

NYMILLS

MAY 2025

UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER



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newyorkmills.org

Investing In Our Future: A Message from Your Superintendent

Dear New York Mills UFSD Families and Community Members,

As your Superintendent of Schools, I am pleased to share with you our annual budget newsletter, an important document outlining our commitment to providing a high-quality education for every student in our District. The 2025-2026 school year's budget reflects our dedication to maintaining the strong educational programming that makes our school a source of pride for our community, while also exercising the utmost fiscal responsibility.

Our school is a vibrant center of learning, where we nurture the intellectual, social and emotional growth of our students. We offer a comprehensive curriculum that includes rigorous academic courses, enriching arts and music programs, STEM initiatives and interscholastic athletic opportunities. Our dedicated teachers and staff are committed to fostering a supportive and engaging learning environment, ensuring that every student has the tools they need to succeed.

After extensive planning, the Board of Education unanimously adopted the 2025-2026 New York Mills Union Free School District budget at the March 18, 2025 meeting. The proposed 2025-2026 school budget is \$17,575,535 with a 1.9% increase to the tax levy. This spending plan results in a levy below the District maximum levy limit while allowing us to support educational programming and services. Our ability to propose a consistent and balanced budget with a levy under the allowable limit is attributed to sound fiscal oversight, strategic planning and the hard work of the Board of Education and the District during the budget development process.

The budget also includes a \$100,000 capital outlay project with safety and security upgrades to our facilities, including sidewalk repairs and other building infrastructure. In addition, the budget includes the purchase of a new bus which will allow the District to continue with its normal bus replacement schedule, designed to support our transportation services. As a District, we make it a priority to protect the community's investments, and we will continue to identify and prioritize items that address the needs of the District as it relates to facilities, infrastructure, programming and services.

The New York Mills Union Free School District is committed to providing our families with the necessary budget information to make an informed decision on Tuesday, May 20, 2025. Please review the budget information in this newsletter.

We invite all residents to attend the public hearing in the New York Mills Union Free High School library on Tuesday, May 6, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

The budget vote will be held at Beekman Gymnasium on Tuesday, May 20, 2025. The polls will be open from 12:00-8:00 p.m. The May 20th vote also includes the election of one vacancy of the New York Mills Board of Education.

This budget represents a sound investment in the future of our students and our community. Your continued support is essential to the success of our school. We rely on your partnership to ensure that our students have the high-quality education they deserve and the opportunities they need to thrive.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support.

Sincerely,

Michele D. LaGase
Superintendent of Schools

IN THIS ISSUE

**2025-2026
SCHOOL BUDGET
INFORMATION**

**OPTIMIST STUDENTS
OF THE MONTH**

**STUDENTS PERFORM AT
OCMEA ALL-COUNTY**

Don't have internet access?

Join our mailing list for paper updates! To sign up, contact District Clerk Mandy Mroz at mmroz@nymills.org or by calling 315.768.8127 (option #2, option #1).

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING & PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING
TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2025
5:30 P.M., HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY

BUDGET VOTE & BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTION
TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025
NOON - 8:00 P.M., BEEKMAN GYMNASIUM

VOTE

2025-2026 BUDGET INFORMATION

ADMINISTRATIVE COMPONENT

The administrative component consists of overall management activities, including Board of Education, superintendent's office, business office operations such as central data processing, payroll, purchasing, BOCES administrative expenses, insurance, printing, mailing, personnel, legal and auditing services and building administrative costs.

Function or Account	Budget 2024-25	Proposed 2025-26	Increase or (Decrease)
Board of Education	\$31,950	\$21,500	(\$10,450)
Central Administration	\$236,586	\$254,629	\$18,043
Finance	\$213,558	\$233,296	\$19,738
Legal Services	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$-
Personnel	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$-
Records Management	\$6,800	\$7,200	\$400
Public Information	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$-
Other Central Services	\$85,000	\$111,000	\$26,000
Other Special Items	\$204,350	\$216,450	\$12,100
Curr. Dev. & Sup.	\$133,000	\$139,000	\$6,000
Supervision - Regular Sch.	\$296,335	\$310,620	\$14,285
Employee Benefits	\$418,005	\$405,155	(\$12,850)
Total	\$1,750,584	\$1,823,850	\$73,266

Administrative
Component
is 10.38%
of Budget

PROGRAM COMPONENT

The program component consists of funding the instruction of and educational support services for the district's 560 students. Transportation of students, athletics and co-curricular activities are also included in this budget component.

Function or Account	2024-25	2025-26	Increase or (Decrease)
Legal Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Instruction	\$9,350,536	\$9,981,360	\$630,824
Other Dist. Transportation	\$517,055	\$593,415	\$76,360
Garage Building	\$62,450	\$68,600	\$6,150
Employee Benefits	\$2,888,335	\$2,958,634	\$70,299
Other Transfers	\$8,500	\$15,000	\$6,500
Total	\$12,826,876	\$13,617,009	\$790,133

Program
Component
is 77.48%
of Budget

CAPITAL COMPONENT

The capital component consists of maintenance of buildings, upkeep of grounds, and electricity, heat, water and sewer and telephone services. Funds are also included for the lease of school buses, payments on the capital project and for refund of taxes for claims against property assessments.

Function or Account	2024-25	2025-26	Increase or (Decrease)
Operation of Plant	\$451,362	\$502,500	\$51,138
Maintenance of Plant	\$361,290	\$347,600	(\$13,690)
Refund of Taxes	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$ -
Lease of Buses/Purchase	\$152,256	\$179,907	\$27,651
Employee Benefits	\$166,299	\$186,911	\$20,612
Debt Service	\$1,081,608	\$807,758	(\$273,850)
Transfer to Capital	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$ -
Total	\$2,322,815	\$2,134,676	(\$188,139)
Total Budget	\$16,900,275	\$17,575,535	\$675,260

Capital
Component
is 12.15%
of Budget

Total Budget
Increase
4.00%



2025-2026 BUDGET INFORMATION

THIS NOTICE IS MANDATED BY NEW YORK STATE New York Mills Union Free 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	\$16,900,275	\$17,575,535	\$17,235,628
Increase/Decrease for 2025-2026 School Year		\$675,260	\$389,353
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		4.00%	2.30%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.95%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$8,271,515	\$8,428,674	
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)	\$8,271,515	\$8,428,674	\$8,271,515
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$269,885	\$323,499	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$8,001,630	\$8,105,175	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$8,001,630	\$8,105,175	
I. Difference: (G - H); (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$1,750,584	\$1,823,850	\$1,823,850
Program Component	\$12,826,876	\$13,617,009	\$13,557,009
Capital Component	\$2,322,815	\$2,134,676	\$1,854,769

* 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.

** 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 Savings¹

\$560

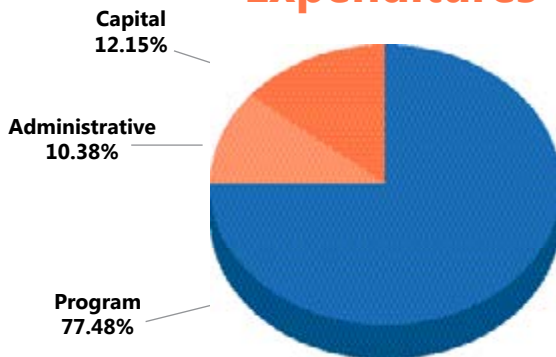
The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2025-26 by the qualified voters of the New York Mills School District, Oneida County, New York, will be held at Beekman Gymnasium in said District on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., prevailing time, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

¹The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

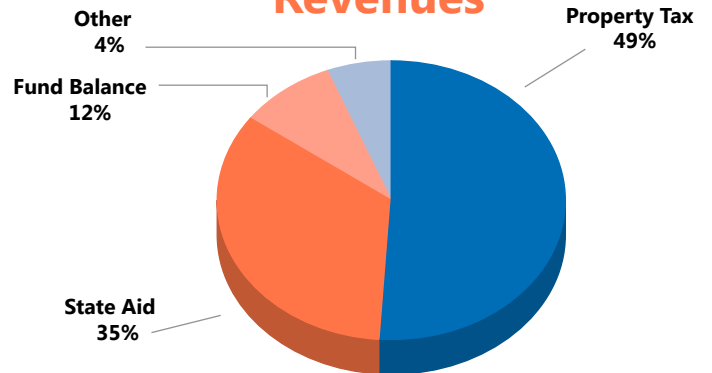


2025-2026 BUDGET INFORMATION

Expenditures



Revenues



BUDGET PROPOSITIONS

PROPOSITION 1 - RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the New York Mills Union Free School District is hereby authorized to expend the sum of \$17,575,535 as a general fund appropriation for the 2025-2026 school year and to levy the necessary tax therefor.

Tax Levy Increase

The tax levy increase for 2025-26 is projected to be 1.9%.

Tax on True

The tax on true value for the district in 2025-26 will be approximately \$15.47.

Note: Rates are estimated based on current information available. Final equalization rates will not be set by the State of New York until August. In the two previous years, the final tax on true was actually lower than projected at the time of budget development.

Absentee Ballots

Ballot applications for absentee ballots must be received by the School District Clerk on or before May 13, 2025, if the ballot is to be delivered by mail, or on or before May 19, 2025, if the ballot is to be delivered personally to the voters. Absentee ballots must be received by the School District Clerk not later than 5:00 p.m. on the date of the election, May 20, 2025.

Voter Eligibility Requirements

A voter must meet the following eligibility requirements to vote in school elections:

- Be a citizen of the United States.
- Have been a resident of the school district for a minimum of 30 days prior to the vote, including those who rent. Section 2018-C of the Education Law may require all persons who vote to provide one form of identification or proof of residency.
- Be at least 18 years of age.



STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

New York Mills Elementary loves to celebrate its students with family and friends. We invite family members to surprise their children at each Student of the Month assembly, where we honor our Kids of Character, Principal's Award winners and staff. Skits representing what the traits "look like" in school, at home and in the community are created and performed by our students each month.

Since October, we have recognized over 280 students with Kids of Character awards for displaying many of the Positivity Project traits. Each teacher has awarded their students for their love of learning, optimism, bravery, humor, appreciating others, respect, perseverance, creativity and kindness.

We also honor seven students each month as Principal's Award winners. These students exemplify the qualities of a NYM Marauder! All staff have an opportunity to choose one student to represent each grade level in recognition of their work ethic, character, attendance, behavior and leadership. These students get to enjoy lunch with the principal! The auditorium rocks during each assembly as excitement fills the air and students cheer on their classmates. It's a great day to be a Marauder - we are so proud of all of our award winners!



SURPRISE PARENT READERS



In the heart of every kindergarten classroom, there is a deep love for storytelling and reading. To encourage this enthusiasm and foster a sense of community, Mrs. Hickel's kindergarten class recently introduced a weekly activity called "Surprise Parent Readers." This initiative allows parents to step into the classroom, but with a twist: the identities of the readers were kept a secret until they arrived, making the experience even more special for the children.



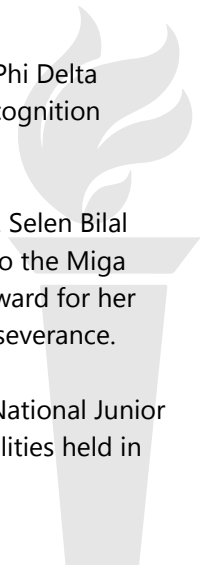
HONOR SOCIETY

Induction Ceremonies

On March 27th, 10 students were inducted into the New York Mills Union Free School District's Phi Delta Chapter of National Honor Society, our Nation's oldest, largest and most prestigious student recognition program. Membership was based on scholarship, leadership, service and character.

In addition, two awards, funded by donations from the Miga family and friends, were presented. Selen Bilal received the Tutor of the Year award in recognition of the time and commitment she has given to the Miga Mentoring Program. Similarly, Danielle Pereira was the recipient of the Walter Miga Memorial Award for her embodiment of the characteristics that defined Mr. Miga, including honesty, generosity and perseverance.

Furthermore, 17 members of the class of 2029 were inducted into the Phi Delta Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society on March 20th. Selection was based upon the effective demonstration of the qualities held in high esteem by the society: leadership, character, citizenship service and scholarship.



NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

Inductees

Asah Bova	Nevaeh Kimble
Abbey Calhoun	Mark Klein Jr.
Jaden Clifford	Ruvym Kryvko
Nathaneal Dzwonskowski	Derick Madore
Kaylin Holmes	Lily Marchese

NHS TAPPING

This year, our National Honor Society members "tapped" the new inductees to notify them that they were being accepted into the NHS. The current members shared the good news with and invited inductees during school.



NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

Inductees

Landon Brown-Whitcombe	Lukas Dzuiba	Victoria Mitchell
Piper Casella	Abigal Huag	Emma Muratovic
Ava Clark	Michael Faustino	Lucia Rzepka
Peyton Corsino	Morgann Faustino	Jason Salatino
Morgan Dam	Carter Lovecchio	Carter Tallman
Anton Donchuk	Kaden Miner	

Congratulations to all of the new inductees!



NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY *Induction Ceremony*

March 27, 2025



NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY *Induction Ceremony*

March 20, 2025



Optimist

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

SEPTEMBER - *Selen Bilal*

Selen Bilal was selected as the September 2024 Optimist Youth of the Month. She is the daughter of Jennifer Bilal.

Selen is a member of the New York Mills Chapter of the National Honor Society and serves as president. She participates in numerous clubs and organizations, including Student Council and Drama Club. Selen is also a member of the cross country and track teams. Outside of school, Selen has participated in Vacation Bible School, D.A.R and Historical Society. She also has volunteered at the Polish Community Club, New York Mills Craft Fair and during fall cleanup.

Selen plans to attend Hamilton College in the fall.



OCTOBER - *Heidi Cilbrith*

Heidi Cilbrith was selected as the October 2024 Optimist Youth of the Month. She is the daughter of John and Linette Cilbrith.

Heidi is a high honor roll student. She is a member of the Yearbook Club and has served as treasurer. Heidi participates in Student Council; in which she is a delegate. She has also volunteered for fall cleanup.

Heidi plans on attending Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

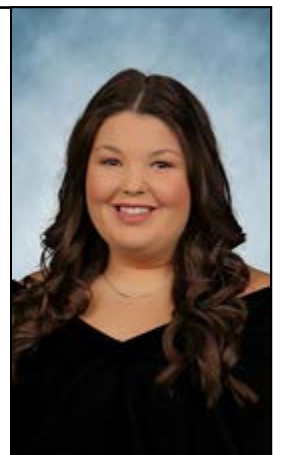


NOVEMBER - *Emily Cognetti*

Emily Cognetti was selected as the November 2024 Optimist Youth of the Month. She is the daughter of David and Jodi Cognetti.

Emily is a high achieving student who is a member of the New York Mills Chapter of National Honor Society and serves as secretary. She is currently president of the Student Council and the Yearbook Club. Emily also participated in a law internship with the Regional Program for Excellence, as well as completed a job shadowing at Oneida County Family Court. She has volunteered for fall cleanup, Snacks with Santa and scorekeeping for the volleyball team.

Emily plans on attending SUNY Albany to study law.



DECEMBER - *Jaden Roback*

A Jaden Roback was selected as the December 2025 Optimist Youth of the Month. He is the son of Glenn and Wendy Roback.

Jaden is a highly motivated student who is currently a member of the New York Mills Chapter of the National Honor Society. He is also a member of the Student Council, Yearbook Club, Drama Club, Battle of the Books, Newspaper Club and the varsity track team. In addition to his involvement in school activities, Jaden has also volunteered with Broadway Utica, Compassion Coalition, Stuff the Bus, OD Awareness Day, food/clothing drives, elementary musical productions and the New York Mills PTSO Craft Fair.

Jaden plans on attending college in the fall to study political science/theater.



JANUARY - *Arianna Piazza*

Arianna Piazza was selected as the January 2025 New York Mills Optimist Youth of the Month. She is the daughter of Michael and Sarah Piazza.

Arianna is a high honor roll student who is a member of the New York Mills Chapter of the National Honor Society. She has participated in cross country, track and was the captain of her dance team. She also has volunteered for fall cleanup, the New York Mills PTSO Craft Fair and Hope House.

Arianna plans to attend Stony Brook University to study biology/pre-med.



FEBRUARY - *Lin Sein*

Lin Sein was selected as the February 2025 New York Mills Youth of the Month. He is the son of Naing and Tamu Oo.

Lin is a member of the New York Mills track and field and cross country teams. He also has been a member of the Chess Club at New York Mills for the past few years. Lin has also volunteered for fall cleanup.

Lin plans to attend MVCC to study business.



MARCH - *Danielle Pereira*

Danielle Pereira was selected as the March 2025 New York Mills Youth of the Month. She is the daughter of Ross and Stephanie Pereira.

Danielle is involved in many extracurricular activities, including page editor for the Yearbook Club, vice president of the New York Mills Chapter of the National Honor Society and on the varsity track team. Some of Danielle's community service activities include yard work, babysitting and volunteering at medical clinics.

Danielle plans to attend SUNY Poly to study nursing.



BATTLE *of the* Books



It was a battle of brains instead of brawn at the regional Battle of the Books competition on March 12th. The event is a collaborative affair made possible by the efforts of our Library Media Specialist Mrs. Danielle Howe and other area Book Club advisors. Ten area school districts participated in the event, which was held at Utica University.

Students from Clinton, Dolgeville, Holland Patent, Little Falls, New Hartford, New York Mills, Richfield Springs, Sauquoit Valley, Utica and West Canada school districts participated in the day's events. Students in the middle school Battle of the Books Club were competing on their knowledge of a list of 13 books. Our high school Book Club had a list of 12 books to study. Judges read quotes from the books and students "buzzed in" (Jeopardy style) to answer with the correct book title and author's name.

We held a local battle of the books competition in our high school library earlier in the month to determine the top four students that would go on to represent our District at the regional competition. Our middle school team included Myles Costello, Brayden Frye, Madelyn Messa, and Anthony Rewkowski. They faced fierce competition at the regional battle. After their performance in the morning rounds of competition, they earned a spot in the finals in the afternoon. They gave it their best, but were defeated by a team from Clinton. Congratulations to these students on their second place finish.

Our high school team of Skylar DesMarais, Austin Exton, Chelsy Plows and Jaden Roback gave it their all and finished the day in fourth place.

The collegiate environment was a great culminating experience for the students as a reward for all of their hard work this year in the Battle of the Books Club.



SCHOOL BOARDS INSTITUTE *Educational Showcase*



On March 27th, Mr. Worboys and his STEM Club participated in the Oneida-Madison-Herkimer School Boards Institute's Educational Showcase, held at the Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES. The event allowed them to present and discuss the projects they have been working on this year. Some of these projects included student coded video games, robots and 3D printed objects. Attendees of the event were very impressed with how poised and knowledgeable our New York Mills students were. Great job, all!



CONGRATULATIONS, *Mrs. Simon!*

Congratulations to Mrs. Ava Simon, who won a \$500 grant from the Rome Teachers Federal Credit Union. She will be using it to enhance her elementary STEAM classes.





Spring Concert Schedule

May 13th – Elementary Band/Chorus Spring Concert, **5:30 p.m.**

May 15th – Grades 7-12 Band and Chorus Spring Concert, **7:00 p.m.**

May 26th – Memorial Day Parade, New York Mills Marching Band, **11:00 a.m.**

Turn to page 16 for more important dates



OCMEA Jr. High **ALL-COUNTY** MUSIC FESTIVAL

This past January, Oneida County held auditions for Jr. High All-County. Students prepared for solo auditions to be accepted into the chorus, band or orchestra. The musicians who were accepted spent the entire weekend of March 14th-15th creating a musical experience that they will never forget. The weekend concluded with a concert that showcased the outstanding talents of all the students. All members of the festival worked with guest conductors and showcased a stellar performance to the entire community at Westmoreland High School.



Congratulations to our New York Mills students on their superb performance!

Chorus: Brody Brood, Peyton Corsino, Carter Lovecchio and Nevaeh-Rose Vivacqua

Band: Keira Dzwonkowski (trombone)



OCMEA Elementary **ALL-COUNTY** MUSIC FESTIVAL

On April 4th and 5th, the Oneida County Music Educators' Association held their annual Elementary All-County Music Festival. This year, it was held at the Sauquoit Valley Central School District and featured fifth and sixth grade orchestra, band and vocal students from throughout the county. Each group began practicing Friday afternoon and performed for an audience of over 1,700 in the high school gym on Saturday.

Congratulations to our New York Mills students on their spectacular performance!

Band: Dominic Falvo and Melody Lovecchio

Chorus: Ava Karakalchu, Madelyn Messa and Graham Panella



Winter Sports Success



We had several teams and athletes
to celebrate during the winter season!



Congratulations to the following coaches and students:



GIRLS VARSITY VOLLEYBALL



Coach Smith and our girls varsity volleyball team won the Center State Championship earlier in the season.

BOYS VARSITY BOWLING



With Coach Ricco's guidance, Nathaniel Dzwonkowski played on the Section III State Bowling Team at the Center State Conference.

BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL

Coach Sharpe and our boys varsity basketball team made it to the playoffs.



Winter Sports Success *Continued*

GIRLS VARSITY GYMNASTICS



Gabby Dietz and the varsity gymnastics team won the Section III State Championship.

VARSITY INDOOR TRACK



Senior Rose Jeff competed in the state level competition for pole vault in Long Island.

LETTER OF INTENT SIGNING



Earlier this year, student-athlete Rose Jeff signed a letter with intent to continue her education and participate in Division III track and field at Rochester Institute of Technology.





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BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kristin Hubley, President
Robert Mahardy Jr., Vice President
Sara DeFazio
Jacqueline Edwards
Jeremy Fennell
Steve King
Abbie Taylor

ADMINISTRATION

Michele D. LaGase, *Superintendent of Schools*
Mary Facci, *K-12 Executive Principal*
Denise DiSpirito, *Interim K-12 Principal*

VISIT US ON THE WEB

newyorkmills.org

IMPORTANT DATES

MAY 6th – Board of Education Meeting and Public Budget Hearing, 5:30 p.m., High School Library

MAY 13th – Elementary Band/Chorus Spring Concert, 5:30 p.m.

MAY 15th – Grades 7-12 Band and Chorus Spring Concert, 7:00 p.m.

MAY 20th – Budget Vote and Board of Education Election, 12:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., Beekman Gymnasium

MAY 26th – Memorial Day - **NO SCHOOL**

JUNE 19th – Juneteenth - **NO SCHOOL**

JUNE 20th – High School Graduation, 6:00 p.m.

JUNE 27th – Last Day of School for Students

OUR MISSION:

Through combined efforts of students, staff, parents and community members, our mission is to foster the confidence, knowledge, cognition and character necessary to instill a strong work ethic, to create an environment of tolerance and respect and to ignite an attitude of inquiry and enthusiasm for learning that will enable students to become productive, responsible citizens.

DID YOU KNOW?

For the complete District calendar, schedule of upcoming events and more District news, please visit newyorkmills.org