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SPECIAL BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROJECT ISSUE • MAY 2025

Dear NSCSD Community,

As we approach the 2025-2026 school year, we are excited to share our proposed budget, which, once again, remains within the New York State tax levy cap. Our goal is to provide every student with the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

This newsletter also highlights the Capital Project Proposition—Proposition 2 on your ballot—which addresses infrastructure improvements, safety upgrades, and enhancements to the student experience. Details can be found on pages 4-6.

The 2025-2026 budget focuses on four key areas:

- Literacy
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- Student Leadership & Independence
- District Operations & Oversight

To improve literacy, we've adopted two new curriculum systems: Wit & Wisdom for elementary and Arts & Letters for middle school. These resources will help students develop essential skills in reading, writing, critical thinking, and communication. The budget also invests in supplies, professional development, and the hiring of an MTSS Coordinator to support implementation of these programs.

The MTSS framework ensures targeted support for students at various levels of need. This role is funded by discontinuing the FLES (Foreign Language in Elementary School) program.

In addition to classroom learning, this budget supports a range of enrichment programs. From athletics to Model UN, students can develop leadership skills in real-world settings.

This year, we welcomed a Director of Facilities and a Director of Technology, replacing contractors with internal staff. This change has allowed us to make strategic investments, including the proposed addition of an Assistant Principal for the Middle School to help lead workload growth and focus on mental health support, middle school branding, and the implementation and coordination of restorative practices. This also gives our MS/HS Principal more time to lead the implementation of the new Arts & Letters literacy curriculum, and our current Assistant Principal more time for MTSS leadership throughout the MS/HS.

We appreciate your ongoing support of the North Salem schools. We believe these investments will position our students for success.

For more details on the proposed budget and Capital Project, please visit www.northsalemsschools.org.

Thank you for being a vital part of our community.

Sincerely, *Kurt Guldán*, President, Board of Education



Rendering of the relocated front entrance of the MS/HS part of the proposed capital project, with new security vestibule showing the enclosed second floor balcony to be used for workspace and conference rooms. Full details pages 4-6.

Budget Highlights

Proposed 2025-2026 Budget:
\$52,377,964

2024-25 Adopted Budget:
\$50,536,389

Tax levy increase 2.9%
remains under state tax levy cap

Capital Project at-a-Glance

**MSHS Infrastructure
& Student Learning:**
\$13,299,819

**PQ Infrastructure &
Student Learning:**
\$9,457,857

Bus Garage Upgrades:
\$1,758,952

Total Proposed Cost:
\$24,516,628

Proposed financing period:
16 years

VOTE!

PROPOSITION 1
2025-2026 School Budget

PROPOSITION 2
Investing in Our Future
Capital Project

SCHOOL TRUSTEE ELECTION
TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025

**7 am – 9 pm • Pequenenack
Elementary School gym**

Budget Public Hearing: May 7

North Salem Central School District 2025-2026 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	\$ 50,536,389	\$52,377,964	\$51,120,500
Increase/Decrease for the 2025-26 School Year		\$1,841,575	\$584,111
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		3.64%	1.16%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.95%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$43,341,004	\$44,598,468	
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)	\$43,341,004	\$44,598,468	\$43,341,004
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$1,862,100	\$2,005,065	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$41,478,904	\$42,593,403	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$41,478,904	\$42,593,403	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval — See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$5,137,836	\$5,849,678	\$5,618,447
Program Component	\$38,436,434	\$38,920,795	\$37,968,875
Capital Component	\$6,962,119	\$7,607,491	\$7,533,178

* 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.
If the proposed budget is not approved by voters, the contingent budget would not have funding for equipment purchases, certain repairs and community use of the facilities unless the district expenses are fully reimbursed. If necessary, the actual budget reductions would be made by the Administration and the Board of Education pursuant to Education Law.

** List Separate Proposition that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation propositions is not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements.)

Description	Amount
Proposition No. 2: RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the North Salem Central School District, is hereby authorized to construct improvements and additions to and reconstruction of School District buildings and facilities, including original furnishings, machinery, equipment, apparatus, appurtenances, and site and incidental improvements and expenses in connection therewith, at a maximum estimated cost of \$24,516,628, with \$105,018 Capital Reserve Fund (2015) monies (plus remaining interest thereon) to be expended therefor, and that the remaining \$24,411,610 of said amount, or so much thereof as may be necessary (after accounting for remaining 2015 Capital Reserve Fund interest), 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 shall be issued.	\$24,516,628

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2025-26 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$1510

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2025-26 by the qualified voters of the North Salem Central School District, Westchester County, New York, will be held at Pequenaconck Elementary School Gym in said district on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 between the hours of 7:00 am and 9:00pm, prevailing time 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. Estimate is based on the Town of North Salem.

5-Year Perspective of Budget Increases

2021-22	2.11%
2022-23	4.24%
2023-24	3.07%
2024-25	2.44%
2025-26	3.64%
Average:	3.10%

5-Year Perspective of Tax Levy Trends

2021-22	1.26%
2022-23	2.07%
2023-24	2.57%
2024-25	2.90%
2025-26	2.90%
Average:	2.34%

Your Investment Paying Off

North Salem by the Numbers:

- **94%** of the class of 2024 attend college
- **100%** of 2024 graduates earned Regents diplomas
- **32%** of 2024 graduates earned Regents diplomas with honors
- **275** Advanced Placement exams were administered in May 2024
- **3** National Merit Scholarship winners
- **4** Seal of Biliteracy scholars
- **84** NYS Seal of Civic Readiness scholars
- **46** seniors earned AP Scholar Awards
- Varsity boys soccer won the Division C State Championship
- Cross country and bowling athletes competed at state championships



- **4** League championship athletic teams
- **68%** participation rate in the athletic program
- **14** New York State Public High School Athletic Association scholar-athlete teams, maintaining a cumulative average of 90% or better
- **67%** participation rate in co-curricular special programs
- **56%** of students volunteered 30 or more hours of community service, using their problem-solving skills to give back to their community.
- Accredited by the University of the State of New York and by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. A "Schools to Watch" designee.

Budget Goals:

Our administrative team, in collaboration with faculty, staff, and the broader community, has prioritized three key goals to enhance teaching and learning.

Goal 1: Strengthening Student Literacy

- Providing high-quality instruction aligned with the Science of Reading. The Wit & Wisdom program is now fully implemented alongside Foundations (K-3) and Heggerty (K-1). Arts & Letters, an interdisciplinary curriculum that builds upon Wit & Wisdom, will be implemented next year. By next year, all students in grades K-6 will be learning with Science of Reading-aligned curricula, and we will continue piloting Arts and Letters in grades 7-8.

Goal 2: Data-Driven Student Support (MTSS)

- To better support student progress, we are expanding our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Our new data dashboard, EduClimber, will consolidate academic, behavioral, and attendance data, allowing us to analyze student growth more effectively and provide targeted support to help students meet grade-level benchmarks.

Goal 3: Empowering Student Independence and Leadership

- Aligned with our North Salem Portrait of a Graduate, we are dedicated to fostering problem-solving, critical thinking, and independent learning. Students engage in civic action, internships through O.P.T.I.O.N.S., and rigorous interdisciplinary learning. They also develop self-regulation and independent thinking through Habits of Mind and Visible Thinking strategies.

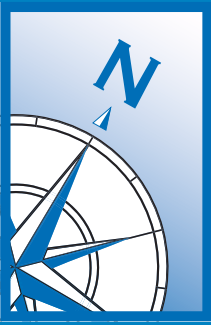
Goal 4: Enhancing District Operations & Oversight

- Savings realized by shifting some administrative roles releases funds for a second assistant principal at the MS/HS, who will be overseeing grade 6-8 students.



- We continue to collaborate with PNW BOCES to explore the role of AI in enhancing critical and creative thinking.
- Our students continue to develop critical and creative thinking skills, which are central to our district's mission, through day-to-day learning that includes developing their computational thinking skills across all academic disciplines. We are also focused on growing our students' skills and dispositions through Habits of Mind and Visible Thinking Routines. These are taught across all grades and departments.
- At PQ, we are expanding on our offerings for students and nearly doubling our budget for student activities in the 2024-2025 school year. The district is preparing for a later school start time to accommodate families and clubs meeting in the morning.
- We are continuing to offer a STEAM course for all students at PQ. This shift ensures equity and access for all students and enhances the existing offerings. The STEAM course will also incorporate agricultural projects to enhance the existing work being done with the PQ chickens and the garden.





Proposition #2

NORTH SALEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT Proposes Capital Improvement Project

To address

Health & Safety • Infrastructure • Student Experience

*Protecting Our Investment ... Enhancing Learning
Providing a Safe and Healthy Learning Environment ...*

ON TUESDAY, MAY 20, the North Salem Central School District community will vote on a \$24.51 million capital project bond to provide students with schools built to today's safety standards, equipped for today's learning.

If approved, the bond would fund capital projects across both school buildings, focusing on infrastructure, health and safety, and instructional facilities, as well as essential updates to the bus garage.

This proposal comes after more than a year of review by licensed architects, engineers, and site planners. The professional team was overseen by a Facilities Committee composed of administrators, instructors, board members and community members. This group met regularly and toured each building to review the 300 areas of need identified in the 2023 state-mandated Building Condition Survey.

The survey revealed aging infrastructure, much of which dates to the original

construction of the buildings and is now beyond its useful life. There have been no significant upgrades or improvements to the North Salem school buildings since 2012.

Students, staff, parents, and community members helped to establish priorities for the proposed projects, all while keeping the needs of taxpayers in mind.

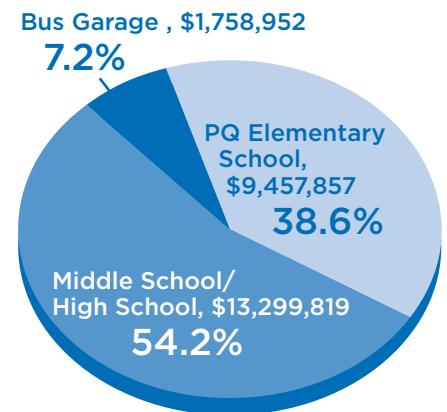
The committee identified repairs and improvements that could be covered under the operating budget and evaluated other needs using the following guiding principles:

- Maintaining infrastructure integrity: Protecting the community's investment in the schools
- Enhancing the student experience: Creating a healthy and relevant learning environment
- Ensuring fiscal responsibility: Making thoughtful financial decisions for the benefit of all stakeholders

The North Salem Central School District Board of Education unanimously approved the proposal at its February 26 meeting.

Investments in program improvements at the middle/high school and the bus garage will benefit all district students.

Proposed Spending by Building



SCOPE OF WORK

While most of the proposed expenditure addresses aging equipment and facilities that have reached the end of their useful life, this work will not only improve the physical infrastructure but also foster a more effective, healthy teaching and learning environment.

Engaging, active and flexible learning spaces are at the heart of 21st century teaching and learning. This proposed capital project seeks to reimagine some instructional space in both schools to meet those needs.

Adaptability and collaboration are key components of today's learning

experience. By reimagining common instructional spaces and making use of underutilized areas such as the middle school quads, the capital project aims to better meet the demands of modern education, conducive to diverse teaching methods and student engagement.

Middle School/High School

The bulk of the proposed work addresses repairs and replacement of infrastructure at the MS/HS that has reached the end of its useful life, and the upgrades will improve air quality as well as result in energy efficiencies. The project will add new electrical service to support new devices and new technology.

Enhancements to the student learning experience are also proposed, notably in the library, which will be redesigned to create collaborative learning opportunities that are so much a part of 21st century learning.

The proposal includes making better use of existing open and underutilized areas, such as the middle school quads and the area outside the auditorium. These will be reimagined as communal gathering spaces for students. An underutilized balcony area upstairs from the lobby will be enclosed for conference and office spaces.

A new façade to the middle/high school's main entrance will make the building more inviting and allow greater space for safely processing visitors to the school.

Specifically, the proposal includes:

- Driveway and parking lot upgrades with additional parking and new traffic flow to enhance safety for our student drivers: \$2,925,000
- Roofing: 35% of the roof will be replaced, another 33% will be repaired: \$3,668,600
- Electrical upgrades: Existing equipment dates to 1967 when the building was constructed, and replacement parts are proving challenging to find: \$1,322,019
- Upgrade to classroom air ventilators to improve air quality: \$2,709,200
- Library renovation, middle school quads renovation, auditorium lobby and balcony renovation to take advantage of underutilized spaces and create 21st century learning environments: \$2,675,000

Total: \$13,299,819



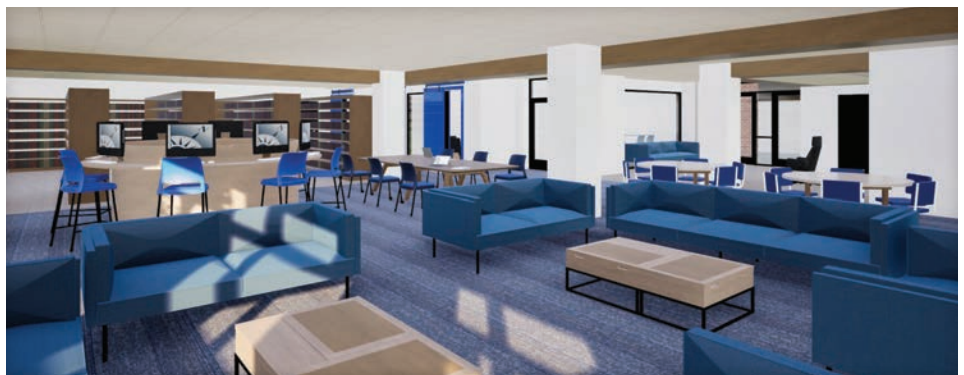
The new entrance will open into a redesigned lobby area outside the auditorium.



The redesigned lobby will offer seating and communal areas for students.



Upstairs, the underutilized balcony space above the MS/HS lobby will be enclosed and used for meeting and conference space.



The MSHS library renovation will provide students with flexible seating options alongside quiet meeting and study spaces to create collaborative learning zones.

Pequenakonck Elementary School

At PQ, infrastructure upgrades also account for the bulk of the proposed investment, realizing enhanced air quality and improved energy efficiencies. A reimagined library will provide flexible learning spaces, allowing for collaborative study.

- Repair driveway and curbing, fix exterior drainage piping and replace culverts: \$2,097,201
- Replace 17% of the roof and repair another 23%: \$1,224,470
- Address building envelope issues, such as water infiltration, and enhance energy efficiencies; replace classroom windows many of which date to the original construction of the school in 1967: \$1,187,316
- Replace end-of-life heating and ventilation equipment to improve air quality: \$2,948,870
- Redesign library and multi-purpose room for collaborative, 21st century learning: \$2,000,000

Total PQ: \$9,457,857



The multipurpose room will be reimagined with an elevated platform, ideal for presentations, small groups, and community meetings.



Libraries today are technology hubs, exploration zones, and cozy reading spaces. The proposed redesign will foster collaborative and independent learning from Pre-K to grade 5.



Bus Garage

Unlike most other districts, North Salem owns and operates its own transportation vehicles: 14 school buses and 18 vans, including 3 wheelchair vans. These require regular maintenance to ensure their safe operation.

Replacement of the driveway entry, curbs, parking and paving is necessary as well as equipment upgrades.

- Pavement replacement and parking improvements: \$1,259,375
- Replacement of the aging bus lift, which will accommodate electric buses in anticipation of a future state mandate for electrification of bus fleets: \$201,319
- A new oil separator for floor drains to mitigate contamination: \$20,474
- Update to fueling stations: \$277,784

Total Bus Garage: \$1,758,952

For more information and full details of Proposition 2 please visit the [Capital Project 2025](#) page on the district website or scan here



FAQs About the Budget

Q. How is the Board able to present a budget at the New York State tax levy cap?

A. The Board and administration have made a concerted effort over the past several years to limit expenses and seek cost savings where possible. This careful planning has allowed the Board to present a budget that does not exceed New York State's maximum allowable tax levy cap. Factors instrumental in holding expenses to a minimum include savings from retirements, additional state aid and growing revenue from the STEP program, which provides special education services to out of district students enrolled at NSCSD.

Q. What does the proposed tax levy increase of 2.90% mean for my taxes?

A. An overall tax levy increase of 2.90% means that we will collect \$1,257,464 more from the whole district than was collected last year. It does not mean your tax bill will increase by 2.90% in 2025-2026. How the tax levy affects the amount of your tax is a product of many factors, including your town's portion of the tax levy, the equalization rates, changes in assessments to your property and others', changes in property tax exemptions within your town, tax certioraris and small claim assessment reviews. Your tax assessor is the professional best able to explain the impact on your tax bill. These officials have information that is not available to the NSCSD. Nevertheless, our commitment to meeting the tax levy cap illustrates our desire to exert as little upward pressure on your tax bill as possible. Please remember that tax rates are not the same as tax bills and are often poor barometers of the actual tax due. Put another way, the only item controlled by the district is the total amount of taxes we seek from the community.

Q. What happens if the community does not approve the proposed budget on May 20?

A. If the proposed budget is defeated on May 20, New York State law allows the district to present the same budget or a revised budget for one more vote, or go directly to a contingency budget. If a second proposed budget is defeated, the district must adopt a contingency budget, which would limit the tax levy to that of the current school year. A contingency budget would not have funding for equipment purchases, certain repairs and community use of the facilities unless the district expenses are fully reimbursed. Areas of the budget such as class size, safety personnel, athletics and other important extracurricular activities would be most vulnerable to cuts or elimination. If necessary, the actual budget reductions would be made by administration and the Board of Education pursuant to Education Law.

Q. What were the Board's priorities in developing the proposed budget for 2025-2026?

A. When preparing the spending plan for 2025-2026, the Board had several priorities guiding the planning process, including maintaining low class size, mental health and social well-being, and safety, security and facilities planning.

FAQs about the Capital Project

Q. Why is this investment in the schools necessary?

A. There are several good reasons to invest in school district facilities, resulting in both direct and indirect positive impacts. Building upgrades realize operational efficiencies and financial savings, and better teaching conditions are good for teacher retention. High quality school district amenities result in increased property values.

Just like our homes, school buildings must be maintained to ensure a safe environment and to protect our investment.

Much of the proposed project addresses roof replacement and repair, and electrical and air quality upgrades.

Teaching and learning styles have changed dramatically in recent years with a focus on collaborative, student-centered learning. That is why we are proposing the reimagined multi-purpose library spaces in both school buildings.

Q. Hasn't the District been maintaining the buildings all along?

A. The District conducts ongoing, routine maintenance work every year. While much of the work highlighted in the Building Conditions Survey has been completed as part of the operating budget, the proposed work includes medium-to large-scale projects that fall outside the definition of routine maintenance. Replacing big-ticket items that are approaching the end of their useful lives through a bond will avoid costly, emergency action in the future, achieve economies-of-scale, and minimize disruption to the students.

Q: Can't the District just pay for the work on this project through its regular budget?

A. It benefits taxpayers to do this type of work through a capital project, rather than the annual budget. This way costs will be spread over a longer period of time (16 years) and therefore shared by more residents living in the community and using the schools. Like a home mortgage, this spreads the payment out over the useful life of the improvements and minimizes the impact on the taxpayer.

Q: How will this impact my taxes?

A. The board proposes to draw the remaining funds of \$105,018 from the existing Capital Reserve Fund to help offset costs of this project.

For residents of the Town of North Salem, the anticipated cost of this Capital Project for a home assessed at \$750,000 would be \$641 a year (with the Basic STAR exemption).

For those who live in Carmel, Somers and Southeast, please visit the Capital Project 2025 page on the website to use a calculator to determine the estimated tax impact on your property. to determine the estimated tax impact on your property.

Q: What is the timeline of the proposed capital project?

A. Should the community approve Proposition 2. in May, the state approval process will proceed immediately, and we anticipate construction to begin in the summer of 2026 and be completed in the 2027-2028 school year. Work would be scheduled to minimize disruption to our students and learning.



NORTH SALEM
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
230 June Road, North Salem, NY 10560

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Visit our web site: www.northsalemschools.org

VOTE ON THE School Budget, Trustee Election and Capital Project TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025 7 a.m. – 9 p.m.

in the Pequenakonck Elementary School gym.

Voter Qualifications

An individual must:

- Be a U.S. citizen, 18 years of age by May 20.
- Have been a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to May 20.
- Not be in jail or on parole for a felony conviction.
- Not claim the right to vote elsewhere.
- Be registered with either the school district's Board of Registration or with your appropriate county Board of Elections. If you previously registered to vote but have not voted in either a school district or general election in the last four years you must register to vote.

You may register at the office of the District Clerk in the district administration office, 230 June Road, during the office hours of 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. You may also contact the District Clerk to schedule an appointment. The last day to register to vote is Thursday, May 15.

School Trustee Election

There are a total of three trustee seats to be filled for a three-year term ending June 30, 2028.

Requesting Absentee Ballots

The application for an absentee/early vote ballot may be obtained on the district website under "Board of Education," or by calling the District Clerk at 914-669-5414, ext. 1011.

The completed application must be received by the District Clerk at least seven days prior to the vote if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter. Applications received after May 17 may not be mailed but they may be picked up at the District Clerk's office until May 19.

The District Clerk must receive all ballots by 5 p.m. on May 20.



Additional Information

For additional information, please contact the District Clerk at 914-669-5414, ext. 1011.

Strong Schools Create Strong Communities
and have a lasting impact on property values.

