OUR SCHOOLS IN ACTION

Budget Issue 2026

BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: RETURN ON YOUR INVESTMENT

Amherst Central School District is grateful for the community's continued support. Your return on investment can be measured by the broad range of opportunities afforded to our students and their successes. Throughout this issue, you will find examples of how your support is reaping great returns for our students.

BUDGET VOTE

Amherst Central High School
4301 Main Street
May 19 from 7 a.m. - 9 p.m.

www.AmherstSchools.org

Our Budget Message

Jessica McLaughlin
Board of Education President

The Amherst Central School District presents a fiscally responsible tax cap compliant budget proposal to our community on May 19. Throughout this year's budget development, the board of education has been unanimous in keeping the budget at or below the cap and this proposal represents a budget that is 1% below the allowable tax cap.

Our approach in budget development involves a multi-year, long-range forecast that allows the school board to consider not only the immediate needs for the district, but also to anticipate the impact these decisions may have in the future.

The 2026-27 budget includes:

- A tax levy increase of 3.4% which is $412K under the maximum allowable tax cap of 4.4%.
- An estimated tax rate increase of $0.45 per $1,000 of assessed valuation, based on prior year town-wide assessments.
- A budget-to-budget increase of $5.4M or 6.64%.

In addition to the budget and Board of Education election, this year's ballot will include two propositions to authorize additional expenditures to the existing Capital Improvement Project approved by voters in December 2022. Propositions 2 and 3 focus on work at the High School including replacement of the heating system, updates to the auditorium theatrical systems and renovations to the south gymnasium/locker rooms. Turn to page 4 to read details about Propositions 2 and 3.

We present this budget proposal to the community with confidence that it meets the school district's mission to prepare all students to excel in a dynamic world while being responsive to the needs of our taxpayers. Stay informed at amherstschools.org/get-to-know-acsd/budget-and-election-2026-27. Please take the time to visit the high school on May 19 and vote.

Respectfully,

Jessica McLaughlin,
Board of Education President

PROPOSED BUDGET INFORMATION Learn more at amherstschools.org

What's on the Ballot?

Residents will vote on the following propositions:

Proposition 1 – School Budget

The Amherst Central School District budget of $87,091,000 for the 2026-2027 school year.

Proposition 2

Authorize an additional $12.5M in expenditures to the existing Capital Improvement Project approved by voters December 2022 for the High School heating system.

Proposition 3

Authorize an additional $17M in expenditures to the existing Capital Improvement Project approved by voters December 2022 for updates and renovations to the High School auditorium and south gymnasium/locker rooms.

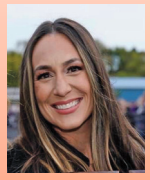
More information about Propositions 2 & 3 is on page 4

Board of Education Candidates

Three at-large vacancies will be filled on the Board. The two candidates receiving the largest number of votes shall each be elected to a term to commence July 1, 2026 and expiring June 30, 2029. The candidate receiving the third largest number of votes shall be elected to a term to commence upon election and expiring June 30, 2027.

Read the candidate biographies on page 5.

Jessica McLaughlin



Maryjane Metzen

Daniel Weinstein

Budget At A Glance

2026-2027 Proposed Budget
$87,091,000

Budget-to-Budget Increase
$5,419,000

Tax Levy Increase
3.40%

Estimated Tax Rate Increase
$0.45 per thousand assessed valuation

Three Part Summary & Definition

All public schools in New York State are required by law to report their spending in three categories: administrative, capital and program.

	2025-2026	2026-2027	$ Change	% Change
Administrative Expenditures	$7,503,934	$7,860,729	$356,795	4.75%
Capital Expenditures	$10,746,888	$14,638,684	$3,891,797	36.21%
Program Expenditures	$63,421,178	$64,591,586	$1,170,408	1.85%
TOTAL	**$81,672,000**	**$87,091,000**	**$5,419,000**	**6.64%**

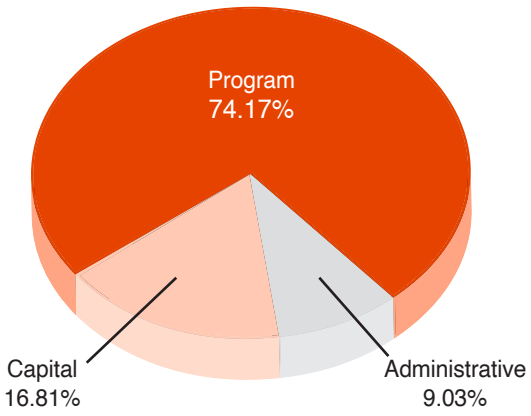
Three-Part Budget Definitions

Administrative Budget Component: Includes expenses for office and administrative costs; salaries and benefits for certified school administrators who spend 50 percent or more of their time performing supervisory duties; data processing; public information; legal fees; property insurance; and school board expenses.

Capital Budget Component: This covers debt service on buildings and leasing costs; tax certiorari and court-ordered costs; and all facility costs, including salaries and benefits of the custodial staff; service contracts, maintenance supplies and equipment; and utilities.

Program Budget Component: This portion includes salaries and benefits of teachers and supervisors who spend the majority of their time teaching; such instructional costs as supplies, equipment and textbooks; co-curricular activities and interscholastic athletics; staff development; and transportation operating costs.

Proposed 2026-27 Three-Part Budget



Where Does the Money Come From?

REVENUE SUMMARY	2025-2026	2026-2027	CHANGE
Property Tax	$41,236,146	$42,636,788	$1,400,642
In Lieu of Tax	$645,000	$510,000	-$135,000
County Sales Tax	$4,700,000	$5,000,000	$300,000
Community Ed	$78,500	$90,675	$12,175
Interest Earnings	$301,000	$557,000	$256,000
State Aid	$26,125,876	$26,844,490	$718,614
Building Aid	$4,415,518	$6,932,587	$2,517,069
Other Revenues	$2,983,560	$2,804,675	-$178,885
Appropriated Fund Balance	$1,000,000	$1,000,000	$0
Use of Reserves	$186,400	$714,785	$528,385
TOTAL	$81,672,000	$87,091,000	$5,419,000

Where Does the Money Go?

EXPENDITURE SUMMARY	2025-2026	2026-2027	CHANGE
Personnel	$36,728,861	$37,530,078	$801,217
Benefits	$16,599,371	$16,467,763	-$131,608
General Support	$3,210,852	$3,139,422	-$71,430
Instruction	$6,970,578	$7,235,194	$264,616
BOCES	$6,021,423	$6,545,912	$524,489
Transportation	$4,804,782	$5,119,832	$315,050
Debt Service	$5,336,133	$9,252,799	$3,916,666
Contingency	$2,000,000	$1,800,000	-$200,000
TOTAL	$81,672,000	$87,091,000	$5,419,000

Contingency Budget

A contingent budget would require the elimination of all equipment purchases, no community use of District facilities without payment of full operating costs, no Community Education Programming, no salary increases for non unionized employees, an additional fund balance and reserves appropriation of $844,808, and no increase to the 2026-27 tax levy.

Five Year Budget History

YEAR	BUDGET	LEVY
2021-22	3.03%	3.14%
2022-23	6.19%	-0.69%
2023-24	10.60%	2.02%
2024-25	4.30%	2.33%
2025-26	6.64%	3.40%
AVERAGE	**6.15%**	**2.04%**

Tax Levy & Rate

	2025-2026	2026-2027	CHANGE
Property Tax Levy	$41,236,146	$42,636,788	$1,400,642
Assessment	$3,078,168,121	$3,078,168,121	$0
Tax Rate per $1,000*	$13.396327	$13.851351	$0.455024

*Rate based on prior year assessed value.

Capital Outlay Project

The 2026-27 budget includes $100,000 for an Amherst CSD Capital Outlay project. The scope of the outlay project will be the installation of window safety film at Amherst Central High School.

Learn more at amherstschools.org

PROPOSED BUDGET INFORMATION

Propositions #2 and #3

Our current $68.7 million capital improvement project approved by voters in December 2022 includes work at all four buildings with improvements across the district in health and safety, educational spaces and facility infrastructure. The large project was split into three phases. If you look around our community, you can see the major outdoor work already done or nearing completion in Phases 1 and 2 including the new bus loop and playcourt improvements at Smallwood Drive Elementary, a new four-classroom UPK addition and playcourt renovation at Windermere Boulevard Elementary, and the multi-sport turf field complex located between Kings Highway and Westmoreland Road. Inside our buildings we have made numerous security enhancements and systems upgrades and auditorium improvements at Smallwood, Windermere and the Middle School.

Due to inflation and escalation of construction costs beyond our control, the work we had planned for Phase 3 can no longer be done within our original budget. Several economic and construction market factors have caused the entire project to incur budgetary increases. We are committed to completing the work we promised our community when they supported the project in December 2022. The Capital Committee was brought together to identify priorities for remaining work in Phase 3 at the High School which includes:

- Replacing and upgrading the High School heating system from a steam to hot water system
- Updating the High School auditorium theatrical performance systems
- Renovating and reconfiguring the High School gymnasium, vestibule and locker rooms

In addition to the budget and Board of Education election, this year's ballot will include two propositions to authorize additional expenditures to the existing Capital Improvement Project approved by voters in December 2022 for the High School heating system and for updates and renovations to the High School auditorium and south gymnasium/locker rooms.

Proposition 2 – Amherst Central High School Boiler System Replacement

$12.5M | Tax Impact - $0 Tax Impact

Proposition 2 is tax neutral and requests an additional $12.5 million authorization to replace the antiquated, inefficient steam boiler system at Amherst Central High School with a new state-of-the-art high efficiency hot water boiler system with digital controls. The high school boiler systems were installed in 1950 and are well beyond their useful life. It has now reached a critical need where repairs cannot be made anymore. This is a high priority project that impacts the health and safety of our staff and students on a day-to-day basis.

Proposition 3 – Amherst Central High School South Gymnasium and Auditorium Renovations

$17M | Tax Impact - $0.19/$1,000 assessed valuation.
Estimated cost on a home assessed at $300,000 is $57.

Proposition 3 has a tax impact of 19 cents per $1,000 of assessed valuation and requests an additional $17 million authorization to complete the auditorium theatrical system replacements and the south gymnasium and locker room renovations at Amherst Central High School. *Proposition 3 approval is contingent upon approval of Proposition 2. For proposition 3 to move forward, both propositions 2 and 3 must be approved by the voters.*

The auditorium and south gymnasium project work is a priority as these large group spaces are used on a consistent basis year-round by our students, staff, families and community members.

The high school south gymnasium renovations include replacing the warped gym floor and installing new bleachers. The locker rooms and bathrooms would be updated and configured to create more efficient spaces. The gym vestibule entrance would be updated.

The high school auditorium would receive updated rigging, lighting and sound systems similar to improvements already completed in the auditoriums at the two elementary buildings and middle school.

If approved, this would add approximately $57 annually for a homeowner with an assessed valuation of $300,000.

Jessica McLaughlin

Jessica McLaughlin has been a resident of Amherst since 2003, where she and her husband, Shawn, have raised their three children in the Amherst Central School District. Their children have attended Smallwood Drive Elementary School, Amherst Middle School, and Amherst Central High School.

Mrs. McLaughlin has served on the Amherst Central School District Board of Education for nine years, including two years as Vice President and one year as President. She serves on the Board's Policy, Safety, Tax Certiorari, and Capital Improvement Project Committees, and has also contributed to the Transportation and Strategic Planning Committees.

In addition to her board service, Mrs. McLaughlin is actively involved in PTA leadership and school-based initiatives. She currently serves as Grants Chairperson for the Amherst Middle and High School PTSA and as Co-Chairperson of the Amherst Central High School Operetta Patron Drive. Her prior roles include President and Vice President of Membership for the Amherst Middle and High School PTSA, and President, Vice President of Membership, and Vice President of Programs for the Smallwood Drive PTA. She also served on the Smallwood Drive Strategic Planning Committee for several years and the Nomination Committee that led to Smallwood Drive School earning its first designation as a National School of Character.

Professionally, Mrs. McLaughlin has worked at Amherst Nursery School for the past fifteen years and has served as a teacher for the most recent five years. She previously worked as a classroom aide and served on the school's Board of Directors, including three years as chairperson. Earlier in her career, she was a sales manager for the Hyatt Regency Hotel. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Russell Sage College.

Maryjane Metzen

Maryjane Metzen and her husband, Greg, were both born and raised in the Western New York area and have resided in the Amherst School District since 2014. They have two children, Jack and Juliette, who currently attend Smallwood Drive Elementary School and Amherst Middle School.

A 2008 graduate of NYU with a degree in finance from the Stern School of Business, she has held various management roles within Target Corporation over the course of the last 17 years. With a focus in talent management, process optimization and operational growth, she has led multi-unit teams spanning across the Buffalo/Rochester area. Prior to joining Target, she lived in New York City and worked for Franklin Templeton Investments, where she specialized in asset management.

Mrs. Metzen has been an active and involved parent over the years, serving on the board of Amherst Nursery School as Treasury Officer. Since joining the ACSD Board of Education in 2023, she has sat on several committees including Transportation, Wellness, Technology and Capital Construction. Mrs. Metzen currently serves as the Vice President of the school board as well as the district representative to the ECASB Budget and Finance Committee.

Daniel Weinstein

Dan Weinstein is a proven leader in healthcare strategy, planning, and execution, currently serving as Vice President of Enterprise Strategy at Highmark Health, a $30 billion blended health organization comprised of BlueCross BlueShield in PA, NY, DE, and WV, a large health system - Allegheny Health Network in Western PA, and a series of national diversified health businesses. With extensive executive experience, he co-leads the Strategy and Transformation Office, overseeing enterprise-wide and long-term strategies, competitive intelligence, and strategic initiatives. He has driven major financial turnarounds, managed large teams, and formed impactful partnerships to enhance healthcare access and operational efficiency.

Previously, Mr. Weinstein led corporate strategy functions at HealthNow (BlueCross Blue Shield of Western New York and Blue Shield of Northeastern New York), where he directed strategic planning, competitive intelligence, and enterprise risk management. He played a key role in HealthNow's strategic affiliation with Highmark and managed the organization's COVID-19 response. Earlier in his career, he held leadership roles in government consulting, including managing multimillion-dollar contracts and briefing top decision-makers at U.S. Strategic Command and other federal agencies.

Mr. Weinstein holds an MBA from Canisius University, a Master of Science in Strategic Studies from Missouri State University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from SUNY Buffalo. He is active in the community and is a graduate of Leadership Buffalo.

He lives in Amherst with his wife, Jamie, and two children, Spencer (15) and Graham (11), who attend Amherst Central High School and Middle School respectively. Born and raised in Amherst, Mr. Weinstein has a strong commitment to the community and a real sense of accountability and pride.

Amherst Central School District

BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday, May 19, 2026
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

at the Amherst Central High School
South Gymnasium

Please enter through the doorway off the driveway to the far left of the school (not the front entrance of the school).

School Board Candidates

PROPOSED BUDGET INFORMATION

Learn more at amherstschools.org

2026-27 Amherst Central School District Budget Notice

OVERALL BUDGET PROPOSAL

	Budget Adopted for the 2025-26 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2026-27 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2026-27 School Year
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	$81,672,000	$87,091,000	$86,444,491
Increase/Decrease for the 2026-27 School Year		$5,419,000	$4,572,491
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		6.64 %	5.58 %
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.63%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	$41,236,146	$42,636,788	
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)	$41,236,146	$42,636,788	$41,236,146
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	$979,528	$1,839,499	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	$40,256,618	$41,209,650	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D)	$40,256,618	$40,797,289	
I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	$0	$412,361	
Administrative Component	$7,503,934	$7,860,729	$7,786,708
Program Component	$63,421,178	$64,591,586	$64,203,684
Capital Component	$10,746,888	$14,638,685	$14,454,099

*Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2026-27 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.

A contingent budget would require the elimination of all equipment purchases, no community use of District facilities without payment of full operating costs, no Community Education Programming, no salary increases for non unionized employees, an additional fund balance and reserves appropriation of $844,808, and no increase to the 2026-27 tax levy.

Note: The District has agreed to a three year extension of our current contract with our contract transportation provider, First Student. 2026-27 is the third year of that three year extension.

** 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
Proposition #2, increase 2022 capital project authorization	$12,500,000
Proposition #3, increase 2022 capital project authorization	$17,000,000

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2026-27 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings[1]	$ 451

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2026-27 by the qualified voters of the Amherst Central School District, Erie County, New York, will be held at the Amherst Central High School in said district on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 between the hours of 7:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the Amherst Central High School, 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.

SNAP helps families buy food.

See if you may be eligible

Many families struggle to afford enough food, and hunger is a persistent reality for kids. SNAP provides monthly benefits that eligible families can use to buy food at grocery stores, farmers markets, and at some online retailers. Scan the QR Code or visit SNAPHelpNY.org to see if you may be eligible.

TIGER PRIDE: ATHLETICS

Excellence in the Classroom

The New York State Public High School Sports Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) designates Scholar Athlete Team awards to qualifying teams when 75% of the team's roster have a 90% GPA or higher.

FALL SPORTS: Girls Tennis, Girls Swimming, Boys Volleyball, Field Hockey, Girls Cross Country, Girls Soccer, Boys Cross Country, Boys Soccer, Gameday Cheerleading, Girls Volleyball, Football, Boys Golf.

WINTER SPORTS: Girls Basketball, Girls Ice Hockey, Girls Bowling, Unified Bowling, Boys Swimming, Boys Indoor Track, Girls Indoor Track, Boys Basketball, Competitive Cheer, Boys Bowling.

SPRING SPORTS: Watch the Athletics website and social media channels for the announcement of the Spring scholar athlete team awards.

WORK FOR AMHERST CSD

Now and throughout the school year, the district has job openings for instructional, non-instructional and substitute positions. The Human Resources Department at Amherst Central is committed to fostering an employee culture focused on our mission to prepare all students to excel in a dynamic world and rooted in core values of respect and responsibility. At Amherst, we pride ourselves for offering opportunities for collaboration, challenge and rewarding career growth.

RecruitFront Employment Portal

Amherst Central Schools uses RecruitFront for all job postings. All candidates will need to complete an application through RecruitFront in order to be considered for employment. Visit amherstschools.org. The Human Resource webpage is located under the Department tab.

Subscribe to Job Alerts

When you are logged into RecruitFront, you can set up the Job Alert Subscription to get notified when a new job is posted that you may be interested in.

Flexible Schedules and Benefits

A number of positions offer flexible daytime schedules during the school year including food service helpers, teacher aides and part-time teaching assistants. ACSD employees qualify for New York State pension, may enroll in health benefits and get paid vacation, sick days and holidays.

WHERE CAN YOU LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BUDGET?

Board of Education Meetings

Presentations on the 2026-2027 budget were made at several Board of Education meetings in December, February and March.

On the Website

The 2026-2027 budget presentations that have been made during Board of Education meetings are posted after each meeting on the website. The documents can be found on the Budget & Election 2026-2027 webpage.

On YouTube

Board of Education meetings are videotaped and the recordings are available to view. They can be found on the Amherst Central School District YouTube channel.

In the District Office

Budget documents are available for review by calling the district clerk at 716-362-3051.

Publications

The budget newsletter is delivered to every resident in the school district via USPS mail in early May.

Amherst Central School District
55 Kings Highway
Amherst, NY 14226-4330

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Board of Education

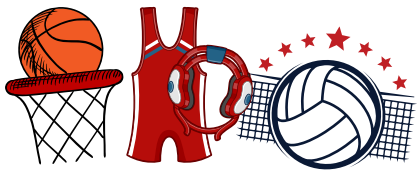
Jessica McLaughlin, *President*
Maryjane Metzen, *Vice President*
Gordon Crock
Nicholas DeMarco
Lynn Errington
Lorry Goldhawk
Daniel Weinstein

Anthony J. Panella, *Superintendent*

******ECRWSSEDDM***
District Resident

Community Education This Summer

Registration is open for 2026 summer camps in basketball, wrestling, volleyball, tennis and PE games for boys and girls. All registration is done online at amherstschools.org. If you have questions, please contact Lori Sosenko in the community education office at 716-362-3031 or email at lsosenko@amherstschools.org.



Krolick's Chicken Barbecue

Tuesday, May 19, 2026
3-5:30 p.m.

at Amherst Central High School

Pickup in Washington Highway parking lot. Dinner includes two sides, dessert and roll.

Cost $15

Pre-order recommended, by Friday, May 15 by email to Laurie LeGoff at llegoff@amherstschools.org or call 716-362-8174.

School Registration for 2026-27

If you have a child who will be five years old on or before December 1, 2026, and lives within the boundaries of the Amherst CSD, they are eligible for kindergarten. All families new to the district are encouraged to register as soon as possible. Our district uses a central registration system. Instructions for the online registration process can be found on the district website at www.amherstschools.org.

Voter Eligibility

To qualify as a voter, a person must be:

- a citizen of the United States
- at least 18 years old
- a resident of Amherst Central School District for at least 30 days prior to May 19, 2026. (Education Law § 2012)

Apartment dwellers who meet these qualifications are eligible. No prior registration is required and residents do not have to be registered voters. (Education Law § 2012)

Budget Feedback

The Amherst CSD Board of Education values insight from the community and has set up an online feedback form open year-round to gather feedback from the community. Find the form on the Board of Education webpage at amherstschools.org.

Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots are available for the Amherst Central School District vote.

The completed ballot must be received by the District Clerk by 5 p.m. on May 19, the day of the vote.

A qualified voter in the district may use an absentee ballot if, on voting day, he or she is a patient in a hospital or unable to appear personally because of illness or physical disability or duties related to the primary care of an individual; or will be absent from Erie County for a long duration; or is detained in jail awaiting action conviction of an offense other than a felony.

For more information, contact the District Clerk at 716-362-3051 or visit the office at 55 Kings Highway, Amherst, NY.

Early Mail Applications/Ballots

Applications for early mail ballots for the budget vote and election of board members may be applied for at the District Clerk's office by May 12, 2026. You may only apply for an early mail ballot on your own behalf and you must be a qualified voter. A voter who applies for and is issued an early mail ballot will not be eligible for an absentee ballot for the same election. For more information, contact the District Clerk at 362-3051 or visit the office at 55 Kings Highway, Amherst, NY.

Twitter @AmherstCSD @AmherstMiddle @WindermereBlvd
@AmherstCHS @SmallwoodDrive @AmherstTigers1

Facebook Amherst Central High School