

School Gram

KENMORE-TOWN OF TONAWANDA UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

REGISTER FOR UPK!



The Ken-Ton School District is proud to offer one of the region's best Universal Pre-Kindergarten Programs housed at Hamilton Elementary School, which features a beautiful new playground. This full-day program is FREE for all students. Those turning 4 years of age on or before December 1st, 2026 are eligible for the 2026-27 school year beginning in September. The UPK curriculum is designed to give every child a joyful, engaging, and meaningful foundation for kindergarten and beyond. Page 6

Voters Must Use Thorncliff Road Entrance

On Tuesday, May 19th, district residents will have the opportunity to vote on the proposed 2026-27 budget during the annual Budget Vote and Board of Education Election. It will take place from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, May 19th at Hoover Middle School. This year will be different from previous years in that voters will use the Thorncliff Road entrance to the school, where voting will be located (do NOT use the Sheridan Drive entrance).

The proposed 2026-27 budget includes only a 2.31% increase in the property tax levy. Keeping the



Sabatino Cimato,
Superintendent of
Schools



Matthew Chimera,
Board of Education
President

tax levy as low as possible was a major priority for the district because we are always mindful of the impact on property tax payers. It is important to note that New York State had not approved a final budget for the state's fiscal year at the time our proposed budget was adopted. The NYS budget determines how much state aid we receive, which is one of our most important revenue sources. However, we worked hard to make the best possible estimates based on budget deliberations to date.

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****NEW THIS YEAR: USE THE THORNCLIFF ROAD ENTRANCE****



BUDGET VOTE & BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTION

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

Hoover Middle School,
249 Thorncliff Road

**NEW THIS YEAR:
ENTER VIA
THORNCLIFF ROAD**

Budget Information:
www.ktufsd.org/budget

Candidate Information:
www.ktufsd.org/candidates

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POINTS OF PRIDE: STUDENTS & STAFF

These are just some of the many achievements and accomplishments of students and staff over the past year.



Kenmore East Model United Nations Team

STUDENTS:

- At the regional Model UN competition, the **Kenmore East Model UN team** earned the highest distinction possible, Best Overall Delegation, for the 20th time in team history. Students also won first place in three of nine Model UN committees.
- A total of **nine Ken-Ton student artists** were selected to have their artwork displayed at the 2026 WNY High School Student Art Exhibition.
- At the Kenan Center's Storrs All High Art Show, Kenmore West student **Aislinn Reed** won an award for best artwork in nature while **Connor O'Donnell** had his artwork chosen for the program cover.
- Kenmore Junior/Senior High School student **Spencer Beatty** won first place in the Healthy Choices Art Contest organized through WNY United.
- Last spring, **Zachary Collins** from Kenmore West performed as part of the All-Eastern Mixed Chorus, which represented the top musicians across 10 East Coast states. Additionally, students **Karissa Curry, Sydney McHugh, Ghana Mohammed, and Elizabeth Starkweather** from Kenmore East and **Copeland Baker, Alistair Gianni, Khloe Kibby, Quinn Lew, and Josephine Sturmer** from Kenmore West were accepted into highly selective Conference All-State ensembles (best in NYS) while **44 students** from Kenmore East, Kenmore West, and Franklin Middle were accepted into Area All-State ensembles (best in WNY).



Kenmore West Band students at the Darken Lake Music Festival

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CLASS OF 2026

- **75% of 440 graduates** earned at least one of the following designations: Advanced Regents Diploma, Advanced Regents with Honors, Technical Endorsement on their Regents Diploma, Seal of Civic Readiness, and Seal of Bilingualism.
- **129 graduates** earned an Advanced Regents or Advanced Regents with Honors.
- **9 students** were candidates for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. IB students have been accepted into some of the most selective colleges in the U.S. and can even begin college as sophomores.
- **131 students** earned a Technical Endorsement on their Regents Diploma for completing a Career & Technical Education Program, including many through the Ken-Ton Career Academies.
- **290 students** earned the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness.
- **62 students** earned the NYS Seal of Bilingualism in French, German, or Spanish.



Scenes from the Big Picture, Crossroads Academy, Kenmore East, and Kenmore West graduation ceremonies

- The **Kenmore West High School Blue Devil Big Band, Franklin Middle School Band, and Franklin Middle School Orchestra** all won first place in their respective categories at the 2025 Darien Lake Music Festival while the **Combined Kenmore West Band** won second place.
- The **Kenmore West Theater and Music Department** won the Outstanding Student-Led Orchestral Performance award at last spring's Shea's Wonder Awards for the production of "Anything Goes." The show was also nominated for Outstanding Production of a Musical, Outstanding Lighting Design and Execution, Outstanding Hair and Makeup Design and Execution, and Outstanding Scenic Design and Execution.
- Two Kenmore West/Erie 1 BOCES students placed in the top two at last spring's NYS SkillsUSA competition: **Marissa Davoli** (first place with her team in the Health Knowledge Bowl) and **Preston Payne** (second place in the Welding competition). At this year's regional competition, Kenmore East student **Victoria Gentile** won second place in the Job Interview competition.
- Kenmore West student **Jacob Laud** was accepted into the highly competitive Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange program to study abroad in Germany.



Jacob Laud

POINTS OF PRIDE: STUDENTS & STAFF

- Kenmore West students **Michael Greene, Kerry-Ann Lewis, and Gabriella Pilat** were among just 12 students from throughout the region recognized at the 2025 Character Council of WNY Scholarship Awards Dinner.
- Kenmore East students **Tyler Kent and Miguel Flores** won second place in the highly competitive Computer App category at the SUNY Erie Tech Wars while **Coby Dybas and Josh Banaszak** won third place.
- The **Kenmore West DECA chapter** had an exceptional showing at the recent DECA regional competition with four students winning first or second place in their respective categories (**Joseph Edwards, Misha LaMotte, Jack Lipowski, and Carter Winiarski**).



College-bound athletes

- A total of **34 Kenmore East and Kenmore West student-athletes** signed their national letters of intent to compete at the collegiate level.
- The NYS Public High School Athletic Association designated **Kenmore East and Kenmore West** as Schools of Excellence for having at least 75% of varsity teams earn the Scholar-Athlete Team Award.



Kenmore Boys Wrestling Team

TEAMS & ATHLETES:

- The **Kenmore Boys Wrestling Team** won the Section VI Division I Championship. Individual champions included Kenmore East's **Jake Giannantonio** and Kenmore West's **Sawyer Dickinson** as well as Kenmore East's **Mackenzie Vetter-Higgins** from the girls team.

- In its first-ever season, the **Kenmore Girls Flag Football Team** made it all the way to the Section VI Class A Championship after finishing with a 12-2 regular season record and a perfect 7-0 league record.



Kenmore Girls Flag Football Team

- The **Kenmore West Hockey Team** made it all the way to the Section VI Championship after finishing the season 18-2 overall with a perfect 10-0 league record.

- Kenmore East student **Amelia MacKinnon** was the Section VI Class A Champion in both the 100M Butterfly and 100M Backstroke.



Amelia MacKinnon

- Kenmore East student **Julianna Schmitt** won first place at the Section VI Bowling Championship.

- The **Kenmore East Cheerleading Team** won the NFL Championship.

STAFF, SCHOOLS & DISTRICT:

- Franklin Elementary School first-grade teacher **Alex Bianchi** became the most recent Ken-Ton educator to earn National Board Certification, considered the gold standard in teaching. He also earned his NYS Master Teacher designation, which is one of the highest honors a teacher can receive in NYS.



Alex Bianchi

- Instructional Support Specialist for ELA **Amy Butler**, Kenmore West Assistant Principal **Dr. Denise Grandits**, and Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources **Jeff Richards** all earned the WNY Educational Service Council Award of Excellence.



Amy Butler, Jeff Richards & Dr. Denise Grandits

- For the 15th year in a row, the **Ken-Ton School District** was honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation by the NAMM Foundation.

- Kenmore East art teacher **Matthew Sagurney** was one of the artists selected to have their artwork prominently featured at Highmark Stadium.

- Public Relations Assistant **Jenna Stockman** received the highest distinction possible, the Award of Excellence, through the New York School Public Relations Association annual awards contest in the Writing category.

- English as a New Language (ENL) Coordinator **Jennifer Conway** was awarded the English-Language Learner (ELL) Advocate Award from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network.

- Kenmore West business teacher **Sharon Stoll** was selected for the 2025 NYS Department of Labor Teacher Ambassador Program.

Instructional Efforts Are Yielding Improved Academic Results

The most recent New York State Report Card and NYS Education Department accountability designations for schools in our district show students making good academic progress, a reflection of the collaboration taking place among staff and the outstanding work of our curriculum/instruction department.

Earlier this year, NYSED released its school district Report Cards which include state assessment results at the elementary, middle, and high school level. Our results signify impressive progress on the Gr. 3-8 NYS Assessments. For example, on the ELA assessments, we saw improvement in all but three of the 20 individual building-specific grade levels (Gr. 3 and Gr. 4 at each of our five elementary schools, Gr. 5-7 at Franklin Middle/Hoover Middle, Gr. 7 and Gr. 8 at Kenmore Junior/Senior High, and Gr. 8 at Kenmore East and Kenmore West). District-wide, our proficiency rate increased by 11%. On the math assessments, we saw improvement in all but four of the 20 individual building-specific grade levels and District-wide, we saw a proficiency rate increase of 7%. On the NYS Regents

Exams, our students exceeded the New York State average in several subjects including Algebra I, Geometry, U.S. History, and Chemistry.

Improved academic results are also reflected in the most recent accountability designations released by the state. NYSED's accountability system includes the following designations: LSI (Local Support & Improvement, formerly "Good Standing"); TSI (Targeted Support & Improvement, schools in need of improvement); ATSI (Additional Targeted Support & Improvement, schools needing additional improvement); and CSI (Comprehensive Support & Improvement, schools needing the most improvement). These designations are based on measures such as academic achievement and graduation rates. If a school fails to meet specific benchmarks within at least one individual subgroup of students for two years in a row, that school is designated as TSI for that subgroup.

Beginning this year, we had a total of six schools designated as TSI. However, the district recently learned that Franklin Elementary, Franklin Middle, and Hoover

Middle have all earned an LSI destination. All three schools were designated as TSI following the 2022-23 school year but demonstrated sufficient progress over the last two years to achieve LSI designations.

Teachers, administrators, and curriculum leaders have been working extremely hard to implement new programs and initiatives in recent years and these results show that their efforts are paying off. The work being carried out in schools has included a greater focus on high-impact instructional practices such as clearly articulating learning intentions and success criteria, as well as empowering students to assess their own progress.

Teachers are also focusing on analyzing student assessment data to a greater extent than before and taking part in highly effective professional development. Central to this effort are professional learning communities which review data, identify priorities, and in turn strengthen classroom practices.

The progress being made in schools wouldn't have been possible without everyone's hard work including teachers, administrators, students, and families.



The Ken-Ton School District 2025 Corporate Challenge Team.

Ken-Ton Well Represented at Buffalo Corporate Challenge

The Ken-Ton School District was very well represented at the 2025 Buffalo Corporate Challenge, which took place in June. With more than 160 participants, Ken-Ton was one of the six largest teams out of more than 200 organizations and businesses taking part.

This was the third year in a row the district has seen its team grow by leaps and bounds, with participation quadrupling during this time period. For the second year in a row, Ken-Ton was also proud to have one of its very own students, Abby Holmes from Kenmore West, sing the National Anthem.

The Buffalo Corporate Challenge brought together more than 200 companies/

organizations for a 3.5-mile walk/run with all proceeds from the 2025 event benefiting FeedMoreWNY.

Numerous partners made it possible for district staff to take part including Buff-a-Logo, Buffalo Gift Emporium, Hodgson Russ, SchoolFront, Instructure, Savvas, Campus Construction, CPL, Juniper Networks, Latina Boulevard Foods, Tarian Group, Bond Schoeneck & King, Eagle Copier Solutions, Lippes Mathias, Sherwin Williams, Home Depot, Pat's Glass & Glazing Inc., RW Lindsay, McS Buffalo, Rel Com Inc., Niagara Window & Janitorial Corp., MRC Inc., John's Towing & Service, Thomas Hanlon, Arric Corporation, and Niagara Custodial Supply.

New Safety & Security Initiatives Implemented

During the 2025-26 school year, new initiatives have been launched to cultivate a safer, more secure environment in schools.

One example is daily Opengate screenings in middle and high schools. The district has been using OpenGate weapons of mass casualty detectors, which can detect weapons such as firearms, for several years including random screenings and for visitors and late arrivals. This year was the first year daily screenings were implemented in all middle and high schools. This would not have been possible without the hard work and collaboration of teachers, staff, and school administrators.

This year also began with a new model for security personnel. Each of 10 schools now has one armed officer through the district's partner, the Tarian Group, each and every day. All Tarian officers are highly trained retired law enforcement. Additionally, new unarmed Security Officer positions were created during the school day. This includes a Senior Security Officer to



Students take part in daily OpenGate screenings at middle/high schools.

oversee the team, five Security Officers at Kenmore West, four Security Officers at Kenmore East, and one each at the Franklin and Hoover Complex.

One Security Officer at both Kenmore East and Kenmore West works extended hours and spends time after school at Adams Field and Crosby Field, which provides an added layer of safety and proactive engagement.

These are in addition to other measures put in place in recent years including newly renovated single points of entry with shatter-resistant glass, enhanced camera coverage, door hardening, and a longstanding partnership with Altaris Consulting, a national leader in security/safety planning.

Bus Tours Offer Opportunities to Learn More About Ken-Ton

In the coming weeks, residents will have the opportunity to learn more about the rich history of Kenmore and the Town of Tonawanda through periodic bus tours offered by the Ken-Ton School District.

Participants board a school bus which departs from Kenmore Junior/Senior High on Delaware Road for a 90-minute drive through Kenmore and the Town of Tonawanda. The tour is narrated by Superintendent Sabatino Cimato and Board of Education President Matthew Chimera and it passes numerous locations of significance for the Town of Tonawanda, the Village of Kenmore, and the Ken-Ton School District.

The tour includes dozens of locations of historical importance in areas throughout the town and village as well as current and former school locations. Mr. Cimato and Mr. Chimera not only detail the history of the Ken-Ton School District but the Town of



Residents take part in a community bus tour narrated by Superintendent Sabatino Cimato and Board President Matthew Chimera.

Tonawanda and Village of Kenmore as well going back to the early 1800s. All participants receive a map which includes the tour route and detailed information about dozens of different locations so they can follow along.

These include all district schools as well as schools that have long since closed and the district's earliest educational institutions, not to mention important locations along the Niagara River, neighborhoods, areas with historical significance, and other points of interest.

The tour was first introduced for new teachers entering the district in August 2022 and was expanded to include tours for community members as well. The tour is free and open to all school district residents. These tours typically begin at 6 p.m. and reservation information is published in the Ken-Ton Bee. You can also check the district website at www.ktufsd.org/BusTour for upcoming dates. Be sure to check back frequently since new dates are periodically added based on interest. Registration is always required since seats are limited and are provided on a first-come/first-serve basis with a waiting list maintained if needed.

Food Service Department Expands Opportunities for Students/Families

Breakfast and lunch are free for all Ken-Ton School District students with no sign-up required thanks to the federal Community Eligibility Provision program. But the district's Food Service Program is doing far more than just providing breakfast and lunch for students each and every day.

Not only does the Food Service team work hard to develop delicious recipes which students will enjoy, but they have also facilitated plenty of new grant-funded opportunities for students/families.

In August, under the direction of Food Service Director Kim Roll, the department hosted its annual Culinary Camp, an annual tradition that brings together the district's cook managers from all 10 schools to develop new skills and experiment with new recipes. Last summer's theme was "scratch cooking," which is preparing meals using raw, whole ingredients as opposed



Food Service staff take part in the 2025 Culinary Camp before the first day of school.

to pre-packaged, processed foods. Dishes included two types of lasagna, meatloaf, baked tomato/feta pasta, blueberry peach feta salad, bean wraps, ratatouille, roasted vegetables, and a Jamaican jerk chicken with homemade rub.

Through the grant-funded Farm-to-School Program, families have been able to sign up to receive "cook kits" which include ingredients as well as recipe instructions to prepare a particular dish. For example, earlier this year, Kenmore West families had the opportunity to receive guacamole cook kits with all the necessary ingredients including tortilla chips, limes, tomatoes, avocados, garlic, and onions.

The Food Service Department and Farm-to-School Program also helped acquire hydroponic systems that are capable of growing plants in water-based, nutrient-rich solutions as an alternative to soil. This makes it possible for classes to grow their own vegetables inside the building during the school day.

The Ken-Ton School District Food Service Team is always striving to offer the best-quality nutritious meals for students to enjoy.

District & Chamber Partner to Offer Local Job Fair for High School Juniors

The Ken-Ton School District and Ken-Ton Chamber of Commerce partnered to host the Chamber's first-ever Career Connections event which brought together nearly 400 juniors from Kenmore East, Kenmore West, and Kenmore Junior/Senior High with more than 35 local businesses and four expert presenters for a day focused on career exploration, skill-building, and community connection.

Developed in partnership with the WNY Scholars Foundation, Career

Connections was designed to introduce students to the wide range of career opportunities available right here in the Ken-Ton community including internships, summer jobs, long-term careers, and more.

Throughout the day, students participated in interactive sessions covering essential topics such as how to start a business, how to present themselves professionally in the workforce, effective study strategies, and careers in civil service fields.



Ken-Ton high school students engage with local business representatives.

High School Students Inspire Our Youngest Learners

Throughout the school year, high school students regularly visit elementary schools to mentor and inspire our youngest students.

On February 4th, which was “National Girls and Women in Sports Day,” students in Lindbergh Elementary teacher Katelyn Hemingway’s class spent time learning about various successful female athletes. The class then welcomed Kenmore East varsity cheerleaders, who are coached by Ms. Hemingway, and they collaborated on a research project highlighting important female athletes.

Teacher Heather Pohl’s first-graders at Franklin were challenged to create their own original monsters under the direction of art teacher Andrea Spoth. These were sent to digital art students in Kenmore East art teacher Megan Sweeney’s class along with a statement about the monster as well as its name and a fun fact about it. The high school students then reimagined their younger partner’s artwork using industry-standard design programs and then visited Mrs. Pohl’s class to meet their partners and deliver both the original and reimagined artwork.

Students in Karen Kull’s Gr. 1 class at Edison recently created a Solar System/ coloring book as part of their Solar System unit with the help of a student who was once taught in that very same classroom: Ms. Kull’s former Gr. 1 student, Gabriella James. Gabriella is currently enrolled in the Big Picture Program at Kenmore Junior/Senior High and has reconnected with her former grade school teacher through an ongoing internship which placed her in Ms. Kull’s class.

As part of an International Baccalaureate (IB) Program project, Kenmore West students Aja Wittemann and Dominic DiGiulio coordinated a social and emotional wellness education day for Gr. 1 students at Hoover. Students rotated through several stations which were run by other Kenmore West students. With support from English teacher Jennifer Lamanna, Aja and Dominic worked



Clockwise, from top left, Martha Sikorski’s students visit Hoover; Megan Sweeney’s students visit Franklin; Kenmore East varsity cheerleaders visit Lindbergh; and Kenmore East girls varsity basketball players visit Edison.

closely with the school’s Take a Look at Teaching Club as well as the administration at Hoover to make the event a success.

Kenmore West Studio in Art students from Martha Sikorski’s class recently paid a special visit to Samantha Page’s kindergarten class at Hoover Elementary School for an “alphabet party.” Mrs. Sikorski’s students collaborated on a project that included illuminated letters from the alphabet with each student creating a page dedicated to a specific letter and worked with the younger students to create alphabet-themed crowns.

There are also many examples of student-athletes visiting elementary schools to help students develop skills that could benefit them later in life and to serve as role models. For example, the Kenmore East boys and

girls varsity basketball teams recently visited Edison and Franklin to read with students and help them develop their basketball skills. The Kenmore West Varsity Football Team and Girls Varsity Volleyball Team visited Holmes to play games with the younger students, read books together, and get to know each other. And players on the Kenmore East Girls Varsity Soccer Team took time out of their school day to visit some of our youngest students at Edison and Franklin to help educate students about the sport of soccer during physical education classes.

In this way, not only do our older students serve as role models for our younger ones, they also educate them about the opportunities that are ahead of them when they reach high school.

Now’s the Time to Register for Universal Pre-Kindergarten

The Ken-Ton School District is proud to offer one of the region’s best Universal Pre-Kindergarten Programs housed at Hamilton Elementary School. This full-day program is FREE for all students and both before/after-school childcare and breakfast/lunch is available at a cost.

The program is operated by the Ken-Ton YMCA under the direction of the Ken-Ton Department of Elementary

Education. The UPK program is designed to give every child a joyful, engaging, and meaningful foundation for kindergarten and beyond. Teachers combine play-based exploration with high-quality, research-backed curriculum programs that nurture the whole child — academically, socially, and emotionally.

Through daily phonemic awareness lessons, children build strong early literacy skills. They learn to hear and play with the

sounds in words — an essential step toward confident reading and writing. Hamilton’s language and literacy program brings stories, vocabulary, and knowledge to life. Children explore rich themes through listening, discussion, and storytelling, expanding their curiosity and love for learning. As for numeracy, math comes alive through hands-on activities that build number sense, problem-solving skills, and a deep understanding of mathematical

concepts. Additionally, through MindUP, teachers support children’s social and emotional growth through mindfulness and self-regulation practices. MindUP helps children learn how to focus, manage emotions, and build empathy for others.

Those turning 4 years old on or before December 1st, 2026 are eligible for UPK during the 2026-27 school year. For information on registering, visit our website at www.ktufsd.org/UPK.

Students Are Making the Community a Better Place

There are countless examples of students giving back and making the community a better place. Throughout the year, students, staff, and families work together on a variety of donation drives, volunteer activities, and service initiatives meant to help people in our community. Here are just a few highlights:

Last spring, fourth-grade students in Hoover Elementary’s “Hoots” club created “Birthday Bags” for families which contained items such as frosting, cake mix, plates, candles, silverware, hats, and everything else needed for a successful birthday party.

Gr. 7 students in Kelly Bacon’s ELA classes at Hoover Middle worked on various “kindness projects” last spring dedicated to spreading kindness — everything from making cupcakes for police officers to collecting items for the Ken-Ton Closet.

Kenmore East and Kenmore West maintain a close relationship with ConnectLife, WNY’s only community blood center. ConnectLife has cited both schools as exemplars for their successful blood drives.

Under the leadership of student board representatives Dominic DiGiulio and Emma

Cudzilo, the District Leadership Council will soon be turning picnic tables at Aqua Lane Park into a canvas and decorating them with beautiful murals.

Teams and student groups volunteered countless hours in the community, everything from Kenmore West varsity and JV girls basketball teams volunteering at the Assumption Church Soup Kitchen to high school students cleaning up local parks.

Leading up to Valentine’s Day, students spent time making heartfelt Valentine’s Day cards for others. For example, students at Franklin Elementary made Valentines for veterans on behalf of the Gold Star Mothers through “Bobby’s Valentines” in honor of Capt. Robert “Bobby” Bager, who passed away during a training accident. And students at Kenmore Junior/Senior High made Valentine’s Day cards for Hearts in Bloom Buffalo, a local non-profit organization that delivers flowers, handwritten notes, and treats to widows, widowers, and grieving mothers across WNY.

Band, orchestra, and chorus teachers regularly enrich the community through public performances, everything from caroling during the holidays to special events like the grand



Clockwise, from top left, students make Valentines at Franklin Elementary; the Purple Pinkie Project; “Kindness Projects” at Hoover Middle; and “Birthday Bags” at Hoover Elementary.

reopening of the historic DL&W metro rail station at Canalside and Ken-Ton’s Memorial Day ceremony.

There were also dozens of donation drives for various causes such as the Purple Pinkie Project to support Rotary International’s efforts to eradicate polio, the Kenmore East Join the Winners event to support Kids Escaping Drugs, the Leo Club assembling toys/activities boxes for parents at Oshei Children’s Hospital, Lindbergh students raising money for the Cystic Fibrosis

Foundation in honor of a then first-grade student with cystic fibrosis and for the Kids Heart Challenge to support the American Heart Association, the Kenmore East Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) holding a cornhole tournament to raise money for the school’s food pantry, Universal Pre-Kindergarten students raising money for the YMCA, and multiple initiatives to donate to the Annual Jerry Starr Ken-Ton Schools’ SleepOut which benefits the Ken-Ton Closet and Family Support Center.

WHAT’S HAPPENING IN THE SCHOOLS

Franklin Students Explore Different Professions at Career Fair

Franklin Elementary School recently hosted a special Career Day event which gave students insight into a variety of different professions.

Students at all grade levels had the opportunity to speak with more than 20 different professionals, learn about their particular career field, ask questions, learn about the skills necessary to be successful in that position, and test out some of their equipment.

Fields included nursing, paleontology, law enforcement, graphic design, photography, home improvement, bus drivers, and librarians. Special thanks go



Franklin students learn about different professions at the recent Career Day event.

out to school counselor Rachel Fuller, social worker Michelle Bailey, and all the parents and organizations who helped make this opportunity possible for students.



All Edison Students Contribute to Impressive Art Display

During Edison Elementary’s recent Color Carnival, which involved each class representing a different color and many different fun activities, every student in school also colored a small square of paper with each student choosing their own color scheme. The papers were then combined together to create one expansive display in the school’s hallway showing how every student’s unique contribution comes together to create one beautiful piece of artwork.

Indoor Recess Room Provides New Options for Holmes Students

Students at Holmes Elementary School have a new way to remain active and play during cold or inclement weather with the opening of a new indoor recess room earlier this school year and classes have been taking advantage of its fun activities.

The inspiration behind the establishment of the Recess Room was to provide a great alternative to going outside and it came in handy during the winter months.

The room is on the second floor of the building and features different stations for students to enjoy such as games, puzzles,

STEM activities like Magna Tiles and Legos, coloring, dress-up, a play kitchen, Barbie toys, toy cars, and more. All of the materials were obtained from donations and contributions from the school's PTA, thrift stores, and garage sales.

Teachers have the option of reserving the room throughout the school year. With recess included each school day for 20 minutes for all students in Gr. K-4 across the district, it gives students the opportunity to have fun, practice and learn social/play skills, recharge, and unwind no matter the weather.



A student enjoys a puzzle in the Recess Room.

Franklin Middle Students Take Part in NASA GLOBE Program

In honor of the historic nine-day Artemis II mission, which brought a crew of four to the moon's orbit for the first time since 1972, Franklin Middle School seventh-grade students have been spending time outside collecting data as part of NASA's GLOBE program.

GLOBE is short for Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment. Through this initiative, students around the country collect data such as temperature readings and cloud cover reports which is then compiled by NASA.

This was done in the vicinity of the school's moon tree which was grown from a seed that flew aboard the unmanned Artemis I mission in 2022. It was in large



Franklin Middle students pose by the school's Moon Tree.

part because of Mrs. Valle's classes' participation in the GLOBE program that Franklin received one of the first 50 moon trees distributed nationwide. The American sycamore sapling was

planted on May 15th, 2024.

Through NASA's Artemis Program, which seeks to reestablish a human presence on the Moon for the first time since the 1972 Apollo 17 mission, tree

seeds from five different species were sent into space and orbited the moon. The seeds were flown aboard the Orion spacecraft during the unmanned Artemis I mission which launched on November 16th, 2022 and returned 25 days later. The seeds traveled hundreds of thousands of miles through space and orbited the moon several times as the Orion traveled farther away from Earth than any surface-returning human-rated spacecraft in history at the time.

The effort was inspired by the work of NASA astronaut Stuart Roosa, who brought tree seeds aboard the 1971 Apollo 14 mission which were later planted and are now flourishing throughout the U.S.



Lindbergh Celebrates Love of Literacy Week

During Love of Literacy Week, which takes place in March, each student was given a book entitled "Say Something" by author Peter H. Reynolds. This children's picture book encourages students to use their voices and actions to make a difference, emphasizing that every person has something to say and that even small acts can create change. It was all made possible thanks to the Lindbergh Elementary School PTA in celebration of Love of Literacy Week, which featured many different literacy-themed activities and special guest readers.

Sabretooth Visits Hoover Elementary

Thanks to the Hoover Elementary Physical Education Department led by Heather Ratka and Public Relations Assistant Jenna Stockman, Hoover won an exciting visit by Sabretooth on April 24th. The Sabres had challenged schools to submit a video showcasing their Sabres spirit and detailing what the team means to them. Hoover won the competition, and Sabretooth along with several members of the Sabres organization spent the morning at the school parading through the halls and leading a pep rally in the gym.

This wasn't the first visit by the Sabres organization. Hoover was among the first schools to take part in the Sabres "Students of the Game" program which is designed to incorporate floor hockey into the PE curriculum among local



Sabretooth leads a pep rally in the Hoover Elementary gym on April 24th. Through this program, representatives of the Buffalo Sabres organization visit the school to teach students the fundamental skills involved in floor hockey and take part in several games and challenges with their classmates. Students typically receive a free T-shirt and coupon to attend an upcoming Sabres game.

Student Teachers from Chile Visit Hoover Middle

In February, Hoover Middle School was proud to host six college student teachers and a professor from Chile. This opportunity, in partnership with Buffalo State University's International Professional Development Partnerships program, is giving these future teachers the chance to observe classroom instruction, learn about our curriculum, and experience what a typical school day is like.

The students spent two weeks in the Buffalo area as they shadowed teachers and experienced American education first-hand. They are all students at the Universidad San Sebastián and are studying to teach English.

The student teachers spent time shadowing several Hoover Middle teachers,



Student teachers from Chile visit Hoover Middle.

which was beneficial for Hoover students and staff members alike. For these student teachers, it was an eye-opening experience to see just how different learning is in U.S. schools compared to those back home.

Kenmore East Receives Exciting Upgrades

There have been many exciting upgrades over the past few months at Kenmore East High School thanks to ongoing capital construction work. Anyone who has driven past the building knows how it has been transformed through significant facade enhancements along the entire exterior of the building as well as through the construction of a beautiful new main entrance. It doesn't end there, though.

In September, the district celebrated the long-awaited completion of the lights at the Kenmore

East athletic field. Thanks to the new lights, this was the first year the district was able to host night games at Kenmore East which represented a game-changer for the Athletic Department.

Additionally, a brand new electronic sign was installed outside Kenmore East, which is similar to the one at Kenmore West. Other work has included a new bus loop, new pick-up/drop-off lane, and redesigned parking lot to improve safety and traffic flow, all while work continues on a new roof and replacing water pipes.



Above, the new lights at the athletic field; below, the new electronic sign.

Alumnus & Astronaut Edward Gibson Visits West

Math and science students at Kenmore West recently had the opportunity to learn from Edward Gibson, a distinguished member of the Class of 1955 who went on to become a NASA astronaut, pilot, engineer, and physicist. Mr. Gibson was in town for the Class of 1955's 70th reunion and visited the school to speak with students in September.

In 1965, Mr. Gibson was chosen as part of the NASA Astronaut Group 4, the first-ever group of scientists selected to be astronauts. He served on the support crew of Apollo 12 and as the science pilot aboard Skylab 4, the final mission to America's first space station.



Edward Gibson speaks at Kenmore West.

During this mission, Mr. Gibson and his two crewmates were in space for 84 days, which was the record at the time. Later, Mr. Gibson presided over the selection and training of scientist-astronaut candidates. He is also the author of four books including "Space: Ever Farther, Ever Faster" which was published earlier this year.

Mr. Gibson answered questions from students about his journey to becoming an astronaut and what it was like to be in space. He also signed a copy of his book, which will be available for students to check out of the Kenmore West library.



Kenmore Junior/Senior High School students took part in an international virtual symposium alongside students from the U.S. and Nigeria through the Civic Science Inquiry to Action Program.

KJS Students Earn Microgrants to Bring Civic Science Projects to Life

Kenmore Junior/Senior High School students in the Big Picture Program have been taking part in the Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELFF) "Civic Science: Inquiry to Action" program. This program empowers them to identify real challenges in their community, collect data, and develop solutions that make a difference.

Students recently participated in an international virtual symposium sharing their ideas and presenting alongside peers from New York, Maryland, Texas, and Nigeria.

Thanks to their hard work and innovative thinking, Big Picture students were awarded a \$4,000 grant to bring three "microgrant" projects to life.

One is the "Water Quality Mural" with the team blending art and science by creating a community mural that highlights local water quality issues.

The second project is an electronics recycling initiative which is focused on reducing the harmful effects of e-waste.

The third and final initiative is named "Sustainable Styling" which is taking a hands-on approach to textile waste with students building clothing racks from sustainably sourced materials to support the school-based clothing exchange program, The Boutique.

The Civic Science model focuses on student-driven inquiry and these projects were chosen by the students based on their own interests and the needs they saw in the Ken-Ton community.

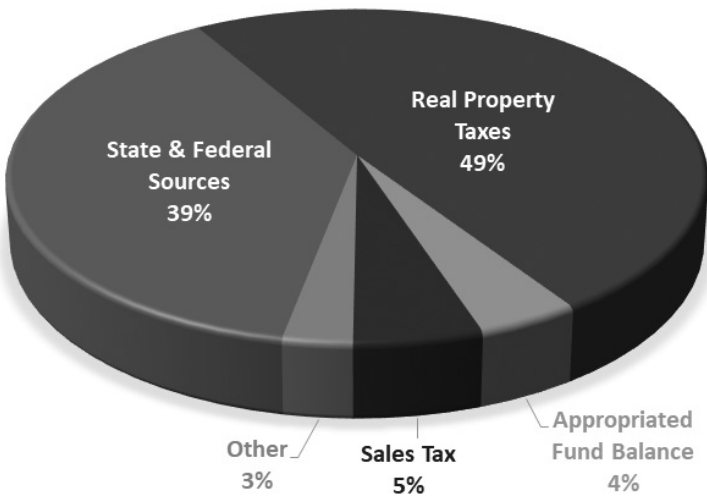
BUDGET INFORMATION

Item	Amount	Item	Amount
Budget	\$203,967,000	Tax Levy	\$100,064,678
Budget Increase	\$6,062,081	Tax Levy Increase	\$2,261,767
Budget-to-Budget % Increase	3.06%	Tax Levy % Increase	2.31%
Fund Balance & Reserve Use	\$8,649,457	Estimated Increase (\$100K Full Market Value House)	\$11.40/month

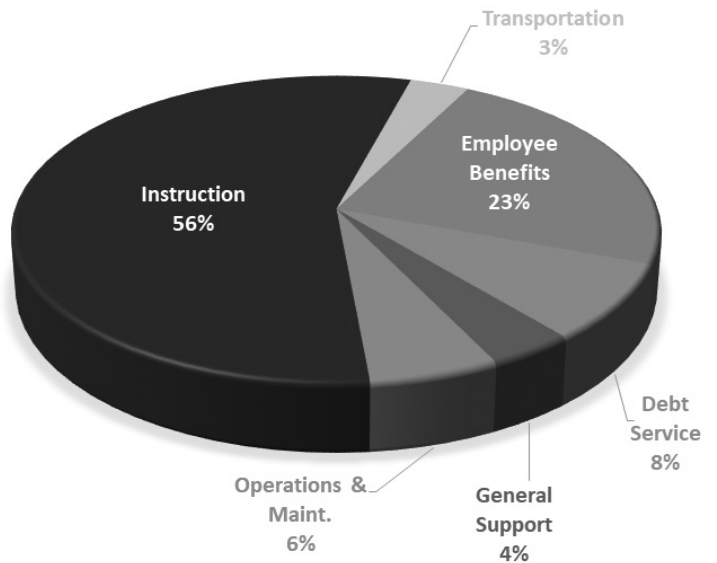
2026-27 REVENUE COMPARISON			
	2025-26 Budget	2026-27 Budget	2026-27 Change
State Aid	\$76,295,103	\$78,454,265	\$2,159,162
Real Property Taxes	\$97,802,911	\$100,064,678	\$2,261,767
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$7,113,105	\$8,649,457	\$1,536,352
Sales Tax	\$10,700,000	\$10,900,000	\$200,000
Other (Including Federal)	\$5,993,800	\$5,898,600	(\$95,200)
Total Revenue	\$197,904,919	\$203,967,000	\$6,062,081

2026-27 EXPENDITURE COMPARISON			
	2025-26 Budget	2026-27 Budget	2026-27 Change
General Support	\$7,162,631	\$7,875,603	\$712,972
Operations & Maint.	\$11,463,945	\$11,814,664	\$350,719
Instruction	\$111,610,672	\$113,572,818	\$1,962,146
Transportation	\$6,474,710	\$6,855,317	\$380,607
Employee Benefits	\$44,863,760	\$47,120,000	\$2,256,240
Debt Service	\$16,329,201	\$16,728,598	\$399,397
Total Expenditures	\$197,904,919	\$203,967,000	\$6,062,081

2026-27 REVENUE COMPARISON



2026-27 EXPENDITURE COMPARISON



VOTING INFORMATION

Voter Qualifications:

- Voters must be a U.S. citizen, 18 years of age or older, and a resident of the district for 30 days prior to the vote.
- Those who are not registered to vote will need to complete an affidavit confirming that they are a qualified voter.
- Photo identification and proof of citizenship, age, and residency are required for those who are not registered.

Early Mail/Absentee Ballot Information:

- Contact the District Clerk at (716) 874-8400 ext. 20342 for an early mail or absentee ballot application. Those on the permanent absentee ballot list do not need to apply for an absentee ballot. Applications must be received no later than seven days prior to May 19th, 2026. Early mail/absentee ballots must arrive no later than 5 p.m. the day of the vote on May 19, 2026.



BUDGET INFORMATION

A Uniquely Challenging Year for Districts Across New York State

Continued from Page 1

This has been a uniquely challenging year for school districts throughout the state. Because of the state’s formula for determining how much money school districts receive, Ken-Ton’s state aid allocation is increasing by a very small amount next year (approximately 1-2%). On the expenditure side, inflation continues to be a challenge. Just as residents have seen significantly higher costs for everyday needs, school districts have seen increased prices for necessary expenses. As a result, we have had to aggressively seek out ways to continue to operate more efficiently and cut spending wherever possible. We are always committed to balancing the budget without impacting the quality of the programs/services we offer students and families.

We have seen certain categories of

spending increase at an even higher rate than inflation. This includes agency tuition for special needs students (11%), BOCES expenditures (9%), utilities (7%), benefits such as health insurance (5%), and charter school tuition (5%). The fact that we were able to limit the increase in the overall budget to only 3.1% despite these sharp increases is a testament to the great work that’s been done to reduce spending and operate as efficiently as possible. This was predominantly accomplished by continuing to eliminate positions through attrition. In fact, the overall amount spent on salaries will increase by only 1% next year.

In addition to the proposed 2026-27 budget, residents will vote on the annual bus purchase. This seeks to replace the district’s fleet incrementally each year to ensure safety and reliability for the buses that transport thousands of students to and from

school each day. Residents will also have the opportunity to vote on a third proposition, a proposal to rename the Kenmore East High School Baseball Field in honor of former coach Robert A. Marafino. This proposal was considered as part of our district’s facility naming procedure and was recommended by the district Naming Committee and approved by our Board of Education. Our residents will now have the final say. Lastly, voters will determine the winners of Board of Education open seats. Learn more about the candidates at www.ktufsd.org/candidates.

You can find more information on the proposed 2026-27 budget on our website at www.ktufsd.org/budget. We encourage everyone to learn about the budget and vote on Tuesday, May 19th. As always, thank you for your continued support for the students of our district.

WHAT VOTERS WILL SEE ON THE BALLOT

Proposition 1: Proposed 2026-27 Budget (funds all district-operated public schools/educational programs as well as services provided for all non-public/private schools located in the district as required by law).

PROPOSITION NO. 1: 2026-2027 BUDGET

RESOLVED, that the basic budget of \$203,967,000 for the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2027 as presented by the Board of Education, is hereby approved and adopted and the required funds therefore are hereby appropriated and the necessary real property taxes required shall be raised by a tax on the taxable property in the District to be levied and collected as required by law.

Proposition 2: Annual bus replacement purchase to ensure safety/reliability for district buses (replaces six 30-seat buses, two 42-seat buses, one full-size bus, and one service vehicle).

PROPOSITION NO. 2: ACQUISITION OF SCHOOL BUSES AND SIMILAR VEHICLES (AND RELATED EQUIPMENT)

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District, Erie County, New York (the “District”), is hereby authorized to purchase school buses and similar vehicles (and related equipment) for use in the transportation program of the District, at an estimated maximum cost of \$1,400,000, (with such estimated maximum cost reflecting the value of any trade-ins) and to expend therefor an aggregate sum not to exceed \$1,400,000; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the sum of \$1,400,000 (which may include certain up-front financing costs), plus an amount for interest thereon, shall be funded by the levy of a tax upon the taxable property of the District and collected in annual installments as provided by Section 416 of the Education Law; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in anticipation of such tax, bonds or other obligations (including, without limitation, obligations arising under leases, lease/purchase contracts or installment purchase contracts) of the District shall be issued or entered into in accordance with applicable provisions of New York State law; and be it further

RESOLVED, that New York State Transportation Aid funds expected to be received by the District as well as Federal, State, County and/or local funds including, but not limited to rebates are anticipated to offset a substantial part of such costs, and such funds, to the extent received, shall be applied to offset and reduce the amount of taxes herein authorized to be levied.

Proposition 3: Proposal to rename the Kenmore East baseball field after retired coach Robert Marafino

PROPOSITION NO. 3: RENAME THE KENMORE EAST HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL FIELD “THE ROBERT A. MARAFINO BASEBALL FIELD”

WHEREAS, pursuant to Policy 3111, the Board of Education of the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District established procedures for the naming of District facilities; and in accordance with such procedures, a committee was formed to consider a request to change the name of the Kenmore East Baseball Field; and upon careful and thorough consideration in accordance with such procedures, the committee has recommended that the Kenmore East Baseball Field be renamed “The Robert A. Marafino Baseball Field” to reflect the service of former baseball coach Robert Marafino; and in order to rename the Kenmore East Baseball Field, the procedures require the Board of Education, by a supermajority vote, to support the submission of the proposition to the District voters; and the procedures also require District voters to approve the proposition to rename the facility; and therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District is hereby authorized to rename the Kenmore East Baseball Field, “The Robert A. Marafino Baseball Field.”

Candidates for the Board of Education: Vote for 2

Karen White Law

Lee Ann Vogt

Budget/proposition information at www.ktufsd.org/budget & candidate information at www.ktufsd.org/candidates





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Sabatino Cimato,
 Superintendent of Schools

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 Superintendent Sabatino
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Budget Vote & Board of Education Election: 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday, May 19, 2026 at Hoover Middle School

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	\$197,904,919	\$203,967,000	\$201,705,233
Increase/Decrease for the 2026-27 School Year		\$6,062,081	\$3,800,314
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		3.06%	1.92%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.63%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$97,802,911	\$100,064,678	
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)	\$97,802,911	\$100,064,678	\$97,802,911
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$3,152,157	\$3,350,771	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$94,773,506	\$96,713,907	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$94,650,754	\$96,713,907	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$122,752	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$18,203,178	\$19,129,216	\$18,567,410
Program Component	\$148,891,606	\$153,149,552	\$152,011,238
Capital Component	\$30,810,135	\$31,688,232	\$31,126,585

*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.

The Board of Education will review the expenditure budget and make decisions on those items to be included based on Education Law Section 2023. The tax levy increase would have to be \$0 through cuts to programs and staff, including non-contingent items that would have to be removed in accordance with New York State Law, and ordinary contingent items that may need to be removed.

**List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount	Description	Amount
	Bus Purchase	\$1,400,000
		Under the Budget Proposed for the 2026-27 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹		\$413

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2026-2027 by the qualified voters of the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District, Erie County, New York, will be held at Herbert Hoover Middle School(s) in said district on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 between the hours of 7:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the Herbert Hoover Middle School(s), 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.