



Chester Union Free School District

2026-27 Budget

Summary and Adoption of Proposed Budget

April 21, 2026
Board of Education Meeting



2026-2027 Budget Priorities

Investing in Excellence

CUFSD VISION

The Chester School District develops global leaders by providing students with learning opportunities that foster critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. Students engage in authentic applications that support inquiry and innovation through partnerships with their community, local businesses, and higher education.

CUFSD MISSION





2026-2027 Budget Priorities

Investing in Excellence

CHESTER GRADUATES ARE



Effective Communicators



Dynamic Collaborators



Innovative Problem Solvers



Digital Strategists



Ethical Citizens



Empowered Learners



2026-2027 Budget Priorities

Investing in Excellence

Strengthening Academic Excellence through Programs & Staffing

Data-driven instructional priorities, professional development, and strategic staffing to maximize student learning and achievement.

Advancing College & Career Pathways, Partnerships & Communication

Future-focused education through business & community partnerships and integrated communication platforms.

Optimizing Infrastructure for Safety, Security & Sustainability

Facility security, energy-efficient improvements, and technology upgrades that safeguard and modernize student learning environments.



2026-2027 Budget Priorities

Investing in Excellence

Strengthening Academic Excellence through Programs & Staffing

Data-driven instructional priorities, professional development, and strategic staffing to maximize student learning and achievement.

- **NYS Next Generation Aligned Instruction:** Standards-aligned curriculum and assessments guide instruction and promote student growth and achievement.
- **Data-Driven & Personalized Learning:** Differentiation supports individual learning needs and drives student growth and achievement.



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Data-driven instructional priorities, professional development, and strategic staffing to maximize student learning and achievement.

- **Pre-K Expansion (First Time Access for All):** Eliminates waitlists and expands early learning opportunities through the addition of classrooms, certified teachers, and support staff, strengthening long-term student success.



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- **Innovative STEM, Engineering & Media Learning:** Future-focused Pre-K–12 opportunities in engineering design, robotics, and media, supported by dedicated staffing to develop critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving skills.



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- **Expanded Electives & Future-Focused Courses:** Expanded offerings in financial literacy, health careers, and technology that equip students with practical skills and career-ready knowledge.



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- **Comprehensive Special Education Services:** Increased investment in individualized supports, including in-district and specialized placements.
- **Social-Emotional Learning & Student Wellness:** Counseling, social work, and school psychology staff, alongside SEL frameworks, support a positive, inclusive environment.



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- **Student Opportunities & Enrichment:** Diverse opportunities in athletics, clubs, and co-curricular programs that promote engagement, leadership, and readiness for future success.
- **Music & Arts Education:** Comprehensive music and arts programs that develop creativity, expression, and meaningful student engagement.



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- **Small Class Sizes & Strategic Staffing:** Prioritizes individualized instruction and strong student–teacher connections.
- **Professional Development & Continuous Growth:** Professional learning is informed by district initiatives, student performance data, teacher input, and aligned to NYS Next Generation Learning Standards and the Portrait of a Graduate.



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Future-focused education through business & community partnerships and integrated communication platforms.

- **College Credit Pathways:** Access to up to 40 college credits through partnerships with SUNY Orange, Mount Saint Mary College, and SUNY Oswego supports college readiness and affordability.
- **Workplace Learning Internship Program:** On-site job experiences through community and business partnerships provide opportunities for career exploration and informed college and career choices.



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- **NYS Seal of Civic Readiness:** Investment in coursework, service learning, and civic engagement experiences that enable students to earn the Seal of Civic Readiness and develop leadership and active citizenship skills.
- **NYS Seal of Biliteracy:** Investment in language instruction and assessment opportunities that support students in attaining proficiency in English and an additional language, earning the Seal of Biliteracy and preparing for college, careers, and a global society.



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- **Integrated Communication Platforms:** Expanded use of ParentSquare, website enhancements, and public information services ensure accessible communication for all students, families, and staff.
- **Student Information System (Synergy):** Increased access to real-time student data and reports supports data-informed instruction and MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports), addressing whole-student academic and behavioral needs.



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Facility security, energy-efficient improvements, and technology upgrades that safeguard and modernize student learning environments.

- **Comprehensive Safety & Security Systems:** Increased investment in safety and security, including an additional position in collaboration with Orange-Ulster BOCES to support emergency preparedness, along with on-site police presence, Atlas Security, surveillance, controlled access, and coordinated safety protocols.



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- **Emergency Preparedness & ICS Response:** Ongoing professional development, districtwide training, and drills strengthen coordinated response systems and real-time communication, with debriefing processes that drive continuous improvement.



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- **Technology Infrastructure Upgrades:** Upgrades to wireless networks, classroom technology, and system reliability enhance instructional delivery and access.
- **Cybersecurity & Data Protection:** Expanded cybersecurity measures protect student and staff data and strengthen system security.



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- **Facilities Improvements & Preventative Maintenance:** Focused upgrades to roofing, boilers, flooring, and water systems sustain safe, reliable, and high-quality learning environments.
- **Transportation Planning for Growth:** Strategic routing and cost management support enrollment growth and rising non-public transportation needs.



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- **Athletics Safety & Program Support:** Enhanced equipment, facilities, medical coverage, and staffing ensure safe participation and program quality.
- **Long-Term Sustainability & Efficiency:** Energy-conscious improvements and infrastructure planning support facility preservation and responsible long-term cost management.

NYS Budget Update



Budget Not Yet Enacted – April 1st deadline passed; legislature has now passed **five budget extenders** (most recently April 20, 2026) while negotiations continue. This pattern is consistent with recent years.

Governor's Executive Budget

Proposed \$27.1 billion in Foundation Aid statewide - a **minimum 1% increase guaranteed** for all districts. Formula unchanged from prior year.

Senate & Assembly Proposals

Both chambers countered with a **minimum 2% increase**, plus formula enhancements for ELL, homeless, and foster care students. Negotiations ongoing.

What This Means for Chester

Chester is in a **Save Harmless position** - Foundation Aid increase limited to the state minimum: 1% under the Governor or potentially 2% if the Legislature prevails.

Current Status & Next Steps

- **Budget to be adopted by Board on April 21, 2026:** The state budget will almost certainly not be finalized at that point - consistent with recent years.
- **Budgeted using conservative 1% Foundation Aid assumption:** Any additional revenue from a 2% legislative outcome will be treated as favorable news and may improve our fund balance position.

Maximum Allowable Tax Levy

Original Calculation (Presented March 4)

Prior Year Tax Levy (2025-26)	\$ 21,328,723
Tax Base Growth Factor	x 1.004200
	= 21,418,304
Prior Year PILOT (Payment In-Lieu of Taxes)	+ 132,311
	= 21,550,615
Prior Year Exclusions (Capital Levy)	- 636,042
Adjusted Prior Year Levy	= 20,914,573
Allowable Growth Factor (lesser of 2% or CPI)	x 1.020000
	= 21,332,864
Current PILOTs	- 148,000
School Tax Levy Limit	= 21,184,864
Available Carryover (used in current year) **	+ -
	= 21,184,864
Current Year Exclusions (Capital Levy)	+ 961,021
Current Year Exclusions TRS (retirement sys)	+ -
Current Year Exclusions ERS (retirement sys)	+ -
Maximum Allowable Tax Levy (MATL)	= \$ 22,145,885
Increase	817,162

Updated Calculation (Current)

Prior Year Tax Levy (2025-26)	\$ 21,328,723
Tax Base Growth Factor	x 1.004200
	= 21,418,304
Prior Year PILOT (Payment In-Lieu of Taxes)	+ 132,311
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Maximum Allowable Tax Levy (MATL)	= \$ 21,945,885
Increase	617,162

3.83%

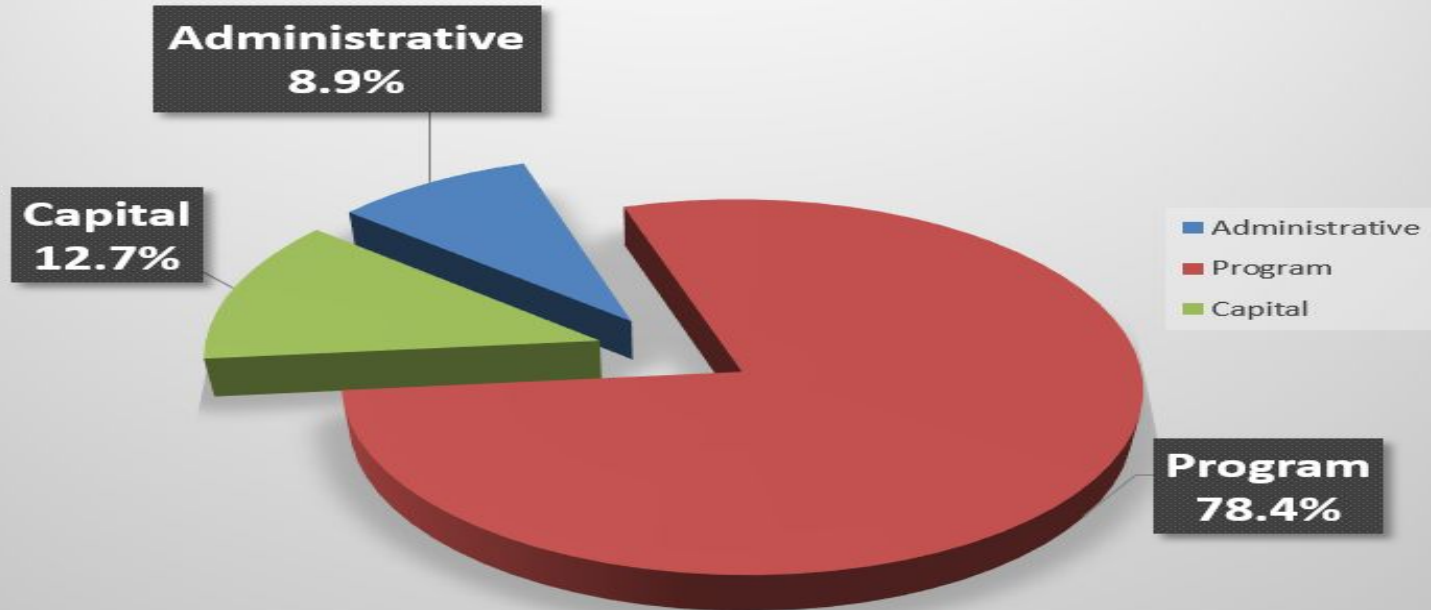
2.89%

2026-2027 Proposed Budget Summary

2025-2026 Adopted Budget	2026-2027 Proposed Budget	Budget-to- Budget Change (\$)	Budget-to- Budget Change (%)
\$38,222,499	\$41,001,754	\$2,779,255	7.27%
Proposed Expenditures			\$41,001,754
Projected Revenues:			
Property Tax Levy (and other tax related items)			22,128,885
State Aid			14,893,060
Other			<u>1,279,809</u>
Total Projected Revenues			<u>38,301,754</u>
Shortfall w/out Appropriated Fund Balance			(\$2,700,000)
Proposed Appropriated Fund Balance			2,400,000
Proposed Appropriated ERS Reserve			100,000
Proposed Transfer from Debt Service Fund			200,000
Balanced Budget			\$0

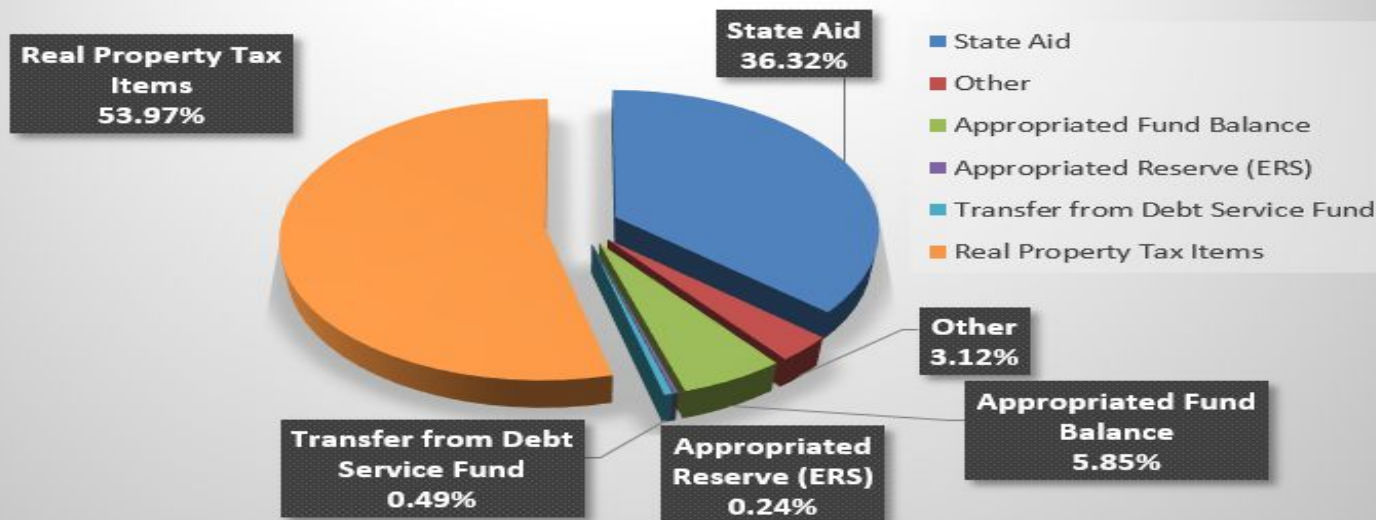
Proposed Expenditure Budget

3-PART BUDGET COMPONENT	2026-27		% OF TOTAL
	2025-26 BUDGET	PROPOSED BUDGET	
Administrative	\$3,100,238	\$3,667,380	8.9%
Program	\$29,956,871	\$32,135,919	78.4%
Capital	\$5,165,390	\$5,198,455	12.7%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$38,222,499	\$41,001,754	100%



Projected Revenue Budget

REVENUE	2025-26 BUDGET	2026-27	% OF TOTAL
		PROPOSED BUDGET	
State Aid	\$14,197,706	\$14,893,060	36.3%
Other	\$1,328,759	\$1,279,809	3.1%
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$1,200,000	\$2,400,000	5.9%
Appropriated ERS Reserve	\$0	\$100,000	0.2%
Transfer from Debt Service Fund	\$0	\$200,000	0.5%
Real Property Tax Items	\$21,496,034	\$22,128,885	54.0%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$38,222,499	\$41,001,754	100%





Contingency Budget

If the Budget is not approved, the Board of Education has three options:

- 1. Present the same budget to the voters for a second vote on June 16th.**
- 2. Present a modified budget plan to the voters for a second vote on June 16th.**
- 3. Adopt a “contingency budget”**

Upcoming Budget Hearing



May 6, 2026

Public Budget Hearing

Budget information and updates available at www.ChesterUFSD.org

Budget Information Online



Budget presentations and related information
will be available on the CUFSD website:

www.chesterufsd.org

Navigate to: Budget & Finance section for all budget documents, presentations, and supporting materials.

Annual Budget Vote



Tuesday, May 19, 2026



BUDGET VOTE

Vote on the proposed 2026-27 Chester UFSD budget



BOARD OF EDUCATION

Vote for One Board of Education Seat

Polls open 8:00 AM – 9:00 PM | Chester Academy Band Room | www.ChesterUFSD.org