

Dear Blind Brook Residents:

On Tuesday, May 19, 2026, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., at the Bruno M. Ponterio Ridge Street Elementary School, voters will be presented with the 2026-2027 Blind Brook-Rye Union Free School District budget. The proposed budget is in the amount of \$63,426,274. This total represents a 3.83% increase over the 2025-2026 budget.

As in prior years, our goal is to deliver a conservative and responsible budget that maintains the integrity of our K-12 curriculum and programming. In recent years, it has become increasingly challenging for the district to manage this budget due to high inflation, rising health care and insurance costs, and significant increases in contracted transportation costs. Despite these obstacles, our proposed budget remains at the New York State Tax Levy Cap, with a tax levy increase of 2.59%.

In addition to the annual budget, residents will vote on Proposition 2. This proposition authorizes the District to use \$257,904 from the established Bus Fleet Reserve Fund to purchase two new school buses (one 70-passenger and one 20-passenger). Because these funds come from existing reserves, this acquisition has zero impact on the proposed budget or the tax levy.

This proposed budget continues our commitment to excellence through strategic investments, including:

- **Instructional Technology:** Continuing the iPad upgrade rollout at the High School and implementing a new Student Information System (Synergy).
- **Facilities & Security:** Upgrading the HS Commons furniture. Continuing the replacement cycle for district security cameras.
- **Student Support:** Maintaining our low student-to-counselor ratios and providing robust mental health and academic assistance.

This budget was developed through a meticulous review by Assistant Superintendent Laurie Baum, the District Business Office, and our administrative leadership team. We encourage you to learn more about the 2026-2027 budget at www.blindbrook.org and by watching our Board meeting budget discussions online.

In addition, it is important to mention two additional points. This year we were lucky enough to welcome Dr. Brian Alm into our district as our Superintendent of Schools. If you have not met Dr. Alm yet, we encourage you to reach out to him to say hello. And we would be remiss if we didn't give a special thanks to the seven teachers and six long-term staff members who will be retiring at the end of this year. Their more than 350 years of service to our district will be sorely missed.

The Board of Education and District leadership thank the Blind Brook community for its dedication, generosity, and unwavering support of our schools. With fiscally mindful and innovative planning, the Blind Brook Schools are poised to remain a pillar of excellence in our community.

Jeffrey Mensch,
Blind Brook Board of Education President

BUDGET VOTE: Tuesday, May 19th, 2026

A Message from Dr. Brian J. Alm, Superintendent of Schools

Since our initial budget presentation in March, our administrative team has been hard at work. I am pleased to share that, in close collaboration with the Board of Education, we have developed a 2026-2027 budget that reflects our shared values: providing a premier education while remaining deeply mindful of our community's investment.

Our goal remains as it has been for several years: to craft a budget that maintains the high-quality educational experiences our students deserve, complies with the New York State tax cap, and advances our long-term strategic goals. While we continue to navigate the rising costs of materials, healthcare, and utilities, our focus has remained on optimization.

By finding creative efficiencies within our operations, we have been able to meet the tax cap without impacting the quality of instruction. In fact, this responsible approach allows us to make modest, targeted improvements to our student programming.

The 2026-2027 budget ensures that our students continue to engage in the vibrant, hands-on deep learning that defines our district. Highlights of the upcoming year include:

- **Hands-On Learning:** Continued support for the Bruno M. Ponterio Ridge Street School courtyard garden and the Middle/High School Fab Lab.
- **Innovative Instruction:** Funding for teachers to design immersive lessons, engage guest speakers, and lead enriching field trips.
- **Academic Support:** Targeted resources to meet the evolving academic needs of every student.

In addition to our general operating budget, our voter-approved capital projects continue to transform our campus. Following the recent installation of our new press box, this summer will bring refreshing cosmetic upgrades to our bathrooms, art classrooms, and technology suites, ensuring our physical environment matches the high quality of the instruction happening within those walls.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to this proposal. I am especially grateful to our administrative team; their dedication to finding optimizations and making thoughtful, least-impactful reductions was essential to this process. The 2026-2027 budget effectively meets the needs of our students while remaining deeply respectful of our taxpayers. I invite you to review the detailed budget documents available on the Finances page of our District website. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or to Ms. Laurie Baum, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Facilities.

Thank you for your continued support of our schools.

BUDGET LEARNING INITIATIVES

District Initiatives

The district's strategic coherence plan continues to drive improvement in teaching and learning through a number of important initiatives:

- Professional learning for teachers and staff on a wide variety of topics including integrating artificial intelligence into K-12 education, classroom questioning and discussion strategies, supporting student writing, and meeting student needs through the MTSS process.
- Hosting our first district visit by members of the Tri-States Consortium to provide benchmarking and feedback on our writing program.
- Addition of a part-time instructional coach to provide ongoing professional learning for teachers at the middle and high school levels.
- Support for additional meeting and collaboration time for academic departments at the middle and high schools.

Bruno M. Ponterio Ridge Street School

At the Bruno M. Ponterio Ridge Street School, we remain deeply committed to providing our students with a supportive, inclusive learning environment that nurtures both academic success and social-emotional well-being. We want our Bluebirds to soar as we continue to emphasize 21st-century learning skills that are student-centered and learner-driven. Our programs are designed to strengthen essential competencies such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, and problem-solving.

We are excited to share highlights of the budget that has been prepared for the upcoming school year, which reflects our continued dedication to innovation, excellence, and the whole-child experience:

- Continue the implementation of the Into Reading literacy program, building on the progress made in the past three years with its connection to our social studies program. We are also taking a closer look at our K-5 writing continuum to ensure consistency across grade levels and continued growth in student writing.
- Continuing our work with math and science as we focus on deep problem-solving and hands-on experiences.
- Continue to enrich school-wide programming

with expanded opportunities in our courtyard, greenhouse, and on our performing arts stage.

- Extend learning beyond the classroom through meaningful, school-sponsored field trips.
- Continue developing students' emotional intelligence through Yale's RULER approach and its Mood Meter and Class Charters, while exploring additional conflict management tools to support all learners.
- Create and sustain programs that foster connection, build relationships, and strengthen our sense of school community.
- Promote instruction through a lens of diversity, encouraging empathy, acceptance, and appreciation of others.

We are proud of the work happening at the BMP Ridge Street School and look forward to another impactful year of growth, creativity, and joyful learning.

Blind Brook Middle School

The Blind Brook Middle School budget continues to promote the implementation of principles of middle-level education. These include: an organization and structure that supports academic excellence and personal development through grade-level teaming; a comprehensive educational program that is challenging, integrated, exploratory, relevant, and aligned to the Next Generation Standards; comprehensive counseling and support services to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of young adolescents; instruction that fosters active, purposeful, and meaningful learning; and co-curricular activities that enrich students' lives and lead to the development of the whole child. Specifically, the proposed budget will allow us to:

- Maintain all current courses and programs.
- Maintain current extra- and co-curricular activities.
- Introduce a new classroom novel in 7th grade.

Blind Brook High School

The Blind Brook High School budget supports our continued commitment to preserving and enhancing a high-quality academic program while maintaining fiscal responsibility. Our work is grounded in alignment with the New York State Vision of a Graduate and reflects our focus on deep learning, effective communication, and meaningful student engagement.

We continue to invest in professional learning, ensuring alignment with district priorities such as problem-based learning, high-leverage questioning, and instructional strategies that promote student voice and critical thinking. Our academic program provides rigorous and enriching core coursework, while also offering students opportunities to explore their interests through electives and co-curricular experiences across DICE, the Humanities, and the Arts.

Equally important, we remain committed to supporting the whole child. Our comprehensive counseling program, revised MTSS framework, and strong emphasis on mental health resources ensure that students receive the academic, social, and emotional support they need. As students progress through our high school, they build authentic connections with peers and adults, preparing them for successful college and career pathways.

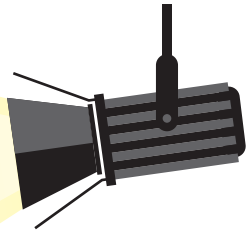
The proposed budget reflects a careful balance between maintaining program quality and making thoughtful reductions in non-essential areas, while also addressing key facility needs that enhance student experience and safety.

Specifically, our budget will allow us to:

- Maintain all current courses, programs, and extracurricular offerings.
- Provide ongoing professional development.
- Support participation in regional and national academic competitions.
- Maintain and enhance student support services, including counseling, college and career planning, and mental health resources.
- Continue implementation of a revised MTSS framework to better support all learners.
- Provide robust co-curricular programming of clubs and activities.
- Sustain a comprehensive college counseling program, including workshops, college visits, and individualized planning.
- Support career and technical education opportunities through our partnership with SWBOCES.
- Address facility needs, including the planned replacement of aging commons furniture to improve safety, functionality, and student experience.



SPOTLIGHT ON BOARD MEMBER CANDIDATES



Danny Fung

Danny Fung is seeking re-election to the Blind Brook Board of Education to continue his commitment to fiscal responsibility and academic excellence. A resident of Rye Brook for nearly a decade, Danny and his wife, Kaity, are the proud parents of two children in the district.

Professionally, Danny works in financial services, advising municipalities, privately held firms, and publicly traded companies on managing complex investment risks. He brings this rigorous analytical background to his work on the Board, ensuring the district's long-term financial health.

During his first term, Danny has been an active leader on the Facilities, Audit, Curriculum, Technology, and DEI committees, and has been a vocal advocate for modernizing campus infrastructure, implementing enhanced safety protocols, and upgrading facilities for student-athletes.

Danny holds a BSc in Economics from Binghamton University and has served as a guest lecturer at New York University and Columbia University. A firm believer in mentorship, he is a former Big Brother with Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC and remains a dedicated mentor to Binghamton undergraduates pursuing careers in finance.



Katherine Hallissy Ayala

Katherine Hallissy Ayala is seeking election to a second term on the Blind Brook Board of Education. First elected in 2023, she has been a committed advocate for the district and its students. Katherine and her husband Hugo have been residents of Rye Brook for 17 years. Their two sons attend Blind Brook schools and are currently in eighth and twelfth grade, respectively.

Katherine is a middle school computer science teacher with experience at the elementary and high school levels. She graduated from Wellesley College with a double major in Computer Science and Spanish and received a Masters in Computing in Education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

A resolute and deeply engaged community volunteer since 2015, Katherine served as a Committee Chair and Den Leader in the Rye Brook Cub Scouts for seven years. Her commitment to local education and enrichment has included service on the Blind Brook PTA Executive Board, the PTA's Pick a Reading Partner Committee, multiple district-wide committees, and the Friends of the Port Chester-Rye Brook Public Library. In addition, Katherine co-founded the PTA's Supporting Every Individual Difference Committee.



2026-2027 BUDGET VOTE & BOARD MEMBER ELECTION

Budget Vote & Board Member Election

Tuesday, May 19, 2026 – BMRSS Old Gym

Polls Open: 7:00 a.m. - Polls Close: 9:00 p.m.

Voting by Mail

Any registered, qualified voter may vote by mail in one of two ways.

To vote by mail, you must **submit an application** for either an Early Mail Voter Ballot or an Absentee Ballot.

Applications are available on the district website, <https://www.blindbrook.org/board-of-education/voter-information> or by contacting the District Clerk at 914-937-3600 x1001, vgroccia@blindbrook.org to have an application sent to you.

Application must be printed, **ink signed by the voter** and returned either in person or by mail to the office of the District Clerk (application cannot be submitted via email):

Vivian Groccia, 390 North Ridge Street, Rye Brook, NY 10573

Application must be received by 2:00 PM on May 12, 2026 if the ballot will be mailed to you, or by 4:00 PM on Monday, May 18, 2026 if you are picking up the ballot.

Additional Information

Please contact Vivian Groccia, District Clerk, 914-937-3600x1001, vgroccia@blindbrook.org.



The Board of Education
Blind Brook-Rye Union Free School District
390 North Ridge Street
Rye Brook, NY 10573

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ANNUAL BUDGET VOTE & BOARD MEMBER ELECTION

DATE: TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026

POLLS OPEN: 7:00 AM - 9:00 PM

PLACE: BRUNO M. PONTERIO RIDGE STREET SCHOOL/OLD GYM

**2026-2027 PROPOSED BUDGET
BLIND BROOK-RYE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**



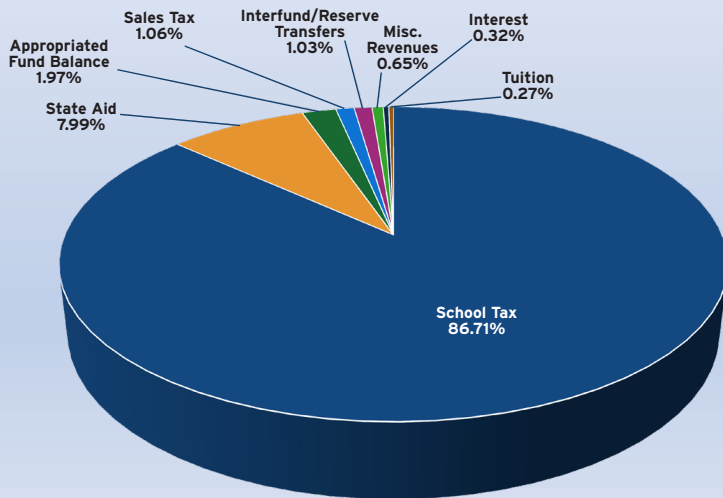
BUDGET VOTE: Tuesday, May 19th, 2026

**2026-2027 PROPOSED BUDGET
BLIND BROOK-RYE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

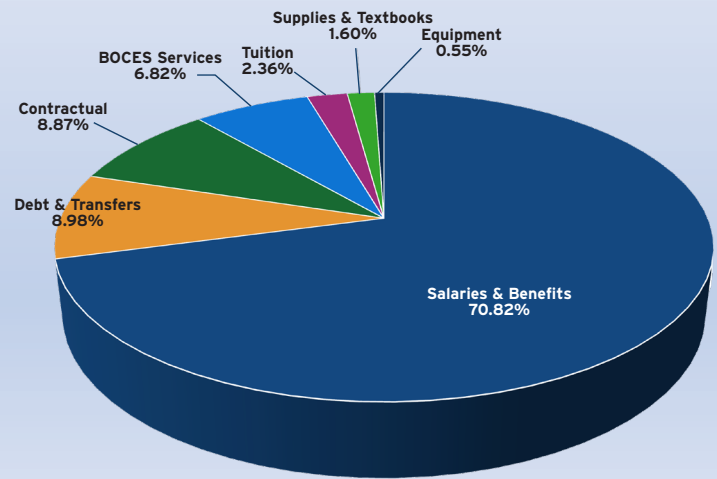
For more information: www.blindbrook.org

Revenue Source	2026-27 Proposed Budget	2025-26 Budget	Dollar Change	% of Budget
School Tax	\$54,995,469	\$53,607,090	\$1,388,379	86.71%
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$1,249,000	\$1,177,857	\$71,143	1.97%
State Aid	\$5,070,041	\$4,735,742	\$334,299	7.99%
Tuition	\$169,699	\$245,922	(\$76,223)	0.27%
Sales Tax	\$675,000	\$600,000	\$75,000	1.06%
Interest	\$202,400	\$315,000	(\$112,600)	0.32%
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$410,665	\$303,355	\$107,310	0.65%
Interfund/Reserve Transfers	\$654,000	\$100,000	\$554,000	1.03%
Total Revenue	\$63,426,274	\$61,084,966	\$2,341,308	100.00%

REVENUES



EXPENSES



Expenditures: How is the Money Spent?

Expenses	2026-27 Proposed Budget	2025-26 Budget	Dollar Change	% of Budget
Salaries & Benefits	\$44,919,722	\$44,937,727	(\$18,005)	70.82%
Debt & Transfers	\$5,698,329	\$5,206,030	\$492,299	8.98%
BOCES Services	\$4,322,564	\$3,607,838	\$714,726	6.82%
Equipment	\$350,673	\$249,340	\$101,333	0.55%
Contractual	\$5,622,970	\$4,801,337	\$821,633	8.87%
Supplies & Textbooks	\$1,012,391	\$888,704	\$123,687	1.60%
Tuition	\$1,499,625	\$1,393,990	\$105,635	2.36%
Total Appropriations	\$63,426,274	\$61,084,966	\$2,341,308	100.00%

Budget Notice	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	\$ 61,084,966	\$ 63,426,274	\$ 61,537,895				
Increase/Decrease for the 2026-2027 School Year		\$ 2,341,308	\$ 452,929				
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		3.83 %	0.74%				
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.63%					
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$ 53,607,090	\$ 54,995,469					
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)	\$ 53,607,090	\$54,995,469	\$53,607,090				
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$ 4,412,997	\$ 4,587,841					
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$ 49,194,093	\$ 50,407,628					
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D)	\$ 49,194,093	\$ 50,407,628					
I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval)	\$ 0	\$ 0					
Administrative Component	\$ 6,507,180	\$ 6,846,716	\$ 6,554,817				
Program Component	\$ 43,762,294	\$ 44,935,956	\$ 44,002,651				
Capital Component	\$ 10,815,492	\$ 11,643,602	\$ 10,980,427				
If a contingency budget becomes necessary, the District estimates a required reduction of \$1,888,379 from the proposed budget. As a result, all planned purchases of furniture and equipment would be eliminated, as well as a decrease in staff positions. Instructional supply budgets would be significantly reduced, and all field trips would be cancelled. Professional development opportunities, including training in instructional strategies, conference participation, travel, and professional organization memberships, would be substantially curtailed. In addition, there would be major reductions in extracurricular programs and interscholastic athletics resulting in a decrease in team sports and clubs. Community use of district buildings and grounds would no longer be permitted unless fully self-funded.							
** 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)		<table><tr><td>Description</td><td>Amount</td></tr><tr><td>Use of Fleet Capital Reserve to purchase one (1) seventy (70) passenger bus and one (1) twenty (20) passenger bus</td><td>\$ 257,904</td></tr></table>		Description	Amount	Use of Fleet Capital Reserve to purchase one (1) seventy (70) passenger bus and one (1) twenty (20) passenger bus	\$ 257,904
Description	Amount						
Use of Fleet Capital Reserve to purchase one (1) seventy (70) passenger bus and one (1) twenty (20) passenger bus	\$ 257,904						

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2026-2027 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$1,360
The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2026-27 by the qualified voters of the Blind Brook-Rye Union Free School District, Westchester County, New York, will be held at Bruno Ponterio Ridge Street School in said district on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time in the Bruno Ponterio Ridge Street 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.	

ON THE BALLOT

PROPOSITION NUMBER ONE - 2026-2027 BUDGET

Shall the proposed budget or estimate of expenditures for the ensuing fiscal year (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027) presented by the Board of Education in the amount of \$63,426,274 be approved and the taxes in the necessary amount therefore be levied?

PROPOSITION NUMBER TWO - AUTHORIZE EXPENDITURE FROM THE BUS FLEET RESERVE FUND - 2022

Shall the Board of Education of the Blind Brook-Rye Union Free School District be authorized, to expend from the Blind Brook-Rye Union Free School District Bus Fleet Reserve Fund - 2022, which was established on May 16, 2023 ("Reserve Fund") pursuant to Section 3651 of the Education Law, for the purchase and acquisition of one (1) seventy (70) passenger school bus and one (1) twenty (20) passenger school bus, in the approximate amount of \$257,904.00, and other work required in connection therewith; and to expend from the Reserve Fund therefor, including preliminary costs and costs incidental thereto an amount not to exceed the estimated total cost of \$257,904.00?

