



Eastchester Eagle

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EASTCHESTER UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

**A Spanish version of this newsletter is available upon request at the District Clerk's office.
Please contact the District Clerk at (914) 793-6130 ext. 4201**

Una versión en español de este boletín está disponible a solicitud en la Oficina del Secretario del Distrito. Comuníquese con la Secretario del Distrito al (914) 793-6130 ext. 4201

Dear Eastchester Community Members,

The proposed 2026-2027 school budget is about one thing: protecting our school investments to keep our Eastchester community strong.

In the last five years, Eastchester schools have made great strides. Now it's time to preserve our academic programs in a time driven by added pressures, keeping pace with rising inflation costs and meeting our students' needs while recognizing the responsibility we are asking our taxpayers to shoulder. This budget reflects a thoughtful path forward, one that balances progress and patience.

Eastchester has expanded access to advanced coursework and early-learning opportunities that position students for long-term success while continuing to enhance the student experience through investments in extracurricular activities, athletics, and learning environments that foster connection and engagement. Safety is prioritized through our SRO partnership with the Town of Eastchester and the Eastchester Police Department, our continued support of student advisory/counseling spaces, upgraded security infrastructure, and our commitment to student wellness.

This budget sustains critical investments in our facilities, ensuring that our buildings continue to meet the needs of modern learning for all students.

I must clearly acknowledge: **without exceeding the tax levy limit, the district would face detrimental reductions that would fundamentally alter the student experience.** The proposed levy reflects the necessary level to maintain program integrity while continuing to move the district forward in a responsible way.

We, as a district, recognize the impact that a 6.31% tax levy increase has on our community, and we do not make this recommendation without full awareness of that responsibility. At the same time, we must be equally candid about the consequences of not acting.

This was not an easy decision—it was a necessary one.

Many in our community have shared thoughtful feedback, and that input has shaped an adjusted proposal grounded in responsibility, balance, and long-term stability. This plan addresses known challenges while protecting against the uncertainty that can destabilize a school system.

Residents know that a high-performing school system is the foundation of a vibrant, sought-after community, and maintaining our schools as a source of pride and a central pillar of the community is critical. Schools drive property values, attract families, grow investments, and sustain the very character that defines Eastchester.

We respect our stakeholders' voices and encourage you to exercise yours on May 19. As always, we remain committed to strengthening our schools and community while preserving the traditions that make Eastchester a wonderful place to live.

Sincerely,
Alison Villanueva, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools

BUDGET SUMMARY

Proposed Budget
\$116,858,433

Budget to Budget Increase
5.36%

Tax Levy Increase
6.31%

SCHOOL BUDGET VOTE

**Tuesday,
May 19, 2026
6:00am – 9:00pm**

**Eastchester
Middle School Gym
(Enter on Lincoln Ave.)**

**Garth Road residents
must vote at Eastchester
Middle School**



Mortensen, Lin Talk “Success” at EHS

There’s no one-size-fits-all blueprint for making the most out of one’s high school experience, but Sarah Mortensen and Maximilian Lin certainly have a few thoughts on the matter.

As the Valedictorian and Salutatorian for the EHS Class of 2026, respectively, Mortensen and Lin have shined academically throughout their time in EHS. But as the duo look back on their Eastchester experiences, one thing is clear; success isn’t just determined by test scores and grades, it’s also a function of taking advantage of the many different experiences Eastchester schools can offer.

Mortensen credits much of her academic success to the lessons and values instilled by her family and the community around her, citing her sister Lucy—a 2024 EHS graduate and salutatorian—as someone who has had a particular influence on the way she approached her studies.

“My parents and older sister, Lucy, have definitely impacted my school work ethic; my parents raised me with high expectations and consistent support, encouraging me to do my best and helping me get there,” said Mortensen. “Lucy is not only my hero, but the most selfless, inspiring cheerleader; she’s given me confidence to take difficult classes, and motivated me through love, not competition.

“I’d also like to give my incredibly supportive church congregation a shout-out for always being there for me,” she added.

And while Mortensen and Lin may have achieved great heights throughout their time in high school, both admit that not all of that success came without struggle. In fact, both say that learning how to overcome those struggles has helped shape who they are, both as students and people.

“This year, I took AP Physics, which is notoriously difficult, because it’s basically two classes combined into one year, so it’s a lot of material,” said Lin. “the material is in-depth, it’s super fast-paced, so I learned how to be a more efficient student.”



Sarah Mortensen, left, and Maximilian Lin were named the Valedictorian and Salutatorian of the EHS Class of 2026.

Mortensen said one thing she has learned throughout her time at EHS is that communication is key.

“There have definitely been times where challenges have seemed overwhelming, either due to too much work or unclear instruction,” she said. “But I’ve learned that instead of getting frustrated about my situation, communicating directly with teachers to increase understanding on both sides effectively reduces stress. Even a couple of emails or a few minutes in afterschool help can impact a year’s worth of learning.”

But perhaps more important than the lessons learned in the classrooms were the connections that Mortensen and Lin have built due to their involvement in extracurricular activities and student groups. Mortensen has been a member of the Flag Football, Volleyball and Spring Track teams, while also being a part of several clubs, including Forum, Spanish Club, and Colloquium. Lin has been a part of various instrumental ensembles and represented Eastchester in the National History Bowl, winning a national championship with teammate Erika Lunenfeld just last year.

“As much as I’ve enjoyed what I’ve learned in school, what I’ll remember most is the stuff outside of school,” said Lin. “Doing the academic challenge and all of the music extracurriculars, it’s been really fun to find a community that you can bond with.”

Lin and Mortensen will speak at the EHS Commencement on June 26, and say that they are very much looking forward to addressing their peers, families, and teachers.

“School is obviously very important, but I think, in the end, how you do in school isn’t the most important thing to take away from this experience,” said Lin. “You don’t need to put pressure on yourself by trying to have everything figured out right away; give yourself the leeway to change and don’t be afraid to explore things you may be interested in.”

“I want my message to be intentional and meaningful, but don’t exactly know how to start yet,” said Mortensen. “But if I had any advice to give future EHS students, it would be to be honest with yourself; make choices that will improve your well-being in the long run. Be grateful for the unique opportunities and support systems at Eastchester... but don’t over-schedule — pick five extracurricular activities that make you happy, and dive in!”



This fall, the EHS Class of 2026 will be headed to a wide variety of esteemed academic institutions, building upon the academic and personal growth they have shown throughout their time in Eastchester to make their marks on the wider world.

With Eastchester’s expanded access to 26 AP level courses, a myriad of extra curricular activities available to students, and a culture of inclusion and empathy fostered in Eastchester schools from Waverly through EHS, we believe that this cohort of students is uniquely positioned to succeed in whatever fields they choose to pursue.

Keep soaring, Eagles!

2026-2027 Revenue Summary

REVENUE CATEGORY	2026-2027 PROPOSED BUDGET	2025-2026 BUDGET	\$ CHANGE	% CHANGE
Property Taxes	\$88,866,506	\$83,593,100	\$5,273,406	6.31%
Other Revenues	\$6,555,358	\$6,125,000	\$430,358	7.03%
State Aid*	\$19,696,569*	\$18,192,462	\$1,504,107	8.27%
Assigned Fund Balance	\$1,740,000	\$3,003,936	-\$1,263,936	-42.08%
GRAND TOTALS	\$116,858,433	\$110,914,498	\$5,943,935	5.36%

* Initial projections determined that the district would receive \$17,461,753 in State Aid for FY 26-27. Thanks to the hard work of the EUFSD Business Office, that State Aid figure was increased by \$2,234,816 to reflect a current amount of \$19,696,569. **This State Aid revenue is contingent upon current projected expenditures and the passing of the proposed budget and supports pre-existing student programs and increased costs related to Special Education.**

2026-2027 Expenditure Summary

BUDGET CATEGORY	2026-2027 PROPOSED BUDGET	2025-2026 BUDGET	\$ CHANGE	% CHANGE
Administration/Operations	\$4,900,899	\$4,744,943	\$155,956	3.29%
Facilities/Operations/Security	\$8,118,539	\$8,089,732	\$28,807	0.36%
Instruction	\$60,678,052	\$59,111,224	\$1,566,828	2.65%
Transportation	\$5,516,400	\$4,945,368	\$571,032	11.55%
Employee Benefits	\$29,133,089	\$26,320,398	\$2,812,691	10.69%
Debt Service	\$8,221,454	\$7,502,833	\$718,621	9.58%
Transfers to Other Funds	\$290,000	\$200,000	\$90,000	45.00%
GRAND TOTALS	\$116,858,433	\$110,914,498	\$5,943,935	5.36%

Transportation

Please note that the transportation budget reflects a reduction in the bus fleet by four (4) buses, lowering anticipated transportation costs for the district.

Projected Tax Bill Impact

NOTE: This projection assumes no change in the taxable assessed values. A change in assessment as calculated by the Town of Eastchester may cause changes to individual tax bills. Reduced assessments may raise the tax rate where conversely increased assessments may reduce the tax rate. Final rates are set by the Town of Eastchester in August.

ASSESSED VALUE	AVERAGE				
	\$5,000	\$7,000	\$8,500	\$11,000	\$13,000
2025-2026 School Tax Bill*	\$8,313	\$11,638	\$14,132	\$18,289	\$21,614
Estimated 2026-2027 Tax Bill**	\$8,822	\$12,351	\$14,998	\$19,409	\$22,938
CHANGE FROM PRIOR YEAR	\$509	\$713	\$866	\$1,121	\$1,324

*Does not include STAR impact. Total Assessed Value = Assessed Value x 100

**Estimated Annual 2026-2027 Tax Bill = Assessed Value x Tax Rate

2025-2026 Tax rate per \$1,000 of Assessed Valuation..... 1662.619

Estimated 2026-2027 Tax Rate per \$1,000 of Assessed Valuation 1764.497

★VOTE May 19, 2026 6:00am – 9:00pm★

EMS Lauded for Mental Health Support

Eastchester Middle School was recently recognized by New York State for its emphasis on student wellness and support, garnering an Honorable Mention nod from the NYS 'What's Great in Our State' Mental Health Awareness Program.

In April, the NYS Division of Integrated Community Services for Children and Families cited the school's commitment to mental wellness and inclusion, something EMS Principal Madelin LoBue said speaks to the dedication of her counseling and psychology staff.

"I submitted a memo highlighting the work that we do, specifically the work done by our counselors and our implementation of the 'Sandy Hook Promise,'" said LoBue. "It's through a culture of support and inclusiveness that we have been able to strengthen our school, and that is what is being recognized."

Much of the work being done at EMS is made possible through the unique structure of the EMS counseling and psychology departments.

Students entering EMS are paired with one counselor that will stay with them throughout their three years at the school. Currently, Christine Mejia-Rodriguez works with sixth graders, Carly O'Shea oversees the seventh grade, and Danielle Fiore is guiding eighth graders as they prepare for their transition to EHS.

But EMS also has a fourth counselor position—held by Anashia Williams—whose role it is to complement the support provided by the grade-level counselors and three school psychologists, Barbara Virtuoso, Sarah Fritz, and Dr. Sarah Quintano, doing classroom push-ins to reinforce lessons and providing one more trusted adult for students to seek out when faced with challenging situations.

"We've definitely leveraged that fourth counselor position to make a bigger impact," said LoBue. "Every student has access to the school-wide counselor at least once a month and it really allows us to do more targeted work with the middle school students."

Williams explained that her work with the Save Promise Club—a program designed to deter violence through education and empowerment—has been a particularly successful endeavor, as it focuses on providing youngsters with the tools they need in order to be more empathetic and intuitive members of the community.

"It may seem simple, but even starting with a 'Hello' can just help someone who may be struggling feel like someone sees them," said Williams. "And that is something we started with back in September."

The schoolwide counselor position was implemented at EMS nine years ago after rapidly increasing enrollment and cuts to personnel left the department



scrambling to find new ways to address the needs of a growing student body. Over the past decade, that fourth counselor position has filled a vital role within the school community, not only through direct work with students, but also in terms of general wellness support.

"Since we don't have a social worker, this position has helped us to provide necessary supports which are culture-building, community-building and speak to the social-emotional development of students," said Danielle Fiore.

"The struggles that middle school students face are very unique. We have to provide an environment where we can help them adapt to new social settings, academic challenges and the physical and emotional changes they experience as they grow and develop," added LoBue. "Our entire intervention team is a dynamic group that cares very much. I know I can ask anything of them; working on weekends, calling, collaborating, and making sure kids are receiving the support that they need."

Technology Investments Shape Learning at Eastchester

A high school Maker Space for digital fabrication, state-of-the-art whiteboards, and expanded access to improved one-to-one devices for all students are all reminders that as technology continues to drive the world outside of Eastchester, our schools are reflecting that reality and investing in instructional technology to enhance—rather than replace—traditional teaching methods.

Anne Hutchinson STEM teacher Dave O'Neil said the difference between the tools students are working with today as opposed to just a few years ago is stark.

"Just before Covid, we had a major Chromebook shortage, with one or two Chromebook carts per grade level," said O'Neil. "Now, fourth and fifth graders can take these devices home with them, while each second and third grade class has their own Chromebook cart for their

individual classroom."

Greenvale STEM teacher Jessica Mintzer added that these investments have allowed young learners to work collaboratively to explore new skills, like coding.

"The kids are easily able to share whatever they're working on, casting it right onto our whiteboards," she said. "It also maximizes instructional time, because it's simple."

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Technology Robert Jacoby said that the District's focus on instructional technology is more than just superficial—it helps students familiarize themselves with the tools that many will likely use well after their time in Eastchester schools has come to an end.

"Our district has a good track record of offering courses to students that get their



hands moving and working," said Jacoby. "It's about acquiring the skills they will use later in life, not to mention the larger goal of problem-solving and creative thinking."

"Students are proud when they come into the computer lab," added EHS computer science teacher Emmanuel Suriel. "They see that an investment has been made, and that enhances the educational experience."

Voting Information

What You Will See on the Ballot

Proposition #1

Shall the Eastchester Union Free School District of the Town of Eastchester, Westchester County, New York, adopt a budget for the school year 2026-2027 for the schools comprising said Eastchester Union Free School District, in the gross sum of \$116,858,433 and raise the necessary taxes required for said budget in one sum by tax upon the taxable property of the District?

Board of Education Candidates

Three (3) Board seats for a full, three-year term commencing on July 1, 2026. Each of the available Board seats will be held for a three-year term that will expire on June 30, 2029. To vote for a candidate whose name is printed on this ballot, fill in the oval below or next to the name of the candidate.

Vote for up to three (3) candidates:

- Reid Kornman
- Robert Krukowski
- Brenna Gethers
- Sean Fellin
- Jill Cosentino

Information about the Board of Education candidates can be found in the Important Information section of our website at www.eufsdk12.org.

SCHOOL BUDGET

VOTE

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Poll Hours: 6:00am - 9:00pm

Eastchester Middle School Gym
(Enter on Lincoln Ave.)

Garth Road residents must vote at
Eastchester Middle School

Am I Eligible to Vote?

In order to vote in the district election, you must be:

- A citizen of the United States of America.
- A resident of the Eastchester School District for at least 30 days prior to the vote date.
- At least 18 years of age by the vote date.
- A registered voter with either the school district or with the County Board of Elections.

You are registered to vote if:

- You are on the Westchester County voter list AND have voted at least once during the last four years, OR
- You are registered with the school district.

Registration Applications

School District Voter Registration Applications

Applications for School District Voter Registration are available at the District Office and on the website at www.eufsdk12.org. This registration allows you to vote only in School District votes (Budget/BOE Trustee, Bond, or Referendum). Deadline for school district registration for the Annual Budget and Trustee Vote is Thursday, May 14, 2026.

Westchester County Voter Registration Applications

Qualified voters who register with Westchester County can vote in school district elections as well as other local and national elections. Registration applications are available locally at Eastchester Town Hall and Tuckahoe Village Hall. Applications can be downloaded at www.elections.ny.gov Call 1-800-FOR-VOTE for additional information.

Absentee Ballots

Obtaining an absentee ballot is a two-step process.

An Application for an Absentee Ballot must be filed first with the District Clerk. Applications for absentee ballots may be obtained by contacting the District Clerk's office at 580 White Plains Road, Eastchester, NY 10709; Phone: 793-6130, ext. 4201; or by going to the website at www.eufsdk12.org. For more information, click on the 2026-2027 Budget Vote and Trustee Election banner.

Deadlines

Applications must be obtained from the District Clerk at least seven days before the election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter or by 5:00pm on the day before the election if the ballot is to be given personally to the voter. The completed ballot must be returned to the District Clerk no later than 5:00pm on the voting day, May 19, 2026.



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- Christie McCloskey, *Vice President*
- Jill DeCairano-Cosentino, *Secretary*
- Christine Civitano-Lombardi, *Trustee*
- Dr. Jacqueline DiMarco, *Trustee*
- Sean Fellin, *Trustee*
- Christina Geagan, *Trustee*
- Laurie Giacobbe, *Trustee*
- Robert Krukowski, *Trustee*

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Alison Villanueva, Ph.D.



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For more 2026-27 Budget Information, go to www.eufsd12.org

2026-27 School 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	\$110,914,498	\$116,858,433	\$111,585,026
Increase/Decrease for the 2026-27 School Year		\$5,943,935	\$670,528
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		5.36 %	.60%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.6%	
A. Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$83,593,100	\$88,886,507	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$	\$	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$	\$	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$	\$	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$83,593,100	\$88,886,507	\$83,593,100
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$4,416,878	\$4,447,033	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$79,176,222	\$81,109,333	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$79,176,222	\$84,439,474	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions)**	\$0.00	-\$3,330,141	
Administrative Component	\$8,719,468	\$9,158,287	\$8,207,583
Program Component	\$86,602,465	\$89,587,740	\$85,330,687
Capital Component	\$15,592,565	\$18,112,406	\$18,046,756

* 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 contingency budget would require cuts of \$5.273M. This would require the elimination of 66 full-time employees (FTE). This will result in the loss of many existing programs; Modified/Freshman/JV athletics; extracurricular activities and advanced course offerings. Increased class sizes and additional reductions will be directly tied to forced personnel eliminations.

** 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 affect voter approval requirements)

Description	Amount
Not applicable	Not applicable

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

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings*** **\$1,286**

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2026-27 School Year

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2026-27 by the qualified voters of the Eastchester Union Free school district, Westchester County, New York, will be held at the Eastchester Middle School(s) in said district on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 between the hours of 6:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the Eastchester Middle School(s), at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.*