

Spotlight

THE BUDGET ISSUE

Spring 2024

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The mission of Southwestern CSD is Learning for All: Engaging & Preparing for Future Success.

Our vision is Southwestern: A community providing a comprehensive & relevant education that enables every student to achieve.

INTEGRITY,
KINDNESS,
CONNECTION,
EXCELLENCE.



**Southwestern
Central School
District**

600 Hunt Road, WE
Jamestown, NY 14701
716-484-1136
www.swcsk12.org

Annual Meeting & Election

Southwestern Central School District's annual Meeting and Board of Education Election is scheduled Tuesday, May 21, 2024, between 7-9 a.m. and 2-8 p.m. in the Southwestern High School gymnasium lobby. A budget public hearing is scheduled Tuesday, May 14, 2024, at 6 p.m. in the high school library.



Southwestern Elementary School's Student Council delivered Valentine's Day cards to residents of Brookdale Senior Living in February 2024.



Left: Senior English students working on literacy skills with their "Little Buddies" at Southwestern Elementary. Right: Southwestern Elementary staff gratefully accept a generous donation of healthy snacks and clothing from the Lakewood Women's Club.



SWCS Board of Education

Mr. Kurt Gustafson,
President
Mr. Richard Hartmann,
Vice President
Mr. Edward Brooks
Mr. Michael Carothers
Mr. Troy Durnell
Dr. Elizabeth Laczi
Mr. Correy Miller

Co-student ex-officio
members: Declan Kennedy &
Connor Young.

MEETINGS

May 2024

14 Budget Hearing &
Regular Meeting 6 p.m.
21 Budget Vote & Election

June 2024

11 Regular Meeting 6 p.m.
25 Work Session 6 p.m.

SWCS Online

Visit Southwestern Central School District's website at www.swcsk12.org and follow its Instagram, Facebook and X accounts @SWCSTrojans for the most up-to-date information about events, celebrations, meetings, opportunities, accomplishments, and more.

Pool Update

The pool at Southwestern Elementary School is closed until further notice due to Capital Project construction. Information about when the pool will re-open will be posted on the district website and social media pages. Questions? Contact Kevin Salisbury at via email ksalisbury@swcsk12.org

A Message from the Superintendent...

Dear Southwestern Community,

Thank you for your continued support as we plan for another successful academic year at Southwestern Central School District.

There is so much to celebrate, appreciate and recognize on our campus. Our classrooms are busy and our athletics teams and creative arts programming continue to innovate and educate.

Our Business Department, in collaboration with our Board of Education, prepared a fiscally responsible 2024-2025 budget, while ensuring our Trojans receive a top-of-the-line education.

This issue of The Spotlight includes key highlights of our proposed spending plan and school board candidates interspersed with information about campus achievements, programming and

more good things happening at Southwestern.

I believe that Southwestern CSD is the heart of our community and all qualified district residents can exercise their right to vote on Tuesday, May 21, 2024.

The community is also welcome to attend Southwestern Middle School's Pops Concert on Tuesday, May 21, at 6:30 p.m. in the high school auditorium.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly at 716-484-1136 or via email mdonahue@swcsk12.org.

Sincerely,

Maureen Donahue,
Superintendent of Schools



MAUREEN DONAHUE



Southwestern Elementary held a Wellness Day event in March 2024 by fostering relationships and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Thank you to Prevention Works (positive self-talk), Adam Puelo (nutrition), Dawn Calimeri & Christina Slojowski (bones/radiology), the National Honor Society (obstacle course & creative corner), Schwerklt Health & Wellness (workout), Alicia Ekstrom (Pound), Michael Baker (judo), Alicia Brandi & Ashley Zambotti (yoga), and Tiffany Heintzman (dance) for helping make this healthy lifestyle event a success!

An Artistic Approach to Professional Development

Southwestern Central School District hosted an art workshop for Region 1 members of the New York State Art Teachers Association on Saturday, April 20, 2024.

Art educators from all over Western New York gathered to collaborate and learn oil paint dry brushing techniques from longtime Southwestern art teacher Mrs. Jenny Brown, who is also Region 1 treasurer for NYSATA.

The 16 participants were from Buffalo Public Schools, Starpoint, Clymer, Iroquois, Akron, West Seneca, Blasdell, Cheektowaga, Rochester Discovery Charter School and Charter School for Applied Technologies.

The session was three hours long and counted toward professional development hours. Attendees also enjoyed a tour of the art wing rooms at Southwestern. NYSATA Region 1 offers monthly workshops for members around the area. Region 1 officers plan and implement the workshops.



Western New York educators gathered on the Southwestern CSD campus in April for a professional development session led by art teacher Jenny Brown.

Artificial Intelligence: Tech Teacher Shares Expertise



Technology teacher Mr. Dan Thomas, middle, participates in a panel of experts talking about Artificial Intelligence at Erie 1 BOCES in April 2024.

Southwestern Middle School technology teacher Dan Thomas was part of a panel of experts at the NYSCATE Digital Pathways conference Friday, April 19, 2024, on the Erie 1 BOCES campus in Buffalo.

Held in partnership with WNYRIC, the “Artificial Intelligence and Pathways in Education” conference united teachers, administrators and tech integrators from throughout the region for a day of learning and networking.

Attendees discussed the state of A.I. in education and three “A.I. Spotlights” for teachers, administrators and cybersecurity were featured. The conference featured 28 breakout sessions and more than two dozen technology vendors.

Follow Mr. Thomas on X (formerly Twitter) @coachthomastech

Creative Coding

Sixth-grade Computer Technology and Library Skills students had a fabulous time collaborating in April 2024 to hone their programming skills with a “Coding Unplugged” day at Southwestern Middle School.

Ms. Mary Jo Andalora and Ms. Mary Zdrojewski combined classes to play a game about conditional statements, encoding emojis, creating algorithms for a partner to build a wooden structure, and using loops and functions to design a beaded bracelet.



Candidates for the Board of Education



RAMON CORDER



ELIZABETH LACZI



CAROL WYNHAM



MICHAEL CAROTHERS



RANDY ELF

Election of Board of Education members will be held to fill three at-large vacancies created by the expiration on June 30, 2024, of the terms of Edward Brooks and Elizabeth Laczi, and by the expiration on May 21, 2024 of the term of Michael Carothers. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes shall begin serving their three-year term commencing May 22, 2024 and ending June 30, 2027.

RAMON CORDER

Pastor Corder has been a resident of the district since 2022 and resides with his wife and four children, including a newborn. He has been pastor of Lighthouse Baptist Church in Jamestown since 2022. Pastor Corder pledges to be responsible and responsive to district residents, including taxpayers. Pastor Corder aspires to support fully all SWCS teachers, coaches, and pupils and do his best to help SWCS to continue to provide excellent instructional and extracurricular programs for young people, of all ability levels, in schools that are safe for and respectful of all. Particularly nowadays, it's important to provide young people with solid fellowship opportunities in safe havens through which they can grow while being shielded from undue influences. He has worked with youth in several programs, and helped provide assistance to many people, including new mothers, in need. He has also served in orphanages in Haiti, helped start churches in Uganda, and helped provide schoolbooks in Kampala. He is committed to respecting both the fundamental importance of education in each child's upbringing and the primary importance of the family in each child's life. To those ends, he will always be receptive to district residents.

ELIZABETH LACZI

Dr. Laczi has been a resident of the district for 3.5 years and resides with her husband, John Kidder, and her children, Grey and Benjamin Kidder. She works for Longevity Health, Clinical Operations. Liz brings to the board the ability to collaborate between different personalities and educational backgrounds, as well as a background in healthcare and behavioral health. She believes that change is something that always occurs, it is making changes that benefit the population of students, staff, families, and community as well as addressing the needs of the Southwestern community at large while preserving kids first and focusing on how to support

our teachers. She volunteers at school events, projects and groups, and is a volunteer coach for athletics. "I am an avid soccer and sports fan. I am eager to provide pathways and networks for our young professionals and new grads to stay in our community and provide opportunities."

CAROL WYNHAM

Mrs. Wynham has been a resident of the district since 1994 and resides with her son. She is currently a business-development manager at Peters Supply, Inc. Mrs. Wynham pledges to be responsible and responsive to district residents, including taxpayers. Mrs. Wynham aspires to support fully all SWCS teachers, coaches, and pupils and do her best to help SWCS to continue to provide excellent instructional and extracurricular programs for young people, of all ability levels, in schools that are safe for and respectful of all. Particularly nowadays, it's important to provide young people with solid fellowship opportunities in safe havens through which they can grow while being shielded from undue influences. She has demonstrated skills in writing resumes, policy, and procedures; mentoring; and helping others find jobs in Chautauqua County. She is committed to respecting both the fundamental importance of education in each child's upbringing and the primary importance of the family in each child's life. To those ends, she will always be receptive to district residents. In addition, she has demonstrated skills in management; finding solutions to help grow organizations; financial reconciliation; auditing; payroll; and training.

MICHAEL CAROTHERS

Mr. Carothers has been a resident of the district for 2 years and resides with his wife, Anne Thomas, and son, Camden. He is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with UPMC Health Plan. Mike brings his extensive experience with working in child welfare, mental health, and health equity and is able to meet adults and children where they are to help them meet their goals. It is important to him that all children have the opportunity to learn and grow. He would like to continue his work with the Southwestern Board of Education to cultivate a strengths-based education system for all. He is an avid sports fan and has enjoyed volunteering his

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2024-2025 Budget Information

PROPOSITION NO. 1: BUDGET

Shall the following resolution be adopted, to wit:
RESOLVED, that the budget for Southwestern Central School District, Chautauqua County, New York, for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025, as presented to the Board of Education in the amount of \$35,745,707.00 is hereby approved and adopted and the required funds therefor are hereby appropriated and the necessary real property taxes required shall be raised by a tax on the taxable property in said District to be levied and collected as required by law.



A line of school buses, above, is pictured on the Southwestern Central School District campus.

PROPOSITION NO. 2:

SCHOOL BUSES & RELATED EQUIPMENT

Shall the following resolution be adopted, to wit:
RESOLVED, that the Board of Education (the "Board") of the Southwestern Central School District, Chautauqua County, New York (the "District"), is hereby authorized to purchase school buses and related equipment for use in the transportation program of the District, including two (2) 70-passenger school buses (at a maximum estimated total cost of \$181,412.82), one (1) 35-passenger school bus (at a maximum estimated total cost of \$156,055.60 each), and to expend for all of such buses and related equipment an aggregate sum not to exceed the sum of \$518,881.24, being the aforesaid maximum estimated total cost, or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be raised 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, in anticipation of such tax, bonds or other obligations (including, without limitation,

obligations arising under leases, lease/purchase contracts or installment purchase contracts having a term of not more than five years) of the District shall be issued or entered into in accordance with applicable provisions of New York State law.

PROPOSITION NO. 2: LIBRARY BUDGETS

Shall the following resolution be adopted, to wit:
RESOLVED, that pursuant to Education Law, Section 259, the Board of Education of the Southwestern Central School District is authorized to levy and collect an annual tax, year after year, separate and apart from the annual school district budget, in the amount of \$256,000, of which \$175,000 shall be paid to the Lakewood Memorial Library for the support and maintenance of that library and \$81,000 of which shall be paid to the Hazeltine Public Library for the support and maintenance of that library; with this appropriated amount to be the annual appropriation until thereafter modified by a future vote of the electors of the Southwestern Central School District.

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time with his son's hockey team and attending local sports events and activities. Mike has also served on the school board for the past several months. "I will assist the school district in meeting the needs of our children, as well as lending support to the families and community I serve."

RANDY ELF

Dr. Elf has been a resident of the district since 1973. His wife and their children are in Heaven. He was a teacher in

Germany and at Southwestern, and a newspaper reporter, as well as a law clerk to two federal judges and has practiced law in the private and public sectors. Since 2020, he has also had a weekly newspaper column. Dr. Elf pledges to be responsible and responsive to district residents, including taxpayers. Dr. Elf aspires to support fully all SWCS teachers, coaches, and pupils and do his best to help SWCS to continue to provide excellent instructional and extracurricular programs for young people, of all ability levels, in schools that are safe for and respectful of

all. Particularly nowadays, it's important to provide young people with solid fellowship opportunities in safe havens through which they can grow while being shielded from undue influences. He has held leadership roles in multiple community organizations, including boards of directors. He is committed to respecting both the fundamental importance of education in each child's upbringing and the primary importance of the family in each child's life. To those ends, he will always be receptive to district residents.

Estimated Tax Levy 2024-25

(Based on 2023-24 final assessment data)

Budget: \$ 35,745,707

	2023-24 Assessment	Equal. Rate	Full Value (True)	Tax Levy/Town	% of Levy
Busti	\$466,555,564	65.00%	\$717,777,791	\$10,461,067.53	72.8879%
Ellicott	\$215,187,904	82.00%	\$262,424,273	\$3,824,634.97	26.6483%
Harmony	\$2,922,965	64.00%	\$4,567,133	\$66,562.50	0.4638%
Total	\$684,666,433		\$984,769,197	\$14,352,265	100.00%

Tax Levy 2022-23	Tax Levy 2023-24	Tax Levy 2024-25	Dollar Change	Percent Change
\$ 13,789,846	\$ 14,134,592	\$ 14,352,265	\$217,673.00	1.54%

Tax Rate 2022-23	Tax Rate 2023-24	Tax Rate 2024-25	Dollar Change	Percent Change
\$ 17.413179	\$ 14.822320	\$ 14.574242	-\$0.248078	-1.6736786%

Tax Rates	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Dollar Change	Percent Change
Busti	\$21.548302	\$22.123078	\$22.4422128	\$0.340696	1.352%
Ellicott	\$17.894170	\$17.438145	\$17.773590	\$0.268547	1.924%
Harmony	\$20.355076	\$20.730517	\$22.772254	\$0.319250	9.848%

Budgets	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Dollar Change	Percent Change
Revenue	\$ 17,108,995	\$ 19,699,206	\$ 21,393,442	\$ 1,694,236	8.600%
Tax Levy	\$ 13,789,846	\$ 14,134,592	\$ 14,352,265	\$ 217,673	1.540%
Budget	\$ 30,898,841	\$ 33,113,563	\$ 35,745,707	\$ 2,632,144	7.949%

Questions and Answers

Question: What would happen if the Southwestern voters did not approve the budget?

Answer: If the proposed 2024-25 budget was voted down, the Board of Education would have three options:

- Put the same budget up for a second vote
- Revise the budget and put it up for a vote
- The Board also has the option to adopt a contingent budget immediately instead of putting the budget up for a second vote

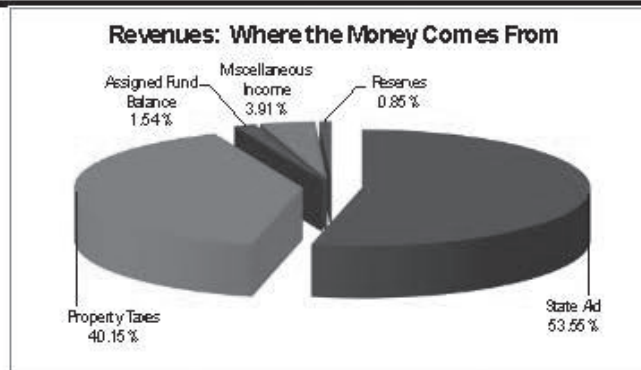
Note: As stated in the NY State Education Law, if the budget is defeated twice, then the district would have to operate on a contingent budget.

Question: What does a contingent budget imply?

Answer: The contingent budget for the 2024-25 school year is \$35,344,990. Under a contingency budget, the 2024-25 Tax Levy would decrease by \$217,673. Should the district go to a contingency budget, certain expenditures are required to be eliminated from the budget, including; equipment, non-essential maintenance, and non-reimbursed public use of school facilities. In addition to these items, the Board of Education can also eliminate or reduce expenditures not specifically authorized by statute.



	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	% of Proposed Budget
ADMINISTRATIVE COMPONENT				
Central Administration	\$492,721	\$528,291	\$552,660	1.54%
Instructional Administration	\$1,569,311	\$1,790,952	\$2,004,879	5.61%
Business Administration	\$757,090	\$849,989	\$872,725	2.44%
Legal & Public Communications	\$72,286	\$74,936	\$77,437	0.22%
Total Administrative	\$2,891,408	\$3,244,168	\$3,507,701	9.81%
PROGRAM COMPONENT				
Teaching	\$15,168,107	\$16,369,500	\$16,935,485	47.38%
Special Education	\$3,782,780	\$4,132,149	\$4,625,268	12.94%
Extra-Curricular/Community Service	\$475,907	\$532,504	\$697,163	1.95%
Pupil Transportation	\$1,573,215	\$1,749,394	\$1,880,057	5.26%
Total Program	\$21,000,009	\$22,783,547	\$24,137,973	67.53%
CAPITAL COMPONENT				
Operations & Maintenance	\$2,846,066	\$3,033,405	\$3,109,182	8.70%
Debt Service	\$4,061,358	\$3,952,443	\$4,890,851	13.68%
Interfund Transfers	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	0.28%
Total Capital	\$7,007,424	\$7,085,848	\$8,100,033	22.66%
TOTAL BUDGET	\$30,898,841	\$33,113,563	\$35,745,707	100.00%



	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
State Aid	\$15,673,173	\$17,673,636	\$19,142,458
Property Taxes	\$13,789,846	\$14,134,592	\$14,352,265
Assigned Fund Balance	\$539,803	\$450,000	\$550,000
Miscellaneous Income	\$711,019	\$720,235	\$1,398,019
Reserves	\$185,000	\$135,100	\$302,965
Total Revenue	\$30,898,841	\$33,113,563	\$35,745,707



Southwestern Telephone Directory

Business Office.....484-1136
District Office484-1136
District Office Fax .488-2442
Supt. Office Fax....488-2442
Special Education. 664-4675
Technology483-5473
Transportation763-8391

Elementary School Pre-K through Grade 5

Main Office664-1881
Health Office.....484-6822
Attendance484-6823
Fax.....487-3170

Middle School-Grades 6-8

Main Office664-6270
Health Office.....484-6841
Guidance/
Attendance.....484-6842
Fax.....487-0855

High School-Grades 9-12

Main Office664-6273
Health Office.....664-6275
Guidance Office/Career
Center.....664-6276
Attendance484-6861
Fax.....484-1167

**The Spotlight is
published through the
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of the
Southwestern Central
School District**

**SOUTHWESTERN
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SCHOOL DISTRICT**
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Turning Pages for a Better Future

The YWCA Jamestown BookMark program visited Southwestern Elementary School in early 2024 to talk about Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta.

Our Trojans learned what an "activist" is and read the book "Side by Side" by Monica Brown. Students then made a Chain of Change to hang in the hall.

The students' colorful chain included messages from all second-grade students about what they want to change in our world and how they will help make that change happen.



Trojans Support Humane Society

Southwestern Middle School's Student Council visited the Chautauqua County Humane Society in March 2024 following a collection drive.

SWMS ran a campaign to collect pet-friendly items and the Student Council brought boxes and bags full of donations to the shelter. Council members made felt blankets, baked dog biscuits and created cat toys to bring on the visit.

Council members enjoyed a tour of the facility and viewed behind-the-scene areas such as



surgical rooms. Students got up close and played with some of the residents of the Humane Society. They also received information about becoming a volunteer at the shelter.