

Learning at...



BUDGET 2025

Wallkill

A PUBLICATION OF THE WALLKILL CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Wallkill High School Names Valedictorian and Salutatorian

WALLKILL SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL (WSHS) IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE the top two students for the Class of 2025. Joshua Craypo is this year's valedictorian, and Adrienne Silvestris is salutatorian.

"These students are hardworking and talented," said WSHS Principal Brian Masopust. "They are great assets to our community."

Josh, with a weighted grade point average (GPA) of 102.4, will graduate first in his class with an Advanced Regents diploma. A National Merit Scholarship finalist, he credits his parents, Raymond Craypo and Jennifer Probst of Wallkill, with providing him with never-ending support and consistent enthusiasm.

Throughout Josh's High School career he has pushed himself academically, taking several Advanced Placement (AP) classes, including AP United States History, AP United States Government and Politics, AP Calculus, AP Psychology, and AP Biology among other challenging courses. While expressing appreciation for all of his teachers at WSHS, he said that he is especially grateful to Social Studies teacher Brian Vegliando and Science teacher Samrat Pathania who, he said, challenged him to think in creative ways and grow as a learner.

Outside of the classroom, Josh competed on the Varsity Cross Country, Indoor Track, and Outdoor Track teams. "I enjoy being part of this community,"



(Left to Right) Superintendent Kevin Castle, Valedictorian Joshua Craypo, Salutatorian Adrienne Silvestris, and Wallkill Senior High School Principal Brian Masopust.

he remarked. "My experience in sports has taught me to push my limits while adding depth to my High School experience." He said that he is grateful to his coaches for helping facilitate this growth.

In the fall, Josh plans to attend Cornell University, where he will focus on biology and environmental sciences. He hopes to one day be a researcher in these or related fields. "I am grateful for the many opportunities I've experienced at Wallkill," he said, "and I look forward to bringing the character I've fostered here into the greater world."

Expressing his pride in Josh's achievements, Mr. Masopust said, "Josh is a gifted intellectual who can conceptualize things very easily in a way that most others can't. He is a three-sport athlete balancing a rigorous academic workload while also competing each season."

Salutatorian Adrienne Silvestris, the daughter of Gina Silvestris of Plattekill and Nick Silvestris of Pennsylvania, will graduate with an Advanced Regents diploma and a weighted GPA of 101.60. In addition to her academic achievements, she has been active in clubs, athletics, and volunteer work.

"I have watched Adrienne blossom from freshman year until now," said Principal Masopust. "She has developed confidence and is willing to take risks, both academically, and athletically."

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VOTE

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025
12 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Polling locations: Wallkill Senior High School,
Leptondale Elementary School, and Plattekill Elementary School

*Budget
Details
Inside*

Valedictorian and Salutatorian CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Adrienne has taken a rigorous course load, including AP Biology, AP Calculus, AP US History, AP Government, and AP Psychology, along with other challenging classes. She has also received a letter of commendation from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. Adrienne is grateful to her mother and her sister Ivy for their support and help throughout her life.

Music has been a running theme throughout Adrienne's school years. She began learning to play the violin in Grade 4, and through hard work and practice earned chairs in the Hudson Valley Youth Orchestra and the Area-All State Orchestra. Drama Club is another extracurricular where Adrienne shines. "Being part of the Panthers Players has taught me to be confident in my own abilities and skills," she said.

Adrienne, who joined the Varsity Tennis team in her junior year, is thankful for her coach's guidance and encouragement. "I would like to thank Coach Jennifer

Gravelle for encouraging me to succeed and motivating me to partake in other athletic endeavors," she said.

Adrienne has also served as co-president of the Science Club, leading the group through many projects such as a Bird and Butterfly Photography Contest and preparations to plant a NASA "Moon Tree." She is grateful to the club's advisor, Science teacher Samat Pathania, for all that he has taught her and for making the Science Club such a special place.

While Adrienne hasn't decided where she will be attending college yet, Northeastern and Binghamton University are her top choices. She plans to study biology and neurosciences and hopes to one day be a doctor or researcher in neurobiology. Whatever the future holds for Adrienne, she knows that Wallkill provided her with a solid foundation. "I will continue to cherish and utilize all that Wallkill Senior High School has taught me," she said.

"Top 10" Students in High School's Class of 2025 Announced

Wallkill Senior High School is proud to celebrate the accomplishments of the "Top 10" students in this year's graduating class. These exceptional students have demonstrated outstanding academic achievements while excelling in a variety of athletic, extracurricular, and community activities. This impressive group is led by Valedictorian Joshua Craypo and Salutatorian Adrienne Silvestris, followed in order of class ranking by Riley Gardner, Xin Ngo, Kaitlyn Bonner, Abigail Martino, Katelyn Krupp, Luke Fragetta, Elena Sindt, and Mayah Simon.



Joshua Craypo



Adrienne Silvestris



Riley Gardner



Xin Ngo



Kaitlyn Bonner



Abigail Martino



Katelyn Krupp



Luke Fragetta



Elena Sindt



Mayah Simon

A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Wallkill Community,

The Wallkill Central School District Board of Education and Administration have worked diligently over the past several months to prepare the proposed 2025-2026 school district budget. The District is proposing a 4.25% budget increase for the 2025-2026 school year that equates to a **1.99%** tax levy increase (**below the tax levy limit**). As a result of the fiscal foresight of the Board of Education and Administration, our proposed 2025-2026 budget will result in a tax levy that is either at or below the limit for the fourteenth year in a row. **In fact, this is the 5th year in a row that we are below the limit.**



Since the proposed tax levy is **below** the tax levy limit, the proposed budget will require a simple majority of voters for approval (50% +1) instead of a super majority for approval (60% or more).

The 2025-2026 proposed budget will maintain:

- ▶ All programs and extra-curricular activities for students
- ▶ The current structure of the Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program (84 slots)
- ▶ Low class sizes in grades K-12 to allow for enhanced learning opportunities (K-6 average class size of 20)
- ▶ Professional Development opportunities to support classroom instruction and student learning
- ▶ Support services to address the mental health and academic needs of our students
- ▶ Police officers in all five (5) buildings

The budget also includes the creation of a full-time Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Health position (currently a part-time Athletic Director stipend position) which will be funded by the elimination of a full-time physical education teacher position through attrition and the part-time Athletic Director stipend position. The budget also includes the creation of a Modified Girls Lacrosse Team, Junior Varsity Competitive Cheer Team and Unified Bocce Ball for students with disabilities. The additional teams will give more students an opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities.

In addition, there will be a second proposition seeking approval for a \$20,000,000 capital reserve that will fund future projects and reduce the amount needed to borrow resulting in a future cost savings to taxpayers.

This issue of *Learning at Wallkill* provides the public with valuable information on District program highlights, the candidates who are running for the Board of Education, the proposed 2025-2026 school district budget, and information about the capital reserve.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all District residents for your continued support of our students!

Stay Panther Strong!



Kevin Castle, Superintendent of Schools

**ANNUAL BUDGET
VOTE
& Election of Trustees**

**TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025
12 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

**Polling locations: Wallkill Senior High School,
Leptondale Elementary School, and
Plattekill Elementary School**

2025-2026 Proposed Budget

Frequently Asked Questions about the 2025-2026 School District Budget

What are the propositions to be voted on?

The propositions voters will cast a ballot for on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, will be:

Proposition #1: RESOLVED, that the proposed Wallkill Central School District budget for the 2025-2026 school year in the amount of \$93,271,595 be approved and the Board of Education of said School District be authorized to levy the necessary tax therefore.

Proposition #2: SHALL the Board of Education of the Wallkill Central School District be authorized to establish a capital reserve fund to be named the "2025 Facilities Capital Reserve Fund" for the purpose of appropriating sufficient funds necessary to construct renovations to, reconstruction of, and/or additions to their facilities as identified from time-to-time, including but not limited to those recommended in its five-year capital facilities plan, installation of air conditioning in all classrooms and including original furnishings, equipment, machinery, apparatus, appurtenances and incidental improvements and expenses in connection therewith, the ultimate amount not to exceed \$20,000,000 over a probable term of fifteen (15) years; and that such amount shall be raised from the unexpended and unencumbered funds of the Wallkill Central School District, and such other available funds permitted by law.

Is the Wallkill Central School District's 2025-2026 tax levy within the limit?

Yes, the 2025-2026 tax levy is below the allowable limit by \$495,619; therefore, a simple majority of voters is needed for budget approval (50% + 1). The tax levy increase with permissible exemptions is 1.99%.

What is the tax levy limit?

Essentially, it is an eight-step formula that each school district must use to calculate the tax levy limit. The result (the limit) is the maximum allowable tax levy (including permissible exemptions) that a school district can propose and would require only the approval of a simple majority of voter (50% + 1). Any proposed tax levy amount above the limit would require budget approval by a super majority (60% or more) of voters. For more information on the tax levy limit, please visit www.wallkillcsd.k12.ny.us.

Does the tax levy indicate how much my taxes will rise?

No, the tax levy is the amount of money the school district can raise through property taxes. The amount an individual will pay toward the levied amount is the tax rate. Tax rates paid by individual taxpayers may differ greatly from one household to another based on such things as equalization rates and total town assessed values.

What strategies were used to have a tax levy within the tax cap?

1. Projected increase in State Aid
2. Lower health insurance renewal rates
3. Use of fund balance and reserves
4. Multi-year financial planning

What is the percent increase of the proposed 2025-2026 budget when compared to the 2024-2025 budget?

The 2025-2026 budget increase is 4.25%.

How much State Aid is the District projected to receive?

The District is projected to receive \$39,703,380 in State Aid in 2025-2026. In addition, the District continues to balance its budget with reserves and fund balance. This includes new projected building aid for the current capital project.

What programs for students are included in the 2025-2026 budget?

1. Maintain programs and extra-curricular activities
2. Maintain the current structure of the UPK program (84 slots)
3. Maintain low class sizes for K-12 to allow for enhanced learning opportunities (K-6 average class size of 20)
4. Professional Development opportunities to support classroom instruction and student learning
5. Maintain support services to address the mental health and academic needs of our students
6. The continued assignment of Police Officers in all five (5) school buildings
7. Create a JV Competitive Cheer Team (Winter Season)
8. Create a Modified Girls Lacrosse Team
9. Create a Unified Bocce Ball Team for students with disabilities
10. Create a Full-Time Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Health by eliminating a Full-Time (1.0) Physical Education Teacher and Part-Time Athletic Director stipend position through attrition

2025-2026 Proposed Budget

What happens if voters reject the proposed budget?

If voters reject the proposed budget, the school district may put up a revised budget for a second vote or adopt a contingent budget.

What additional programs/positions will be reduced if the budget fails (contingent budget)?

- ▶ Reduction of nine (9) elementary instructional positions resulting in larger class sizes and loss of programs for our students
- ▶ The UPK program
- ▶ All equipment (except for technology equipment for instructional purposes and equipment necessary for health and safety purposes)
- ▶ Charges to community groups that result in identifiable costs for use of buildings

What is included, as allowed by New York State Education Law, in a contingent budget?

A contingent budget will allow:

- ▶ All regular transportation to and from school at current levels of more than .6 miles and to private/parochial schools
- ▶ All legal obligations
- ▶ All health and safety repairs
- ▶ All expenses to maintain mandated educational programs
- ▶ All other budgeted items as determined by the Board of Education

Who can vote on May 20, 2025?

Voters are eligible to vote if they are: (a) a U.S. Citizen; (b) at least 18 years of age; (c) a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to May 20, 2025; and (d) not otherwise ineligible to vote under Section 5-106 of the Election Law. Please contact the District Clerk at 845-895-7101, or by email at kcorcoran@wallkillcsd.k12.ny.us if you have any questions regarding how you may obtain an absentee or early mail voter ballot. Information on how an unregistered voter, who meets the definition of a qualified voter, may receive an absentee or early mail voter ballot is available at: www.wallkillcsd.k12.ny.us.

Preguntas frecuentes sobre el presupuesto del distrito escolar 2025-2026

¿Quién puede votar, el 20 de mayo de 2025?

Los votantes son elegibles para votar si son: (a) Ciudadano de los Estados Unidos; (b) Por los menos 18 años de edad; (c) residente del distrito escolar 30 días antes del 20 de mayo de 2025; y (d) no inelible para votar de acuerdo con sección 5-106 de la Ley Electoral. Comuníquese con la Secretaria del Distrito al 845-895-7101, o por correo electrónico a: kcorcoran@wallkillcsd.k12.ny.us si tiene alguna pregunta con respecto a cómo puede obtener una boleta en ausencia o votante por correo temorano. La información sobre cómo un votante no registrado, que cumple con la definición de un votante calificado, puede recibir una boleta en ausencia o votante por correo temprano está disponible en: www.wallkillcsd.k12.ny.us.

Si necesita una versión en español de estas preguntas, vaya a nuestro website:

www.wallkillcsd.k12.ny.us

Tax Levy Increase – Yearly Analysis

Year	Tax Levy Increase
2021-22	1.47%* (\$150,000 below the tax levy limit)
2022-23	2.50%* (\$69,762 below the tax levy limit)
2023-24	1.99%* (\$395,480 below the tax levy limit)
2024-25	2.47%* (\$262,655 below the tax levy limit)
2025-26	1.99%* (\$495,619 below the tax levy limit)

The Tax Levy increase has remained at or below the Tax Cap level beginning with the 2012-2013 school year.

***below the tax levy limit**

5 Year Average Tax Levy Increase – 2.08%

Students Experiment With Success at Ostrander's Science Fair

At Ostrander Elementary School (OES), students begin asking about the Science Fair from day one, according to Grade 4 Science teacher Sara Bender. Students in Grades 4, 5, and 6 participate in the Science Fair as an extracurricular activity, and some projects are months in the making.

Leading up to the Science Fair, students learn about the scientific method and spend time doing experiments using it, explained Grade 6 Science teacher Alyssa Kelso. "Students also learn about breaking apart what variables are and how to do an experiment," she said.

The Science Fair is an optional activity and does not impact students' grades. The projects are judged, however, and the students receive constructive feedback on their work.

Judges for the event include retired OES Science teachers Elizabeth LaMark and Debbie Reese (who ran the event up until she retired last year). Julie Craner is a parent volunteer who helped start the Science Fair at OES approximately 15 years ago. Three Science teachers from Wallkill Senior High School—Valeria Ramos Avila, Kyle Ferraiolo, and Nicholas Malgieri—also helped judge the presentations.

"The judges do a really nice job of writing comments for the students," said Mrs. Kelso. At the event's end, she explained, students receive sheets with feedback about their projects so that they can make changes if they choose to participate the following year.

Grade 6 students Robin Monson, Lily Watt, and Lucy Kieran took such feedback into account when designing this year's project, which involved running light bulbs with citrus fruit. "Last year we didn't do anything with independent variables, so that was something we wanted to add when doing our project this year," explained Robin. Lucy added that doing more research before the experiment is also something they learned from participating last year.

The day of the Science Fair each grade visits the gymnasium, where the exhibits are displayed. Family and friends are invited to attend the fair in the evening. All students who participate receive a certificate and a medal and those students that go above and beyond expectations receive an Honors certificate.

To Principal Alyssa Greany, the Science Fair is one of the highlights of the school calendar. "We are very proud of this wonderful event," she said. "The experiments and displays are really impressive, and I learn something new every year."



2025-2026 Proposed Budget

Tax Levy Limit Calculation 2025-2026

Prior Year Tax Levy	\$47,850,000	
Tax Base Growth	x 1.0084	
PILOT	+ \$9,105	
BOCES Exemption	- \$119,731	
Capital Exemption	- \$666,960	
Adjusted Prior Year Tax Levy	= \$47,474,354	
	x 1.0200	← Allowable Growth Factor
PILOT	- \$9,207	
Tax Levy Limit Prior To Exemptions	\$48,414,554	← Voter Threshold
BOCES Exemption	+ \$215,469	} Estimated
Capital Exemption	+ \$667,811	
TRS Exemption	+0	
ERS Exemption	+0	
Maximum Allowable Tax Levy	= \$49,297,834	← *Maximum Allowable Tax Levy

**The District's is proposing a tax levy of \$48,802,215 which is \$495,619 below the tax levy limit*

Three Component Budget

Administrative Component: \$9,348,371

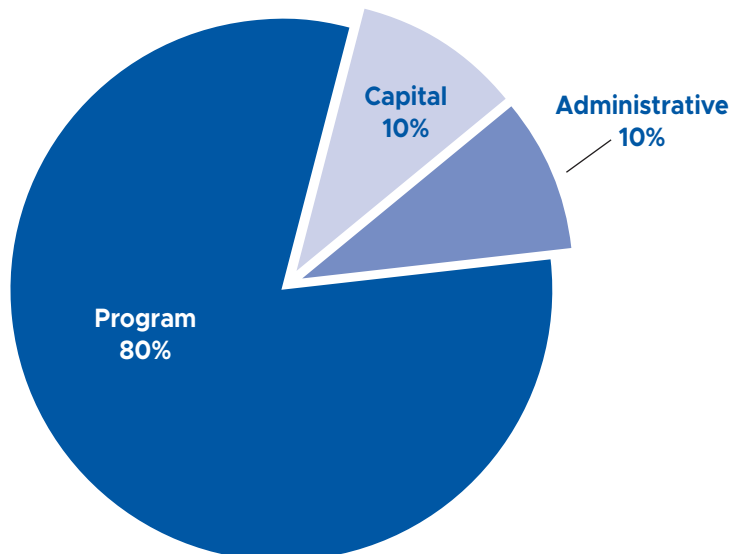
▶ Central Administration, Building Supervision, BOCES (partial)

Program Component: \$74,533,643

▶ Instructional Areas, Transportation, Extracurricular Activities

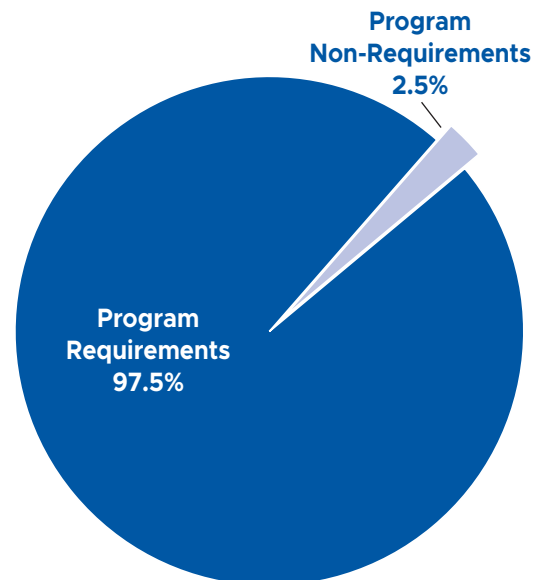
Capital Component: \$9,389,581

▶ Operations and Maintenance, Debt Service



Program Budget: Required vs. Non-Required

As the chart indicates, 97.5% of the program budget is devoted to New York State Education Department required programs.



2025-2026 Proposed Budget

Wallkill 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	\$89,466,000	\$93,271,595	\$92,319,380
Increase/Decrease for the 2025-26 School Year		\$3,805,595	\$2,853,380
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		4.25%	3.19%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.95%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$47,850,000	\$48,802,215	
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)	\$47,850,000	\$48,802,215	\$47,850,000
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$786,691	\$883,280	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$47,325,964	\$48,414,554	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D)	\$47,063,309	\$47,918,935	
I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$262,655	\$495,619	
Administrative Component	\$8,640,868	\$9,348,371	\$8,830,378
Program Component	\$72,543,422	\$74,533,643	\$74,159,421
Capital Component	\$8,281,710	\$9,389,581	\$9,329,581

* 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.

Elimination of: Nine (9) elementary teaching positions, the UPK program, and all equipment purchases (except technology equipment for instructional purposes and equipment for health and safety).

Total: \$952,215

**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

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2025-26 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$540.10
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¹ The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2025-26 by the qualified voters of the Wallkill Central School District, Ulster/Orange Counties, New York, will be held at the High School, Leptondale and Plattekill schools in said district on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 between the hours of 12:00 pm and 9:00 pm, prevailing time in the High School, Leptondale and Plattekill schools, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine. Information about requesting an absentee ballot or early mail voter ballot, can be found on the District's website or by contacting the District Clerk at 845-895-7101.

**ANNUAL BUDGET
VOTE
& Election of Trustees**

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025

12 p.m. to 9 p.m.

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Programs Offered to Students in the Walkkill Central School District

LEPTONDALE, CLARE F. OSTRANDER, AND PLATTEKILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- ▶ Full-day Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) – 84 students
- ▶ Math instruction includes the use of technology and manipulatives for hands-on learning
- ▶ Arts and Environmental Education
- ▶ Active parent organizations
- ▶ Character Education programs
- ▶ After-school programs and events
- ▶ Specialized multi-sensory instruction (Orton-Gillingham and Wilson Learning programs) for early reading intervention
- ▶ Active Learning Labs and iPad carts
- ▶ SMART Boards in K-6 classrooms
- ▶ 1:1 student computers in Grades K-6
- ▶ D.A.R.E. program
- ▶ Family Nights for Math, Literacy, STEM, and the Arts
- ▶ Grade 6 Olympics
- ▶ Enrichment programs
- ▶ Author's Day
- ▶ Choral, band, and string programs
- ▶ Academic Intervention Services
- ▶ Talented and Gifted programs
- ▶ Climbing walls: leadership and trust building
- ▶ Ashokan Field Campus
- ▶ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- ▶ Inclusion programs for special education students
- ▶ Programs that celebrate diversity
- ▶ Safety and wellness programs
- ▶ Fire safety education
- ▶ Field days
- ▶ Project-based learning with makerspaces
- ▶ School newsroom studios
- ▶ Parent forums and workshops
- ▶ STEM lessons
- ▶ Coding instruction
- ▶ Too Good for Drugs program
- ▶ Before and after-school academic support programs
- ▶ Summer Learning Academy

JOHN G. BORDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL

- ▶ SMART Boards in ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies classes
- ▶ 1:1 Chromebooks for students
- ▶ Instructional teams
- ▶ Interdisciplinary curriculum
- ▶ Enrichment activities

- ▶ Field trip experiences
- ▶ Inclusion programs for special education students
- ▶ A wide variety of extracurricular activities
- ▶ A broad intramural and interscholastic athletic program that meets the needs of all students
- ▶ Character Education program
- ▶ Active Learning Lab
- ▶ After-school academic support programs
- ▶ Active parent organizations and community involvement
- ▶ Academic Intervention Services
- ▶ Accelerated courses
- ▶ Choral, band, and string programs
- ▶ Talented and Gifted programs
- ▶ Author's Day
- ▶ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- ▶ Parent forums and workshops
- ▶ Career Day
- ▶ Family Coding Night
- ▶ Programs that celebrate diversity
- ▶ Summer Learning Academy

WALLKILL SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

- ▶ Extensive Advanced Placement/college course offerings
- ▶ College offerings in pre-engineering through Project Lead the Way
- ▶ Annual scholarship attainment of over \$4 million
- ▶ Career and Technical Education provided through the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)
- ▶ A wide variety of extracurricular activities
- ▶ A broad intramural and interscholastic athletic program that meets the needs of all students
- ▶ An award-winning vocal and instrumental music program
- ▶ A diverse offering of clubs, organizations, and groups to benefit the ever-changing needs of our students
- ▶ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- ▶ Author's Day
- ▶ SAT prep course
- ▶ Summer school
- ▶ After-school academic support programs
- ▶ Academy Model
- ▶ College and Career Fair
- ▶ Instant college admissions program
- ▶ Peer tutoring
- ▶ VEX Robotics team
- ▶ 1:1 Chromebooks for students
- ▶ Inclusion programs for special education students
- ▶ Programs that celebrate diversity

2025-2026 Proposed Budget

Candidates for the Board of Education

The four (4) candidates below (shown in ballot order) are seeking election to the Board of Education. There are three (3) vacancies for full terms of three (3) years. The three (3) candidates receiving the highest number of votes will earn the three (3) available full-term seats and serve from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2028.

The Wallkill Central School District's practice has been to annually afford each candidate filing a petition an opportunity to present a bio about themselves, including reasons why they are seeking office. The views expressed by these candidates should not be construed in any way as being endorsed or promoted by the Wallkill Central School District.

Christopher Olson

Hello, my name is Chris Olson, and I'm excited to announce my candidacy for the Wallkill Central School District School Board of Education. Having lived in Wallkill for over 30 years and as a proud graduate of the district, I deeply value the commitment our schools have to their students. With two young children in the district and a spouse who is an educator in a neighboring district, I'm more invested than ever in the future of our schools.

My professional background has equipped me with strong skills in strategic planning, budget management, and relationship building that I believe will bring value to both the school board and the community.

As a local taxpayer, I understand the need for fiscal responsibility. I am committed to ensuring the board balances the district's needs with the financial realities of our residents, especially during challenging economic times. Transparency, fiscal responsibility, and open communication will be my top priorities.

I believe in fostering a collaborative environment where students, parents, educators, and the community work together to support academic success, emotional well-being, and future opportunities for all.

I'm excited for the opportunity to serve and to contribute to the future success of our students.

Dustin Palen

My name is Dustin Palen, and I am seeking re-election to the Board of Education. I have served nine years on the Board on the Health and Safety, Buildings and Grounds, Budget and Policy Committees. I believe all students deserve the best education in a safe environment while being conscientious of costs to taxpayers. When elected, I supported establishing a program placing a police officer in our District's schools; I am pleased to say this program is still in place.

I believe the administration and Board, along with a supportive "Panther Strong" community work together

to keep our students and staff safe; our priority of putting students first has never wavered and I would like to continue being a part of this collaboration.

I am a lifetime resident of the District, 1993 alumni and am committed to this community I call "home." I am proud to share that both my wife and daughter are Wallkill graduates and educators at Ostrander Elementary and my son has completed his third year of College at St. Thomas Aquinas. I am a captain with the Orange County Sheriff's Office, have coached Wallkill Youth Football and am a 28-year member of the Modena Fire Department.

Thank you for your support.

David Bartolone

My name is David Bartolone, and I am seeking re-election to the Wallkill Central School District Board of Education. I have been a proud resident of the district for the past 20 years, where I live with my wife Brea and our three children.

Serving as a current Board of Education member, I have made it my mission to represent our students, parents, and educators with honesty, integrity, and dedication. I am committed to continuing this work by fostering a safe and healthy learning environment for all students and staff.

I will continue to collaborate closely and effectively with WCSD staff to build strong, inclusive educational programs that meet the diverse needs of our students. I am also passionate about supporting Special Education initiatives and will keep working with the Special Education Committee to ensure students have access to the latest technology and the most up-to-date, impactful curriculum.

It would be an honor to continue serving the Wallkill Central School District. Thank you for your support so I may continue bringing fresh ideas, vision, and unwavering dedication to our schools and community.

See fourth candidate on next page

2025-2026 Proposed Budget

James Holmes

My name is James Holmes, a retired New York City police officer with three children in the Wallkill Central School District. One of my children benefits from an Individualized Education Program. This experience has shown me the importance of Special Education and the role it plays in a student’s successful school experience.

My goal is to work with fellow board members and parents to ensure that Special Education continues to receive the resources needed to empower students in the school system. I pledge to listen to both parents and teachers to make informed decisions.

One of my hobbies is screenwriting, and I believe art is important. Another goal of mine is to help bring attention to clubs like drama, orchestra, and chorus. The district has many talented kids who deserve attention, and I vow to be an ally to these clubs.

During COVID-19, the school district needed substitute teachers. I proudly served the district as a substitute, working in all three elementary schools. I was fortunate to witness how caring the administration and teachers are towards the students. If elected, it will be an honor to help facilitate what these administrators and teachers need.

2025-2026 Proposed Budget	
Total Proposed Budget Amount.....	\$93,271,595
Increase from the 2024-25	
School Year.....	\$3,805,595
Percentage of Increase	4.25%

2025-2026 District Revenue	
Revenue Source	Amount Received
Estimated State Aid	\$39,703,380**
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$1,500,000
Appropriated Reserves	\$2,116,000
Other Sources	\$1,150,000
Tax Levy	\$48,802,215
Total Revenue	\$93,271,595
Tax Levy Increase	1.99%*

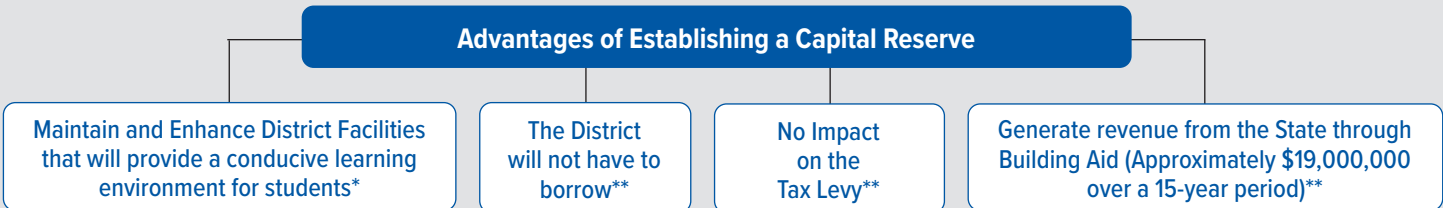
** Below the tax levy limit
 ** This includes new projected building aid for the current capital project*

PROPOSITION 2: Seeking Approval to Establish a Capital Reserve Fund

Purpose of the Capital Reserve: If approved by the voters, the capital reserve would assist the District to complete future capital repairs/improvements to the facilities while limiting the amount having to borrow.

- ▶ The reserve will help fund the installation of air conditioning in all classrooms.
- ▶ The District would use the 5-year Building Condition Survey to assist in identifying potential capital repairs/improvements to District facilities in addition to any other repairs/improvements that may be identified through general maintenance evaluations of the facilities.

Terms of the Capital Reserve: The terms of the capital reserve would be a 15-year term with a funding limit of up to \$20,000,000. If the capital reserve is approved, any funds that are to be expended from the reserve must be approved by the voters. The reserve would be funded with a portion of unexpended monies and other such available funds at the end of each fiscal year for up to 15 years.



* Will help fund the installation of air conditioning in all classrooms ** For capital project costs up to \$20,000,000



Now Accepting Applications for Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program!

THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL BUDGET, which is being proposed to Wallkill residents on May 20, 2025, will include the current Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) program available to four (4) years olds who reside in the District. The program will include one (1) section at Plattekill and Ostrander Elementary Schools, with a maximum class size of eighteen (18) students per section and forty-eight (48) slots assigned to community-based organizations [Building Blocks (8), and Most Precious Blood (40)].

As a result, there will be eighty-four (84) slots available in the 2025-2026 school year.

Please be advised that our in-house UPK program is contingent upon the passing of the 2025-2026 school budget on Tuesday, May 20, 2025. Please also note that District transportation will not be provided for the program.

Applications for the proposed UPK program can be found at <https://forms.office.com/r/YDYhusegGj>

The District will hold a random lottery to determine enrollment in the proposed UPK program. All eligible applicants will be entered individually into the lottery. The lottery will be held Thursday, June 5, 2025, at 4:00 PM. Access to the lottery will be via the Wallkill Central School District website.

Please note that you will be offered the opportunity to indicate a preferred location on the UPK application. Should your child be selected for the program, the location will be determined by the lottery selection process.

To be eligible for the lottery:

- You must be a resident of the Wallkill Central School District.
- Your child must be four (4) years old on/before December 1, 2025.
- **You must complete and submit the lottery application form to the Wallkill Central School District Office for Educational Services by Friday, May 23, 2025, by 3:00 PM.**

All families will be notified of their child's status on Friday, June 6, 2025. Any student not selected in the lottery for a seat will be placed on a waiting list.

If you have any questions, please contact Anthony White via email at awhite@wallkillcsd.k12.ny.us or phone at 845-895-7103.

Leptondale Students Embark on Reading Challenge

The Grade 6 students at Leptondale Elementary School have accepted the challenge put forth by their teachers to read 600 books by June 1. According to Grade 6 teacher Danielle Croce, the challenge was designed to support one of the professional learning community goals she and her colleagues have for this year: to increase their students' love of reading.

"The idea for the challenge started because we noticed the students weren't really taking advantage of the school library," Ms. Croce explained. Speaking of her own students—as well as the other Grade 6 students participating in the challenge—she said, "There are so many academic goals when it comes to reading; I want to instill a love of reading in our students and teach them how to use their imaginations to enrich their lives."

Should the students meet their reading goal, Principal Scott Brown will host a pizza party for the entire sixth grade. He has also promised to "do something special" for the students to celebrate. While that particular reward has yet to be determined, one idea that has been suggested is to let students "bedazzle" Mr. Brown's bald head with gem stickers.

Students say that they are reading more at home since the challenge started. "Sometimes when I get home from school, I will start reading a book on my own," Grade 6 student Sienna Hernandez shared. Avery DeGroat, another sixth grader, agreed, saying, "I read books when I'm at home to relax."

As of April 10, the sixth graders had read a total of 195 books. After reading each book, students write a review and receive a book icon to add to the tally wall in the Grade 6 hallway. "This is working," asserted Ms. Croce. "I received an email from the library instructional assistant, Mrs. Piaquadio, saying that so many more kids are taking out novels now."



Plattekill’s “One School One Book” Project Promotes the Joy of Reading and Community

TALES OF A MISCHIEVOUS CLASSROOM PET HAD THE PLATTEKILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PES) community talking and reading! One of the school’s goals for this year was to promote the joy of reading and to do this, the entire school community participated in the ‘One School One Book’ reading program during February and March.

At the start of the program, each PES student received a copy of *The World According to Humphrey* to read at home as well as at school. The book, written by Betty G. Birney, tells the story of Humphrey, an adventurous hamster who is a classroom pet. Every weekend, Humphrey gets to go home with a different student.

During February and March, all PES students would read a couple of chapters in school with the teacher as a read-aloud activity, and then read the same chapters at home with a reading partner. The program’s timeline was set to coincide with the PTA’s Pick A Reading

Partner (PARP) Program.

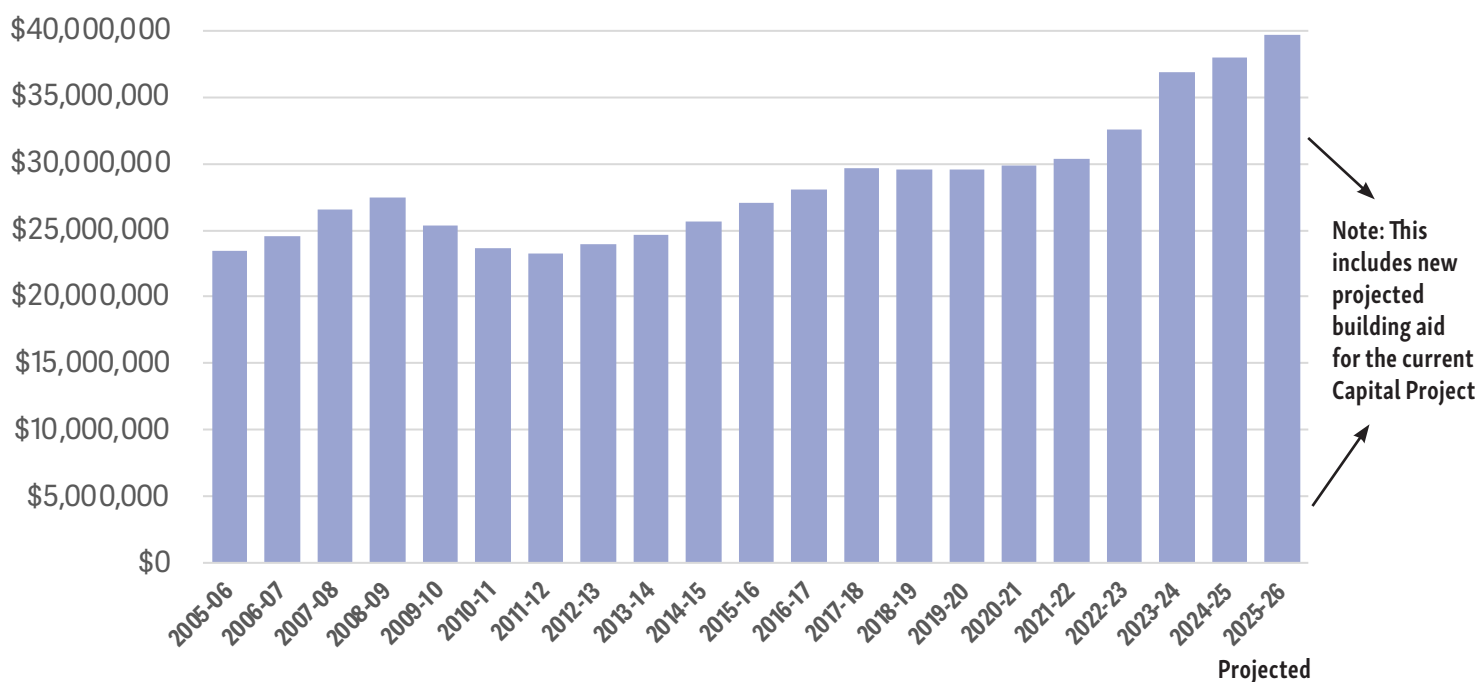
Students enjoyed the experience of reading the same book across all grade levels. “It was fun because everyone gets to enjoy the book, not just a specific class,” said Evelyn Santorelly, Grade 5. Students were also excited to bring the classroom pet home for a visit. “When Humphrey came home with me, we went to my neighbors’ house and took a picture with him and then we took him shopping with us,” said Kindergartener Eleanor McGlynn.



Students and their families celebrated Humphrey Day on the evening of April 3, marking the completion of the One School One Book program.

Student volunteers from the middle school and high school helped out at the event, which featured a hamster-themed obstacle course (with lots of tunnels), a Humphrey Trivia Contest, hamster-inspired crafts, word searches, and many other fun activities connected to the story.

History of State Aid 2005-2025



New Weight Room at Borden Middle School

STUDENTS AT JOHN G. BORDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL are enjoying the new weight room created as part of the voter-approved Capital Project. “Our Physical Education (PE) teachers got right to work redesigning the fitness unit and including experiences in the weight room,” says Middle School Principal Michael Redmond.

The weight room, which was previously part of a locker room, was converted to its current use during the locker room renovations this past summer. Filled with a variety of fitness machines and free weights, the weight room is now used by students as part of their fitness unit in PE. “We want them to be comfortable with the cardio machines so we start with that,” explains PE teacher Kevin Falk. “We then have a day where we go through some very basic dumbbell exercises where we are really just teaching form. We go through how to do a squat and how to do a bench press.”



The students come in with varying levels of experience using this type of equipment. The lessons are an introduction that allows the students to learn to lift weights safely. “They are not maxing out, they are learning how to use the equipment,” says PE teacher LeeAnn Pazoga. She notes that part of the instruction is also about caring for the equipment, including how to set it up and wipe it down after each use.



Some of the Varsity sports teams are also using the equipment while waiting for their gym time or during inclement weather. The plan for next year is to begin the school year with the fitness unit and then revisit the weight room monthly throughout the year to reinforce the techniques and skills learned.

AP Government Students Learn about Civic Engagement Firsthand

On January 16, students in Wallkill Senior High School's AP (Advanced Placement) Government class witnessed Assemblyman Brian Maher being sworn in for his second term representing Assembly District 101.

The ceremony, which was held in the school library, was followed by the Assemblyman's keynote speech. In his remarks, Assemblyman Maher talked about his journey from playing college basketball at Post University to finding his passion for advocacy and public service. He also spoke about his previous position in local government and answered questions from students.

“It was a chance to get up close and personal with the process,” said AP Government teacher Michael LaPolla. “The Assemblyman told his story and talked about his grassroots effort to become mayor of Walden.” Mr. LaPolla went on to explain that the class usually focuses more on big-picture, national government processes, but this event gave students the opportunity to learn about government on the local level as well.



“I learned how time consuming working in government really is,” said Jesse Bello, Grade 12. “He made it personal and explained what happened, how it happened, and also the impact it had on his life and his family and friends.”

Wallkill Central School District Superintendent Kevin Castle spoke to the attendees after the Assemblyman had completed his swearing-in. Mr. Castle talked about his experience working with Assemblyman Maher and said the Assemblyman understood the needs of Wallkill and other school districts, including the importance of proper funding for classes and electives like AP Government.



Students were also inspired by the work Assemblyman Maher is doing. “He mentioned that he wanted to work together with both parties, Republicans and Democrats, which I think is very important for the country,” said Brandon Quinn, Grade 12. “The experience made me want to get more politically informed locally,” said Tyler DePuy, Grade 12.

Expanded Alumni Day Event at High School Showcases Career Pathways

THIS YEAR, THE WALLKILL SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL (WSHS) ALUMNI DAY featured more than 100 alumni returning to the school for an expanded career expo-style event.

Graduates from the 1970s through 2024 came back to WSHS to share their career journeys and to answer questions from the current student body. In the past Alumni Day had only included recent graduates, but this year's expanded format included alumni from dozens of career fields, including Agriculture, Culinary Arts, Visual Arts, Accounting, Business, Engineering, Marketing, Real Estate, Human Resources, Military, Law, Politics, Corrections, Law Enforcement, and Medicine (including physicians, nurses, and mental health providers).

The expo tables were set up in the gymnasium, with similar careers being grouped together and flowing into adjacent fields. "This helped students navigate by having all the health careers grouped together, which led to the physical therapist, which led to the educators, which led to our administrators and so on," explained teacher Shannon LaRocco, who helped organize the event.

The inner section of the gym was filled with numerous tables, with college students studying in a particular field sitting across from Wallkill graduates who were already working in that field. For example, nursing students shared a table with actual nurses. This gave the Wallkill students the opportunity to speak to a current nursing student before talking to an actual nurse.

The revamped Alumni Day was a hit with the attendees. "In previous years, there wasn't as much direction in terms of what to talk about...this year, with everyone set up at tables, alumni seemed more approachable, and you could have individual conversations," said Alex Arenas, Grade 12.

Many students found it enlightening to speak to someone who was already working in a career they were interested in exploring. "Talking to Rachel Simon, an alumna who's an occupational therapist, really opened my eyes to how rewarding this career can be," said Mariah Seely, Grade 10. "Hearing about her experiences inspired me to want to help people in the same way and pursue a career that makes a real difference."

"As a senior who is graduating soon, I found it reassuring to see the huge network of alumni who were successful in their respective fields after their time at Wallkill," said Senior Mayah Simon. "The knowledge that each alumnus shared about their professional career was invaluable and encouraging for many students who shared similar interests. It truly opened my mind to a number of different paths that I could explore after High School."





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www.wallkillcsd.k12.ny.us

Word Problem Wednesdays Work Wonders at Plattekill Elementary School



Word Problem Wednesdays is an innovative initiative aimed at improving math scores on the New York State Math Assessment. Grade 5 students work together in class to solve the weekly problem, with each class submitting a final answer as part of a grade-wide competition. Classes with the most correct answers win prizes. "Word Problem Wednesday helps us understand word problems and helps us get better with math, but it is also fun!" said Grade 5 student Elliana Curnan.

"Learning at...Wallkill" is an official publication of the Wallkill Central School District.

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- Ms. Tara Rounds, *Assistant Superintendent for Special Education & Intervention Services*

Important Telephone Numbers to Know

- Leptondale Elementary School.....845-895-7200
- Clare F. Ostrander Elementary School....845-895-7225
- Plattekill Elementary School.....845-895-7250
- John G. Borden Middle School845-895-7175
- Wallkill Senior High School.....845-895-7150