



# HAMILTON CENTRAL SCHOOL

Hamilton Central School • A Professional Learning Community

## BUDGET NEWSLETTER MAY 2025

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

Michelle Jacobsen  
President

Jennifer Jones  
Vice President

Sung Choe

G. Cory Duclos

Amanda Phillips

[www.hamiltoncentral.org](http://www.hamiltoncentral.org)

### Budget Hearing

May 13, 2025

6:00 P.M.

Dave McKay Board of  
Education Room/LGI

### Budget Vote & Board Election

May 20, 2025

12 Noon - 8 P.M.

Bus Garage

### Voter Requirements

- U.S. citizen
- 18 years of age or older
- Have been a resident of the school district for at least 30 days before the vote.

Dear District Community,

As a rural district with a small student body, Hamilton Central has always been asked to do more with less. In recent years, state budget calculations have made it increasingly difficult for our district to meet financial needs, even when compared with our regional counterparts. Nevertheless, the dedication of our teachers, staff, and administration combined with unwavering community support have made it possible to be fiscally responsible while also offering high quality educational opportunities. This united effort has allowed the school to further our mission to educate every student, every day.

In 2011, state law mandated the use of a formula to calculate a school budget tax cap. Since then, our district has only asked voters to exceed the tax cap once. Those who have followed the current budget process know that last year it was not easy to remain within that limit. While we stayed below the tax cap, it required the school to become as efficient as possible through creative reorganization of staffing and teaching responsibilities along with strategic use of limited reserve funds and a generous donation from Colgate University.

While these measures protected our curricular offerings this year, they are not sustainable solutions in the long term. We continue to face many uncertainties about changes to how the state funds schools, and like many other districts and municipalities across the state, our budget is facing considerable shortfalls. Our administrative team has held numerous budget coffees and workshops to receive feedback from the community to understand how to best prioritize our commitments to educational excellence and fiscal responsibility.

Through this helpful public feedback and in consultation with the administration, the Board of Education has voted to propose a budget of \$16,670,098. Although the proposed budget exceeds our tax cap, the total amount also takes into account the ongoing efforts to make school operations more efficient. By exceeding the tax cap, however, it does not compromise on the quality of education or the breadth of curricular options for our children. This budget provides enough funding to maintain, but not to expand, the current number of teachers employed by the school.

The proposed budget is a 6.37% increase over the budget for this current year. While this equals a 9.2% increase in the tax levy, it is important to remember that that percentage is not directly proportional to the increase individuals will see on their property tax bills. Many factors, including individual property assessments, equalization rates, and different municipalities' procedures make calculating the individual increase impossible. Nevertheless, we do know that the proposed budget is \$429,173 above the allowable tax cap and that amount is distributed across 2,892 different property tax bills in the district.

In order to enact the proposed budget, it must be approved by a 60% supermajority of votes. The district will hold a public budget hearing on May 13th at 6pm in the LGI room. We encourage the public to attend and express their thoughts. Voting will take place on May 20th from 12pm-8pm in the bus garage.

The Board of Education once again thanks all the dedicated support for our school from teachers, staff, administration, and community members. We encourage everyone who is eligible to vote in the upcoming election and ensure that our children receive the education they deserve.

Sincerely,

*The Hamilton Central School Board of Education*





*Below are the Propositions that will be placed on the ballot.*

**PROPOSITION #1 - BUDGET**

Shall the Board of Education of the Hamilton Central School District, County of Madison, New York, be hereby authorized to expend the sum set forth in its proposed budget for 2025-2026 in the total amount of \$16,670,098 and to levy the necessary tax therefore?

**PROPOSITION #2 - TRANSPORTATION**

Shall the Board of Education of the Hamilton Central School District be authorized to purchase and finance one (1) 30-passenger school bus and one (1) suburban—type vehicle, including necessary furnishings, fixtures and equipment and all other costs incidental thereto, and expend a total sum not to exceed \$180,000 which is estimated to be the total maximum cost thereof, and said amount, or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be raised by the levy of a tax upon the taxable property of said School District and collected in annual installments as provided by Section 416 of the Education Law; and, in anticipation of such tax, obligations of said School District, in the principal amount not to exceed \$180,000 shall be issued?

**PROPOSITION #3 - HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Shall the Hamilton Central School District be authorized to levy a tax in the amount of \$198,248 and pay such monies to the Trustees of the Hamilton Public Library for the support and maintenance of the Library with such support continuing on an annual basis unless or until a different amount is authorized by the qualified voters of the school district?

**BOARD SEAT ELECTION**

**Vote for TWO** - Three-year terms - July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2028

- Michelle Jacobsen
- Jennifer Jones

**Meet The Candidates**

**Michelle Jacobsen**

I would love the opportunity to continue representing our community on the Hamilton Central School Board of Education for another three-year term.

Nine years ago, when I first ran for office, it was with the desire to give back to a community that has given so much to me. Having been born and raised here, I attended HCS from kindergarten through graduation. My husband, Matt, and I are proud parents of two HCS students - Kevin, 6th grade, and Tyler, 9th. This desire to give back continues to drive me today.

If re-elected, my priority will be to ensure our students are at the heart of every decision. I will continue working with the board to enhance educational opportunities while navigating financial challenges with state funding. I firmly believe this is achievable thanks to the district's strong leadership, dedicated staff, and outstanding faculty.

It has been an honor to serve this community. My hope is to continue working to represent the needs of our community and help guide Hamilton Central into the future - one where, by working together to educate every student every day, we can accomplish great things.

Thank you for your time and support.





Dear HCS Families and Community Members,

As Superintendent of Schools, I want to take a moment to address an important matter that will impact the future of our district: a proposal to exceed the New York State property tax cap for the upcoming school year.

This decision was not made lightly, it comes after months of discussions. This reflects our district's continued commitment to maintaining the high-quality education, staffing, and programming that define Hamilton Central School (HCS). In order to preserve these critical resources - and to make it possible for us to continue offering the multiple pathways students need to succeed -

we must take steps that secure our financial stability in the face of growing challenges.

The New York State Education Department (NYSED), through the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission, is moving toward more flexible and individualized graduation pathways. Meeting these expectations requires sustained investment in staffing, programs, and instructional resources that support academic, artistic, technical, and athletic achievement for all students.

At the same time, we are experiencing rising operational costs and increasing uncertainty around state and federal funding. While we continue to advocate to state and federal leaders for equitable and reliable support, the Board's decision to exceed the tax cap is a proactive measure to protect the integrity of our educational offerings and the future of our students.

With great pride, Hamilton Central School continues to be recognized at both the state and national levels for excellence in academics, the arts, and athletics. These accomplishments are made possible by our incredible staff, students, families, and community.

We understand the impact this decision may have on our taxpayers and sincerely appreciate your ongoing support. With your partnership, we will continue to uphold the tradition of excellence that makes HCS such a special place for students, staff, and families.

Together, we are #HCSstrong!

*William Dowsland*

Superintendent of Schools

## Meet The Candidates

### Jennifer Jones

Fifteen years ago, my family and I chose Hamilton for its exceptional school district and strong sense of community. My husband, Jamie, and I have three children: Mercedes (HCS Class of 2019), Devon (Class of 2021) and Ryker, currently a 10th grader. As a parent, I've seen the power of a well-rounded, student-centered education, and I'm committed to ensuring every child has access to the resources they need to thrive.

I serve as Executive Assistant to the President at SUNY Morrisville and have dedicated time to various local boards, including serving as Vice President and Advocacy Liaison for the HCS Board of Education. My passion for service extends to wellness, where I help others take a proactive approach to health—because I believe overall well-being plays a vital role in student success.

Education is the foundation of our future. I'm committed to keeping HCS a place where students feel supported, valued and prepared for whatever comes next. It's been an honor to serve on the Board for the past six years, and I would be grateful for the opportunity to continue advocating for our students, families and staff.

Thank you for your support!



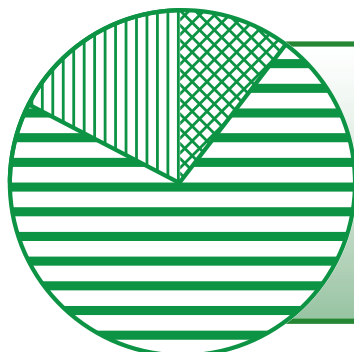





2025-2026

Proposed Budget for the Hamilton Central School District

EXPENDITURES

ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	2024-25 BUDGET	2025-26 PROPOSED	DOLLAR CHANGE	PERCENT CHANGE
<b>PROGRAM</b>				
INSTRUCTION	\$3,684,399	\$3,847,520	\$163,121	4.43%
SPECIAL PROGRAMS	\$2,325,252	\$2,517,478	\$192,226	8.27%
PUPIL SERVICES	\$558,433	\$600,610	\$42,177	7.55%
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION	\$502,860	\$539,076	\$36,216	7.20%
INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA	\$378,748	\$397,427	\$18,679	4.93%
INTERFUND TRANSFER - CAFETERIA	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$0	0.00%
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	\$4,017,000	\$4,210,291	\$193,291	4.81%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$11,496,692</b>	<b>\$12,142,402</b>	<b>\$645,710</b>	<b>5.62%</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>				
BOARD OF EDUCATION	\$21,699	\$26,361	\$4,662	21.48%
CENTRAL ADMIN & FINANCE	\$530,403	\$547,963	\$17,560	3.31%
STAFF	\$51,180	\$57,175	\$5,995	11.71%
SPECIAL ITEMS	\$220,890	\$232,973	\$12,083	5.47%
ADMINISTRATION & IMPROVEMENT	\$390,933	\$394,504	\$3,571	.91%
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	\$300,121	\$314,562	\$14,441	4.81%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,515,226</b>	<b>\$1,573,538</b>	<b>\$58,312</b>	<b>3.85%</b>
<b>CAPITAL</b>				
CENTRAL SERVICE	\$838,004	\$880,010	\$42,006	5.01%
DEBT SERVICE	\$1,522,028	\$1,759,586	\$237,558	15.61%
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	\$300,121	\$314,562	\$14,441	4.81%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,660,153</b>	<b>\$2,954,158</b>	<b>\$294,005</b>	<b>11.05%</b>
<b>TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>\$15,672,071</b>	<b>\$16,670,098</b>	<b>\$998,027</b>	<b>6.37%</b>



	ADMINISTRATION .....	9.4%
	PROGRAM .....	72.8%
	CAPITAL .....	17.8%



**2025-2026****Proposed Budget for the Hamilton Central School District****PROGRAM BUDGET**

*The program budget includes all services provided directly to our students and represents approximately 73% of the expenditures in the budget. Programs budgeted in this category include the following: elementary and secondary education, occupational education, remedial and special educational programs, library and media services, inter-scholastic athletics, extra-curricular, and other direct services to students.*

**Instruction** – This category includes the salaries for teachers, teacher assistants, and substitutes along with monies for the necessary supplies, textbooks, and equipment to support the instructional program. Funds have also been provided to support the Performing Arts, enrichment programs, and field trips.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<i>Total</i>	<b>\$3,684,399</b>	<b>\$3,847,520</b>	<b>4.43%</b>

**Special Programs** – This category includes the salaries of teachers and support staff who work with children with special education needs. Also included are the expenses associated with BOCES special education programs, and occupational education programs.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<i>Total</i>	<b>\$2,325,252</b>	<b>\$2,517,478</b>	<b>8.27%</b>

**Interfund Transfer – Cafeteria** – Funds have been provided in the budget to support the food service program. The transfer of funds will ensure the necessary revenues to offset the increase in fixed costs in this program. The general fund support is needed to offset increases in food costs, and rising employee benefit costs. It is important to us that our students have nutritious food as a mainstay of their meal.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<i>Total</i>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>0%</b>

**Pupil Services** – Included in this category are the costs associated with attendance, guidance, health and psychological services, and extra-curricular programs.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<i>Total</i>	<b>\$558,433</b>	<b>\$600,610</b>	<b>7.55%</b>

**Transportation** – This section includes all the expenses related to student transportation.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<i>Total</i>	<b>\$502,860</b>	<b>\$539,076</b>	<b>7.20%</b>

**Instructional Media** – This category includes all expenses associated with the operation of the elementary and secondary Media Centers, computer classrooms, and district technology.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<i>Total</i>	<b>\$378,748</b>	<b>\$397,427</b>	<b>4.93%</b>

**Employee Benefits** – This section of the budget includes all the employee benefits for most of the instructional and non-instructional staff as required by law or included in the negotiated employee agreements.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<i>Total</i>	<b>\$4,017,000</b>	<b>\$4,210,291</b>	<b>4.81%</b>

	2024-25	2025-26	
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM</b>	<b>\$11,496,692</b>	<b>\$12,142,402</b>	<b>5.62%</b>



## ADMINISTRATION BUDGET

*This category of the budget includes administrative, financial, legal and instructional support services for the operation of the school system, as well as insurance and school board expenditures. Staff and curriculum development are also part of this budget.*

**Board of Education** – This item of the budget includes all the expenditures incurred by members of the Board of Education and the District Clerk in the performance of their duties. Included are supplies, meeting expenses, training for new board members and expenditures such as printing, legal notices, and dues. Also, expenses for conducting district votes and elections are included.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$21,699</i>	<i>\$26,361</i>	<i>21.48%</i>

**Central Administration & Finance** – This item includes expenses of the District and Business Offices, which include the superintendent, business official, secretaries, auditor, treasurer and tax collector. Other expenditures include supplies, postage, rental and repair of equipment.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$530,403</i>	<i>\$547,963</i>	<i>3.31%</i>

**Staff** – Included in this category are the expenses for legal consultation, labor relations, policy development and our Employees Assistance Program.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$51,180</i>	<i>\$57,175</i>	<i>11.71%</i>

**Special Items** – This account includes expenses for the district's share of the BOCES administrative and capital (building) budget and for the school's insurance (liability, fire, theft, etc.).

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$220,890</i>	<i>\$232,973</i>	<i>5.47%</i>

**Administration & Improvement** – Included in this category are the expenses related to teacher in-service, curriculum development and the supervision of the instructional program. Funding for staff development, pre-K – 12, classroom libraries and enrichment opportunities for our students are included.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$390,933</i>	<i>\$394,504</i>	<i>0.91%</i>

**Employee Benefits** – This section of the budget includes all the employee benefits for the administration and clerical staff as required by law or included in the negotiated employee agreements.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$300,121</i>	<i>\$314,562</i>	<i>4.81%</i>

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<b><i>TOTAL ADMINISTRATION</i></b>	<b><i>\$1,515,226</i></b>	<b><i>\$1,573,538</i></b>	<b><i>3.85%</i></b>



## CAPITAL BUDGET

**Capital Services** – This section of the budget includes the maintenance and operation of the school's buildings and grounds, including the custodial staff, supplies, service contracts, utility charges and maintenance equipment. It also includes debt service on our capital equipment (buses and buildings) and the benefits for employees in this category.

**Central Service** – Operation and maintenance of all district buildings & grounds.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$838,004</b>	<b>\$880,010</b>	<b>5.01%</b>

**Debt Service** – All principal and interest payments from building projects and bus purchases. The large increase is due to new principal and interest payments for our recently completed and continuing capital improvements.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,522,028</b>	<b>\$1,759,586</b>	<b>15.61%</b>

**Employee Benefits** – This section of the budget includes all the employee benefits for the maintenance department as required by law or included in the negotiated employee agreements.

	2024-25	2025-26	% Change
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$300,121</b>	<b>\$314,562</b>	<b>4.81%</b>

<b>TOTAL CAPITAL</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>% Change</b>
	<b>\$2,660,153</b>	<b>\$2,954,158</b>	<b>11.05%</b>

### Voter Requirements

A qualified voter is one who is:

- (1) a citizen of the United States of America, and
- (2) eighteen years of age or older, and
- (3) resident within the School District for a period of thirty (30) days preceding the annual vote and election, and
- (4) not otherwise disqualified to vote by applicable law.

The School District may require all individuals voting in the budget vote and election to provide one form of proof of residency, in accordance with Education Law Section 2018-c. Acceptable forms of identification include a driver's license, non-driver ID card, utility bill, or voter registration card. Voters are also required to provide their signature, printed name, and address at the time of voting.

### Absentee and Early Mail Voting

Qualified voters of the District may obtain applications for an absentee ballot or an early voting ballot from the office of the Clerk of the District. Completed applications must be received by the Clerk of the District no later than 3:30 p.m. on May 19, 2025 and must be received no later than 3:30 p.m. on May 13, 2025 if the absentee ballot or an early voting ballot is to be mailed to the voter. Completed applications received after 3:30 p.m. on May 13, 2025 will require the voter to personally appear at the office of the Clerk of the District to receive an absentee ballot or an early voting ballot. A listing of all persons to whom an absentee ballot or an early voting ballot is issued will be available for inspection by any qualified voter in the office of the Clerk of the District between the hours of 7:30 A.M. and 3:30 P.M. during each of the five business days prior to the election.

# Hamilton Central School

West Kendrick Avenue  
Hamilton, NY 13346

"A Professional Learning Community"

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## Budget Hearing

May 13, 2025  
6:00 P.M.

Dave McKay Board of  
Education Room/LGI

## Budget Vote & Board Election

May 20, 2025  
12 Noon - 8 P.M.  
Bus Garage

## Voter Requirements

- U.S. citizen
- 18 years of age or older
- Have been a resident of the school district for at least 30 days before the vote.

### 2025-26 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	\$ 15,672,071	\$16,670,098	\$15,869,277
Increase/Decrease for the 2025-26 School Year		\$998,027	\$197,206
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		4.77%	1.26%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.95%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$8,704,579	\$9,505,400	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$163,501	\$198,248	
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)	\$8,868,680	\$9,703,648	\$8,902,827
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$437,398	\$544,486	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$8,267,181	\$8,531,741	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$8,267,181	\$8,960,914	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$0	(\$429,173)	
Administrative Component	\$1,515,226	\$1,573,538	\$1,503,966
Program Component	\$11,496,692	\$12,142,402	\$11,411,153
Capital Component	\$2,660,153	\$2,954,158	\$2,954,158
* 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.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administrative Component at the maximum allowable</li><li>• Remaining difference eliminated from the Program Component</li></ul>			
** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)			
		Description	Amount
		Public Library Proposition	\$198,248
			\$
			\$
			\$

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2025-26 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings <sup>1</sup>	\$504.00

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2025-26 by the qualified voters of the Hamilton Central School District, Madison County, New York, will be held at Hamilton Central School in said district on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 between the hours of 12:00pm and 8:00pm, prevailing time in the District Bus Garage, 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.