day assembly at Smallwood Drive Elementary School welcomed Adam Page, Paralympic sled hockey gold medalist, where he spoke to all students about his experiences as an athlete. The assembly also included members of the high school Unified basketball team sharing their experiences. During the day, students rotated through sessions focused on well-being and included adaptive physical education classes thanks to Greater Buffalo Adaptive Sports, who lent wheelchairs so students could experience adaptive sports.



WHERE CAN YOU LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BUDGET?

Board of Education Meetings

Presentations on the 2025-2026 budget were made at several Board of Education meetings in December, February and March.

On the Website

The 2025-2026 budget presentations that have been made during Board of Education meetings are posted after each meeting on the website. The documents can be found on the Budget & Election 2025-2026 webpage.

On YouTube

Board of Education meetings are videotaped and the recordings are available to view. They can be found on the Amherst Central School District YouTube channel.

In the District Office

Budget documents are available for review by calling the district clerk at 716-362-3051.

Publications

The budget newsletter is delivered to every resident in the school district via USPS mail in early May.



TIGER PRIDE: HELPING OTHERS

Amherst Middle Helps South Sudan Villages Clinic

In English class, Amherst Middle School seventh graders read the book "A Long Walk to Water" by Linda Sue Park highlighting the scarcity of clean drinking water in the African nation of South Sudan. Making a connection to a nation far from WNY was made a little stronger this year through a special guest presentation and a series of fundraising activities.

The middle school hosted Fidele Dahn, who works as a bus driver for First Student and drives for Amherst Schools. Dahn is also one of The Lost Boys of Sudan, which tied into the book seventh grade was studying. Dahn was the guest speaker at a grade-level assembly where he shared some of his story that started when he was nine years old and his community in a village of South Sudan was attacked by government troops. Amid the chaos, he was separated from his family and joined a group of frightened boys who ran from the violence. This group of boys became known as The Lost Boys. They roamed for roughly 1,000 miles, making it to Ethiopia before fleeing once again, finally reaching sanctuary in a refugee camp in Kenya. Dahn's journey led him to refugee status in Syracuse and to college in Buffalo.

During the school assembly, he talked about why it was important for him to start a foundation and medical clinic, South Sudan Villages Clinic, in the village and surrounding region that he left as a child. He answered some questions from students and the seventh grade team had a surprise donation for him to support his clinic.

Teaching Assistant Lynette LaBoy had the idea to have seventh-graders be involved in two fundraisers during December to support the South Sudan Villages Clinic. For the main fundraiser, seventh graders created 352 mini yarn hats that could be used as candy holders, place card holders,

bottle toppers or ornaments. Donations were collected for the hats at school and during a winter concert. A second fundraiser had students donate money to vote for staff members to dress up in silly holiday costumes for the middle school winter concert.

At the end of assembly, Dahn was presented with a check for more than \$1,500 to help support the South Sudan Villages Clinic. The funds, he said, were enough to purchase several months of medicine for the clinic.



TIGER PRIDE: ATHLETICS

Excellence in the Classroom

The New York State Public High School Sports Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) designates Scholar Athlete Team awards to qualifying teams when 75% of the team's roster have a 90% GPA or higher.

FALL SPORTS: Girls Tennis, Girls Swimming, Boys Volleyball, Field Hockey, Girls Cross Country, Girls Soccer, Boys Cross Country, Boys Soccer, Gameday Cheerleading, Girls Volleyball, Football, Boys Golf.

WINTER SPORTS: Girls Basketball, Girls Ice Hockey, Girls Bowling, Unified Bowling, Boys Swimming, Boys Indoor Track, Girls Indoor Track, Boys Basketball, Competitive Cheer, Boys Bowling.

SPRING SPORTS: Watch the Athletics website and social media channels for the announcement of the Spring scholar athlete team awards.

TIGER PRIDE: MASTER TEACHERS

ACHS Math Teacher Joins NYS Master Teacher Program

Kimberly King, an Amherst Central High School math teacher, is the latest teacher from ACSD selected to participate in the New York State Master Teacher Program, Western Region, by the State University of New York. She teaches Algebra 2, AP Precalculus and AP Statistics and is the 16th ACSD faculty member to be selected for this state-wide professional network of outstanding science, technology, engineering, and mathematics teachers. Amherst CSD has 16 teachers who have been named to the New York State Master Teacher program.

Currently in the four-year program are:

- Christina Randazzo, a fourth-grade teacher at Windermere Boulevard Elementary School
- Stephen Johnson, a seventh-grade math teacher at Amherst Middle School
- Garrett Kensy, a math teacher at Amherst Central High School
- Deanna Castle-Hebeler, a first-grade teacher at Smallwood Drive Elementary School
- Michael Milliman, a fifth-grade teacher at Smallwood Drive Elementary School
- Christopher Kensy, an algebra teacher at Amherst Central High School

The following are Master Teacher Emeritus, a title given to those who successfully complete four years as a NYS Master Teacher:

- Amy Sorrentino, an Algebra 2 Regents and Precalculus Regents teacher at Amherst Central High School
- Jamie Cinelli, kindergarten teacher at Smallwood Drive Elementary School
- Krista Jones, an eighth-grade math and Algebra Honors teacher at Amherst Middle School
- Erik Zobel, a physics teacher at Amherst Central High School
- Lori Chittenden, a first-second grade teacher at Smallwood Drive Elementary School
- Jill Zobel, kindergarten teacher at Smallwood Drive Elementary School
- Kristen Shouldice, a second-grade teacher at Windermere Boulevard Elementary School
- Nancy Claxton, a seventh-grade science teacher at Amherst Middle School
- Dr. Stephanie Reddien, a math teacher at Amherst Central High School

WORK FOR AMHERST CSD

Now and throughout the school year, the district has job openings for instructional, non-instructional and substitute positions. The Human Resources Department at Amherst Central is committed to fostering an employee culture focused on our mission to prepare all students to excel in a dynamic world and rooted in core values of respect and responsibility. At Amherst, we pride ourselves for offering opportunities for collaboration, challenge and rewarding career growth.

RecruitFront Employment Portal

Amherst Central Schools uses RecruitFront for all job postings. All candidates will need to complete an application through RecruitFront in order to be considered for employment. Visit amherstschoools.org. The Human Resource webpage is located under the Department tab.

Subscribe to Job Alerts

When you are logged into RecruitFront, you can set up the Job Alert Subscription to get notified when a new job is posted that you may be interested in.

Flexible Schedules and Benefits

A number of positions offer flexible daytime schedules during the school year including food service helpers, teacher aides and part-time teaching assistants. ACSD employees qualify for New York State pension, may enroll in health benefits and get paid vacation, sick days and holidays.

RETURN ON YOUR INVESTMENT

District

- We serve approximately 3,000 students and 560 staff each day.

Class of 2024

- 96% graduation rate.
- 56% of students graduated with Advanced Regents designation; of those 20% earned Advanced Regents with Honors.
- 2 National Merit Finalist; 8 National Merit Commended Students.
- 28% of the student population took Advanced Placement courses.

Family Support Center

- Our Family Support Center counselors help students who struggle with issues such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem/self-image, substance use, family conflicts, peer relationships or serious school academic or behavior concerns.
- The Center will assist parents with getting their children and family the most appropriate, affordable support in a timely manner.
- The Family Support Center offers a newsletter for parents, as well as informational and activity-based events for families throughout the year. All events are posted on the website calendar.

English as a New Language (ENL)

- Our district has over 40 different languages spoken by our families; some students speak up to 4 languages in their homes.
- There are currently 200 students districtwide receiving ENL services.
- There are 10 ENL staff members.
- ENL teachers do so much more than teach English. They also help students through culture shock, teach about American culture and customs, help with translation and interpretation services for families, host parent orientation to teach about American school expectations, move-in interviews, help with paperwork, make connections with services both inside the district and outside, facilitate students' sharing of their cultures with classmates, and build bridges between our families and the school.



Amherst Central School District
55 Kings Highway
Amherst, NY 14226-4330

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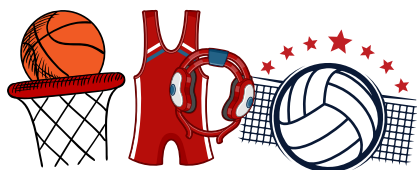
Anthony J. Panella, *Superintendent*

*****ECRWSEDDM***

District Resident

Community Education This Summer

Registration is open for 2025 summer camps in basketball, wrestling, volleyball, tennis and PE games for boys and girls. All registration is done online at amherstschoools.org. If you have questions, please contact Lori Sosenko in the community education office at 716-362-3031 or email at lsosenko@amherstschoools.org.



Krolick's Chicken Barbecue



**Tuesday, May 20, 2025
3-5:30 p.m.**

at Amherst Central High School

Pickup in Washington Highway parking lot.
Dinner includes two sides, dessert and roll.

Cost \$15

Pre-order recommended, by Friday,
May 16 by email to Laurie LeGoff at
llegoff@amherstschoools.org
or call 716-362-8174.

School Registration for 2025-26

If you have a child who will be five years old on or before December 1, 2025, and lives within the boundaries of the Amherst CSD, they are eligible for kindergarten. All families new to the district are encouraged to register as soon as possible. Our district uses a central registration system. Instructions for the online registration process can be found on the district website at www.amherstschoools.org.

Voter Eligibility

To qualify as a voter, a person must be:

- a citizen of the United States
- at least 18 years old
- a resident of Amherst Central School District for at least 30 days prior to May 20, 2025. (Education Law § 2012)

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)

Budget Feedback

The Amherst CSD Board of Education values insight from the community and has set up an online feedback form open year-round to gather feedback from the community. Find the form on the Board of Education webpage at amherstschoools.org.

Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots are available for the Amherst Central School District vote.

The completed ballot must be received by the District Clerk by 5 p.m. on May 20, the day of the vote.

A qualified voter in the district may use an absentee ballot if, on voting day, he or she is a patient in a hospital or unable to appear personally because of illness or physical disability; is required to be outside the country because of duties, occupation or studies; is on vacation outside the country; or is detained in jail awaiting action conviction of an offense other than a felony.

For more information, contact the District Clerk at 716-362-3051 or visit the office at 55 Kings Highway, Amherst, NY.

Early Mail Applications/Ballots

Applications for early mail ballots for the budget vote and election of board members may be applied for at the District Clerk's office by May 13, 2025. You may only apply for an early mail ballot on your own behalf and you must be a qualified voter. A voter who applies for and is issued an early mail ballot will not be eligible for an absentee ballot for the same election. For more information, contact the District Clerk at 362-3051 or visit the office at 55 Kings Highway, Amherst, NY.



@AmherstCSD
@AmherstCHS

@AmherstMiddle
@SmallwoodDrive

@WindermereBlvd
@AmherstTigers1



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Amherst Central High School