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The Grand Island Central School District BRIDGE

www.grandislandschools.org

The Community Newsletter for the Grand Island Central School District

# Message From Your Superintendent

Dear Grand Island families and community:



*Brian Graham, Ed.D.*
*Superintendent of Schools*

Over the past decade, I have continued to be impressed by the strength of our school community and the many opportunities available to our students. I am also grateful for our Board of Education and its collaborative, thoughtful work throughout the budget development process. Each board member has been actively engaged in reviewing projected expenditures, anticipated revenues, and the long-term needs of our school district.

As a result of that work, the Grand Island Central School District is preparing to present a proposed 2026–27 budget that maintains our strong educational program while remaining fiscally responsible.

The proposed 2026–27 budget total is $81,685,805. This proposal includes a tax levy increase of 2.7%, with an estimated annual impact of $116.44 for a home assessed at $397,000 with a Basic STAR exemption. We are proud that this budget remains within the state's tax levy cap and reflects our commitment to being responsible stewards of taxpayer resources.

This budget supports the goals of the Board of Education and preserves our current elementary class sizes, instructional program, transportation services, student academic and social-emotional supports, extracurricular opportunities, and interscholastic athletics. Through careful planning and sound budget management, we are able to continue providing high-quality opportunities for students while remaining mindful of the financial pressures facing our families.

In December, the community considered a proposed capital improvement project that did not receive voter approval. We respect the outcome of that vote and remain committed to listening to our community as we consider future next steps. In the meantime, we will continue to maintain our facilities responsibly and ensure that our schools remain safe, secure, and supportive learning environments.

Voting on the school budget and Board of Education candidates will take place on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, in the Grand Island High School gymnasium. Absentee ballots may be requested by contacting the District Clerk, and all ballots must be received by 5:00 p.m. on the day of the vote. Additional budget information and presentations will be available on our website at www.grandislandschools.org

Thank you for your continued partnership and support of the Grand Island Central School District. We greatly appreciate your consideration of the proposed 2026–27 school budget.

Sincerely,

Brian Graham, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

**The annual Community Perception Survey is on our website at www.grandislandschools under the Our District tab. Click Board of Education from the drop-down menu.**

VOTE

## Grand Island Schools 2026-27 Budget Vote and Trustee Election

**Tuesday, May 19, 2026**
**8 a.m. to 9 p.m.**

Grand Island High School Gym
1100 Ransom Road
Grand Island, NY 14072

## Budget Public Hearing

Monday, May 11, 2026, at 7 p.m. in the Professional Development Room at Grand Island High School, 1100 Ransom Road.

## Find Out More

Copies of the district's proposed budget will be available online, at the Grand Island Memorial Library, and in the District Office. Copies are also available in all five schools. Contact the district with questions about the budget development process. Visit the district website at www.grandislandschools.org for more information.

## Voter Registration Information

Electronic polling books will be used during this vote/election. If you have not registered for the primary or general election, please view resources on the district website, www.grandislandschools.org, under the 2026-27 budget information page.

The Grand Island Board of Education supports this budget and encourages residents to call with questions or attend the regularly scheduled meetings. For further information call 716-773-8805 or visit www.grandislandschools.org.

# 2026-2027 Budget Proposal at a Glance

| | 2025-2026 | 2026-2027 | $ Change | % Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ADMINISTRATION - %**<br>**Consists of these examples and others:**<br>Daily operating activities which indirectly provide a benefit to students and staff. | $7,154,484 | $7,015,558 | ($138,926) | -1.9% |
| **PROGRAM - %**<br>**Consists of these examples and others:**<br>Activities which directly benefit students. | $57,354,934 | $60,098,647 | $2,743,713 | 4.8% |
| **CAPITAL - %**<br>**Consists of these examples and others:**<br>Activities involving maintenance and upkeep of district buildings. | $14,811,727 | $14,571,600 | ($240,127) | -1.6% |
| **TOTAL** | **$79,321,145** | **$81,685,805** | **$2,364,660** | **2.98%** |

## Where Does School Funding Come From?

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.0% | Other | $1,606,622 | 32.8% | State Aid | $26,816,737 |
| 6.0% | Sales Tax | $4,900,000 | 52.6% | Real Property Tax | $42,976,370 |
| 6.6% | Fund Balance | $5,386,076 | 100% | Total Budget | $81,685,805 |

## The 2026-27 Grand Island Central School budget propositions can be summarized this way:

**Proposition 1: Budget**

- Maintains our current elementary class sizes
- Continues the implementation of our regular instructional program
- Continues the practice of a $100,000 capital outlay project annually
- Maintains the safety and security of the campus and continues our security camera replacement and upgrade plan

**Proposition 2: Vehicle Purchase**

- Maintains current transportation services
- Purchase of two 66-passenger buses
- Purchase of one 29-passenger bus
- Purchase of one 20-passenger wheel chair bus
- Purchase of one Ford Transit 350 Cargo Van - B&G Department

## Board of Education Trustee Election

Voters will elect to the Board of Education two (2) members to three-year terms commencing July 1, 2026, and concluding June 30, 2029.

**Candidates**

1. James Mulcahy 2. Michael Madigan 3. Susan Marston 4. Liz Goss

Candidate biographies can be found at www.grandislandschools.org.
(Select the Our District tab and click Board of Education from the drop-down menu.)




## Proposition No. 1 (2026-27 budget)

RESOLVED, that the budget for the Grand Island Central School District for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027, as presented by the Board of Education in the amount of **$81,685,805**, 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 the District to be levied and collected as required by law.

❑ YES ❑ NO

## Proposition No. 2

Shall the following resolution be adopted? RESOLVED: (a) that the Board of Education of the Grand Island Central School District, in the County of Erie, New York (the "District"), is hereby authorized to acquire various school buses and similar vehicles for use in the transportation program of the District, and to expend therefor an amount not to exceed $672,000; (b) that a tax is hereby voted in the amount of not to exceed $672,000 to finance such cost, such tax to be levied and collected in installments in such years and in such amounts as shall be determined by the Board of Education; (c) that the District is authorized to issue serial bonds and/or bond anticipation notes to finance all or part of such cost, and a tax is hereby voted to pay the interest on such bonds and/or notes as the same shall become due and payable; and (d) that, in lieu of such bonds or notes, the District is authorized to enter into one or more installment purchase contracts for the purchase of some or all of such buses and vehicles, for a term of not to exceed five (5) years; and a tax is hereby voted to pay each installment on any such contract.

❑ YES ❑ NO



## What is Being Done to Control School District Costs

The Grand Island School District understands the need to present a fiscally responsible budget to our taxpayers. Most of our proposed $81 million budget is required by New York State law, and these mandated expenses continue to increase. The proposed 2026–27 budget reduces expenses in the following ways:

- Reducing six (6) teaching positions and one (1) teacher aide position due to retirements.
- Mitigating a 14% increase in health insurance costs by reducing other benefit expenses in the budget.
- The District is educating a higher number of students with special needs, many of whom require more intensive support. To address this, an additional small classroom (6:1:1) is being added rather than paying tuition to outside organizations.
- The District transports students to 41 individual schools on a daily basis due to our unique location between Niagara and Erie counties along the Niagara River. We are sharing costs with West Seneca for the required daily transportation of two students to Fairport, NY. Fuel costs—including gasoline for smaller buses and diesel for larger buses—continue to rise. These increases are being offset by reducing other costs within the Transportation Department.
- Utility costs continue to rise. We are controlling these expenses by participating in a municipal energy cooperative with multiple Western New York school districts.
- Additional cost reductions in the proposed budget include travel and conference budgets, new equipment purchases, and supplies and materials. The purchase of new school buses reduces the need to contract out routes to private vendors, and our maintenance staff completes most repairs in-house rather than outsourcing.

Despite these cost increases, the initial budget was projected to rise by 5.5%. Through careful planning, the Board of Education and Superintendent have reduced the proposed increase to 2.9%. We will continue to seek opportunities to reduce expenditures, and during the school year, district spending will be limited to essential needs.

The proposed budget of $81,685,805 will be presented to district taxpayers for a vote on May 19, 2026.

# 2026-2027 Tax Information

| | 2025-2026 Budget | 2026-2027 Budget | Dollar Change | Percent Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assessed Value * | $3,504,922,246 | $3,689,391,838 | $184,469,592 | 5.26% |
| Equalization Rate | 100% | 95% | N/A | -5.0% |
| Tax Levy | $41,846,515 | $42,976,370 | $1,129,855 | 2.7% |
| Tax Rate | $11.94 | $12.26 | $0.32 | 2.68% |

### Tax Levy

The tax levy is the total amount of property taxes a school district must collect to balance its budget, after accounting for all other revenue sources including state aid. The tax levy is the basis for determining the tax rate for each of the cities, towns or villages that make up a school district.

### Tax Rate

Tax rate is determined by your property's assessed value divided by 1,000, and multiplied by the tax rate. This rate is established using the Town of Grand Island assessed value.

→ *The 2026-27 proposed tax rate is based on the estimated assessment. Final assessment values for calculation of the 2026-27 tax rate are not available at this time.

# Contingent Budget Information

| | Proposed Budget 2026-2027 | Contingency Budget 2026-2027 |
|---|---|---|
| Total Budget | $81,685,805 | $80,555,950 |
| Budget Increase/Decrease | $2,364,660 | $1,234,805 |
| % Increase/Decrease | 2.98% | 1.56% |
| Change in Consumer Price Index | 2.63% | 2.63% |

### What happens if the proposed budget is not approved?

If a proposed budget is defeated by voters, a school district - as in the past - has two options: to put the same or a revised budget up for a revote, or to adopt a contingent budget. If a proposed budget is defeated twice by voters, a district must adopt a contingent budget.

### Does the law make any changes to the requirements for a contingent budget?

Certain existing contingent budget requirements remain in effect which prohibit spending in specific areas including community use of buildings, elimination of all proposed increases in staff, prohibit purchasing of new equipment (i.e. buses) and prevent any member of a bargaining unit which does not have a contract beyond June 30, 2026, from having an increase in salary in 2026-27. However, under the new law, a district that adopts a contingent budget may not increase its current tax levy by any amount, which would impose, in effect, a zero percent cap. Districts will not be allowed to increase the tax levy to the extent needed to fund expenditures excluded from the tax cap (no growth factor, nor capital, court order/judgments, or pension expenditures.)

Grand Island Central School District

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## 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 | $79,321,145 | $81,685,805 | $80,555,950 |
| Increase/Decrease for the 2026-27 School Year | $1,388,891 | $2,364,660 | $1,234,805 |
| Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget | 1.78% | 2.98% | 1.56% |
| Change in the Consumer Price Index | 2.00% | 2.63% | 2.63% |
| A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount | $41,846,515 | $42,976,370 | $41,846,515 |
| B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable | $0 | $0 | |
| C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable | $0 | $0 | |
| D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy | $0 | $0 | |
| E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D) | $41,846,515 | $42,976,370 | $41,846,515 |
| F. Total Permissible Exclusions | $2,098,699 | $2,265,112 | $2,265,112 |
| G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions | $39,747,816 | $40,711,258 | $39,581,403 |
| H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D) | $39,747,816 | $40,711,258 | $39,581,403 |
| I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval) | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| Administrative Component | $7,154,484 | $7,015,558 | $6,866,203 |
| Program Component | $57,354,934 | $60,098,647 | $59,397,646 |
| Capital Component | $14,811,727 | $14,571,600 | $14,292,101 |

Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2026-2027 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law: The contingent budget is calculated using the NYS Contingent budget formula which excludes non-contingent budget items. In addition, a contingency budget would require the district to charge for the use of its facilities.

| Description | Amount |
|---|---|
| Proposition #2 - Vehicle Purchase | **$ 672,000** |

| | Under the Budget Proposed for the 2026-27 School Year |
|---|---|
| Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings* | **$426** |

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2026-27 by the qualified voters of the Grand Island Central School District, Erie County, New York, will be held at the High School in said District on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. prevailing time in the High School Gymnasium, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

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*The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law (new rate will be available in August).