

2024-25 **BUDGET**



Greater Johnstown SCHOOL DISTRICT

VOTE

Tuesday, May 21

11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Johnstown High School
Auditorium Lobby

Annual budget vote set for **May 21**

On Tuesday, May 21, residents of the Greater Johnstown School District will vote on a proposed \$43,488,975 spending plan for the 2024-25 school year.

The plan represents a spending increase of 3.00% (\$1,266,669) and calls for a 4.26% tax levy increase (\$500,818), which is at the District's maximum allowable levy under state law. This marks the fourth straight year that the tax levy increase will be within the cap, requiring a simple majority (more than 50%) to pass.

"Over the past year, we have fine-tuned the budget in order to present a spending plan that continues to provide financial consistency for our community members, while also prioritizing the District's dedication to its [mission](#) and responsibilities," Superintendent of Schools Dr. William Crankshaw said. "We are steadfast to our goal of continuous improvement, and to provide our students with the programming and resources necessary to receive a top-level education, all of which is reflected in this proposal."

Nearly 60% of Johnstown's revenue is from state aid. School districts typically see an annual increase in state foundation aid to help navigate rising costs and inflation, but as has been widely reported, foundation aid will remain flat for the 2024-25 school year. "Because there will be no increase in foundation aid, the District allocated more from its fund balance to help balance the proposed budget, rather than pass that responsibility to our local taxpaying citizens," Dr. Crankshaw said. "We expected a change in foundation

aid for this year and planned accordingly," Assistant Superintendent Alicia D. Koster said. "Fortunately, our long-range strategic financial plan to utilize fund balance, maintain healthy reserves, and time important capital projects has positioned us well for minimizing reliance on foundation aid increases," she added.

Crankshaw noted that there are no staffing increases or large purchases included in the spending plan, and that budget lines showing increased spending from last year are mostly due to non-discretionary expenses including contractual obligations for salaries, health insurance and retirement.

"As they do every year, our administrative team took a collaborative deep dive into each school building to assess staff and student needs," Crankshaw said. "As a team, we incorporated specific cost-saving efficiencies and strategies to streamline District resources without sacrificing programs and emerging needs of our students, which was an important step to arriving at a balanced budget for next year," he added.

Voters will also be asked to approve establishing a Capital Reserve Fund, as a way to help save for future capital projects. The fund will be contributed to annually, up to \$10 million over the next 10 years. Also on the ballot, voters will see a proposition for a small capital project, spending no more than \$5 million from the District's already established Construction Capital Reserve (2023). The funds already exist, but voter approval is required to expend the funds. Costs for the project are not included in the 2024-25 budget and do not affect the District's 2024-25 tax levy. *See more details on the capital project on page 6.*

BY THE NUMBERS

\$43,488,975

Proposed 2024-25 budget

3.00% (\$1,266,669)

Year-to-year spending increase

4.26% (\$500,818)

Year-to-year tax levy increase,
which is at the allowable
New York state tax levy
cap increase

May 21, 5 p.m.

Deadline for District
to receive absentee
and early mail
voting ballots



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

A new day in school transportation

Starting July 1, 2024, Student Transportation of America Inc. (STA) will provide home-to-school transportation for students, as well as out-of-district placements, extracurricular activities, athletics and field trips - a service that is currently provided by HFM BOCES.

"Through the work of our shared decision making committee, it became clear that our District's transportation needs were growing to the point that it necessitated a change," Superintendent of Schools Dr. Crankshaw said. "STA specializes in transportation and has the appropriate resources, infrastructure, and staffing in place to fulfill our District's transportation needs into the future."

Assistant Superintendent Alicia D. Koster said the partnership will also reduce District transportation spending by nearly \$1 million immediately, with the potential for further savings in the future.

"STA owns their bus fleet and is required to maintain them according to DOT regulations and fulfill the New York state mandate to electrify buses by 2035," she said. "In addition to being a fiscally responsible choice, the move to STA allows for further efficiencies to be incorporated, which will result in greater transportation consistency and reliability."

STA General Manager Richard Miles will work directly with GJSD Transportation Director Julia Barringer for day-to-day logistical operations. Efficient bus routes will be created this summer, utilizing the District's practice of identifying centralized bus stops for eligible students whose families have requested transportation. Buses will be rebranded this summer to incorporate the Johnstown name, as well as colorful school logos.

"STA has been handling several Johnstown bus routes in the last two years to help the District alleviate capacity issues. This will be a seamless transition and we will all be ready to go on the first day of school, Sept. 5," Koster said.

A message from Dr. William Crankshaw, GJSD Superintendent of Schools



The Greater Johnstown School District is gaining attention regionally, statewide, and nationally for its impressive educational practices. The District continues to enjoy significant improvement

in its fiscal and academic health, thanks to strategic long-range planning, dedicated and talented staff, careful day-to-day financial management, and stewardship of federal, state and local funds to prioritize high-quality academic curriculum, programming and instruction.

The District's proposed 2024-25 budget of \$43,488,975 reflects the seriousness with which the Board of Education and administration have approached their responsibilities to be educational and fiscal stewards for the District. This spending plan was intentionally built to stay within the allowable tax cap for the fourth year in a row, while simultaneously continuing to advance our goal to build upon recent growth in all District aspects.

Conservative, but necessary and responsibly-planned spending, has allowed us to stabilize our tax levy and prioritize long-range financial planning at a time in history when rising costs are challenging to even the most well-off communities. We've prioritized the District's fiscal health, while also strengthening existing programs, creating relevant opportunities for our students, and focusing on educational excellence.

Recently, the District has noted great improvement in its math and ELA scores. It also has been nationally recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for its practices to improve chronic absenteeism. Johnstown's strong commitment to supporting its

students' social, emotional, and academic learning is being lauded by several important statewide organizations.

For the last two years, the District's high school graduation rate is among the highest in the region (94%). Everyone in the District is working diligently to provide the very best educational program for students. Administration and the Board of Education continue to navigate fluctuating and insufficient state aid contributions, all while balancing the needs among three critical stakeholder groups: students and families, staff, and citizen taxpayers.

As a home and property owner in the District myself, I can assure our District residents that tax increases, while necessary, have been thoughtfully developed to be relevant to students' needs, with sensitivity to our community members who are asked to contribute the local share of the total budget.

The District's proposed budget incorporates all of the important and relevant curricula, programs, and services students need for continued success and growth. The spending plan also continues social, emotional, and academic learning (SEAL) supports that students need to be successful learners at all levels.

Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and instructional support systems included in this budget will mean that all students, regardless of ability and need, will have the opportunity to thrive.

The work is not done. The District needs the community to grow, in order to raise educational standards and expectations for every aspect of our great school system. I believe that the Greater Johnstown School District is well on its way to the vision it set coming out of COVID to be the region's example for educational excellence. A widespread culture of continuous improvement and innovation is helping us to raise student outcomes now and for many years to come.

With your support, we can realize our vision as we conscientiously approach each day knowing that we are charged with the important task and awesome responsibility of educating our community's youth. We hope that you are encouraged to support the District to provide a first-rate education for our students and make our community schools a source of great pride for all.



Kraemer continues Johnstown career as Director of Student Engagement and Athletics

Starting July 1, 2024, current Knox Middle School Principal Robert Kraemer will serve Johnstown students in the role of Director of Student Engagement/ Athletic Director.



In his new role, Kraemer will have oversight of all extracurricular programs, including Johnstown’s athletic programs. He will oversee the District’s physical education (P.E.) and health education staff and curriculum, as well as the District’s team of school nurses. Johnstown’s transition from the Foothills Conference to the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) for the 2024-25 school year will also take place under his leadership.

“Student engagement in school is incredibly important to the development of a student’s sense of purpose and belonging, and is also critical in helping to develop character,” Kraemer said. “These experiences help teach students valuable skills like responsibility, leadership, teamwork, and time management. Students learn to socialize effectively with their peers in a variety of settings, are able to make new friends with common interests, and can feel a sense of

pride in representing their school.”

Kraemer graduated from Johnstown in 1996, where he immersed himself in sports each season. A certified administrator, he received his B.A. in Physical Education from SUNY Cortland, and his Masters in Education from the University of New England.

Nearly his entire professional career has been spent at Johnstown. He taught elementary P.E. for 15 years before spending two years as an assistant principal and athletic coordinator at Schoharie High School. For the past seven years, he has served as principal at GJSD.

“I’ve been a part of this community my entire life, so I know how important traditions are, and how big of a deal school pride is here in Johnstown,” Kraemer said. “We plan to bring back a few old traditions, but will work hard to create some new traditions as well,” he added.

“I’m excited to be in a position where I can influence student engagement through meaningful participation. It’s important to me that we’re producing students, teams, and programs that this community can support,” he said.

Kraemer also serves as an assistant football and girls basketball coach at Johnstown. His previous coaching experience includes head



Johnstown’s Amethyst JV winter color guard team won first place in the Novice Class at this year’s Mid-York Color Guard Championships.



The GJSD boys alpine ski team won second place at the Section 2 championship, and Jakob Hanna (Jr), Carter Cheney (Sr), and Carson Cheney (Fr) competed in the NYSPHSAA tournament.

coach of both the football and bowling programs, and assistant coach for the baseball program. He has also served as a board member for Johnstown Little League Baseball and as the vice president of the Johnstown Little Football League.

GJSD prioritizes mental health with SEAL Team

The District’s Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (SEAL) Team is made up of a variety of mental health professionals including school psychologists, social workers, behavioral specialists, counselors, and the District’s School Resource Officer - who are embedded into each of the District’s four school buildings to provide personalized assistance to students in need.

The SEAL Team has been fine-tuned and added to since COVID as a way to enhance and streamline resources aimed at increasing student achievement. Nikki Lent (Dir. of Pupil Personnel Services) is the administrator overseeing the team, and Dr. Chad Swanson (School Psychologist, Warren St.) is the District’s SEAL Team Coordinator.

“These resources are critical,” Dr. Swanson said. “We’re not just teaching reading, writing, and math anymore. We have to provide them with

mental health supports to deal with chronic stress they’re facing outside of school, so they can focus on learning in the classroom.”

Lent says it is the teamwork aspect that makes the SEAL program so successful. “Each of the SEAL professionals has a different expertise, but the real power comes from the team’s collective knowledge to formulate the best possible plan for each student,” she said.

Dr. Crankshaw has made mental health an important cornerstone of his work at Johnstown and says the District is already seeing positive changes in student achievement, and combating chronic absenteeism.

“The SEAL Team is here to stay. This is where we are as a society, as a community, and as a District.



These resources help our students be more successful in the classroom and better prepares them for adulthood, which is the ultimate goal.”

Learn more about the SEAL Team on the District’s website:





PROPOSITIONS

Vote YES or NO

Proposition No. 1	Proposition No. 2	Proposition No. 3
<p>Proposed Budget</p> <p>The District asks voters to decide on a \$43,488,975 proposed budget for the 2024-25 school year, with a tax levy increase of 4.26%, which is at the District’s allowable limit as determined by the state’s tax cap formula and will require a simple majority approval (over 50%).</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO </p>	<p>Establish Capital Reserve Fund</p> <p>Establish a Capital Reserve Fund (savings) as a way to help save for future capital projects. The fund will be contributed to annually, up to \$10,000,000 over the next 10 years, through unappropriated fund balance and future budget surpluses. Future expenditures from the newly established Capital Reserve Fund would need to be approved by voters.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO </p>	<p>Small Capital Project</p> <p>Voters will be asked to approve a small capital project, spending no more than \$5 million from the District’s already established Construction Capital Reserve (2023). The funds already exist in the reserve, but voter approval is required before the funds are spent. Costs for the small capital project are not included as part of the 2024–25 proposed budget and do not affect the District’s 2024-25 tax levy.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO </p>

GJSD hosts community walking & swimming programs

The Greater Johnstown School District once again opened its doors this past winter for its Community Walking Program at Warren Street, and Community Swim Program at JHS using the District’s indoor Olympic-size pool.

“We are grateful to be able to offer these very popular programs to members of our community,” Dr. Crankshaw said. “There are obvious health benefits to providing a safe, indoor environment for people of all ages to exercise during the winter months. We have beautiful facilities at GJSD and we are happy to share them.”

Crankshaw said he heard from many senior community members that the walking program provided them with a way to socialize with friends, and feel more in-tune with what’s going on in the school as they passed by classrooms, curriculum-themed bulletin boards, and student artwork hanging on the wall.

The swim program was popular among adults who wanted to exercise by doing laps in the pool, but also among families that appreciated the chance to get out of the house, spend quality time together, and give everyone some time away from their electronics.

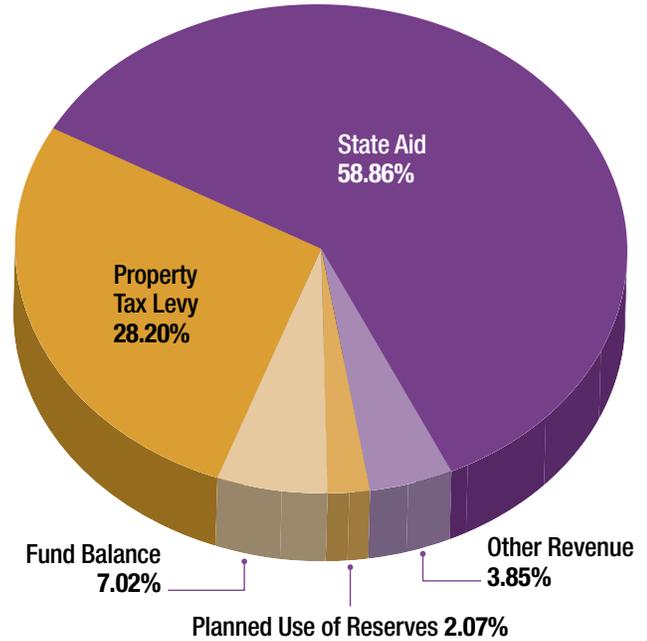
“We will look to continue these programs next winter and encourage everyone in the community to take advantage of the opportunity,” Crankshaw said.



District Revenues

Nearly 60% of Johnstown’s revenue comes from **state aid**, most of which is foundation aid, intended to support day-to-day operations. Other state aid is expense-based aid, which provides partial reimbursement for certain prior-year expenditures like transportation, BOCES and special education services. Another revenue source is the **tax levy**, which is the amount of money expected to be collected in taxes from property owners in the district. **Fund balance** is unassigned money that a district may appropriate to balance the budget (budgeted revenues must equal budgeted expenses). Fund balance reserves are similar to a savings account. They allow a district to save for unexpected expenses, and contribute to its long-term fiscal health. In general, it is best to minimize the use of reserves for regular operating expenses.

Other local revenue includes tuition, classroom rentals and facility use fees.



Projected Revenues

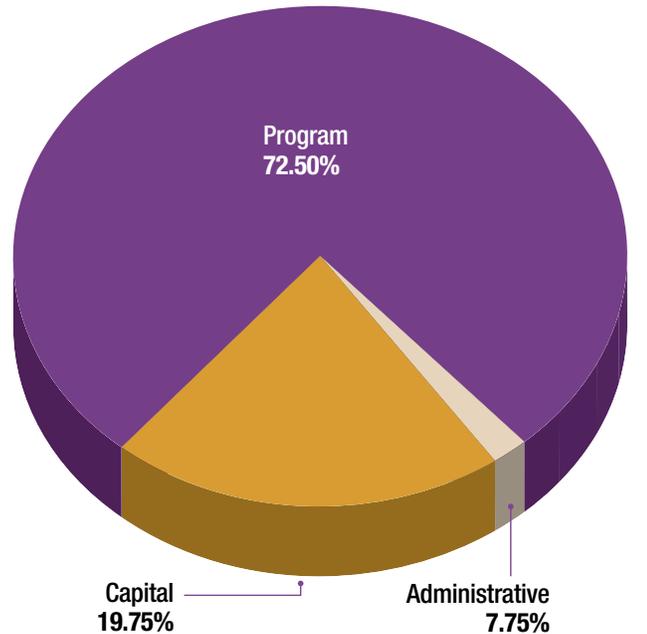
Revenue	Approved 2023-24	Proposed 2024-25	\$ Change	% Change
State Aid	\$25,294,689	\$25,596,714	\$302,025	1.19%
Property Tax Levy	\$11,764,841	\$12,265,659	\$500,818	4.26%
Fund Balance	\$2,291,805	\$3,052,777	\$760,972	33.20%
Use of Reserves	\$900,000	\$900,000	\$0	0%
Other Revenue	\$1,970,971	\$1,673,825	-\$297,146	-15.08%
Total	\$42,222,306	\$43,488,975	\$1,266,669	3.00%

District Expenditures

Approximately 73% of Johnstown’s expenditures go directly toward programs for students. The **program component** of the budget includes instruction, special education services, health and counseling services, library and educational technology, extracurricular activities and bus transportation. The **capital component** includes building administration, maintenance of school buildings and grounds, utilities and debt related to renovation and repair projects. The **administrative component** includes costs for central administration, public meetings, mailings and communications, records management, legal services, liability insurance, auditing and business office expenses.

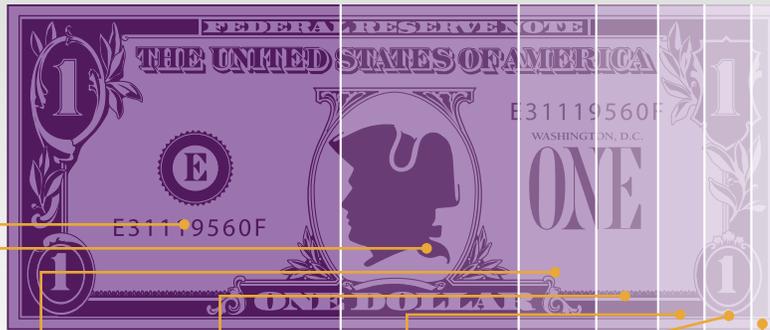
Projected Expenditures

Expenditures	Approved 2023-24	Proposed 2024-25	\$ Change	% Change
Administrative	\$3,281,945	\$3,370,695	\$88,750	2.70%
Capital	\$8,217,531	\$8,589,983	\$372,452	4.53%
Program	\$30,722,830	\$31,528,297	\$805,467	2.62%
Total	\$42,222,306	\$43,488,975	\$1,266,669	3.00%



Where the Money Is Spent

For every dollar Johnstown spends...



About **43 cents** goes directly to classroom instruction.*

About **23 cents** is spent on employee benefits.

About **10 cents** goes to debt service.

About **8 cents** goes to operating schools.*

About **6 cents** goes to transporting students to and from school and school-related activities.

About **6 cents** goes to the administration of our schools’ programs and services.*

About **3 cents** supports other instructional activities.*

About **1 cent** goes to extracurricular and athletic offerings for students.*

*without employee benefits allocated

\$5 million capital project on this year's ballot

Voters will be asked to approve a small capital project, spending no more than \$5 million from the District's already established Construction Capital Reserve (2023), which was partially funded by the transfer of the remaining balance of the Bus Purchase Reserve Fund (\$1,145,413). The funds already exist in the reserve, but voter approval is required before the funds are spent.

Costs for the small capital project are not included as part of the 2024-25 proposed budget and do not affect the District's 2024-25 tax levy. The project will collect about 91% building aid from the state.

The scope of work includes the renovation and modernization of bathrooms at JHS, as well as some overflow projects that could not be completed in the \$15 million "medium" capital project, previously approved by voters in November 2022.

"Estimates for work on the \$15 million capital project came in higher than expected and saw delays in state approval, thereby making it necessary for us to shift portions of the work to the next strategically planned project," Dr. Crankshaw said. "Construction costs are still high, and there are many additional factors that add to projects, including mandatory state regulations to ensure that updates on antiquated infrastructures meet current code requirements."



Overflow work includes renovations and new appliances in the kitchens at both Pleasant Avenue and Warren Street. The Pleasant Avenue kitchen would also see a new walk-in cooler/freezer, redesigned dry storage area, and new floors. A new, expanded serving line area at Warren Street has also been shifted to this project.

At Knox, HVAC will be updated in the auditorium balcony area, which is currently used as an instructional space, and the last phase of installing iron, ornamental fencing will be completed.

If approved, the \$5 million small capital project will be submitted to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) in early summer. Depending on how quickly the project can be approved by the state, work is anticipated to start in the summer of 2025.

"As part of the District's long-range financial plan, small, medium and large capital projects are intentionally planned in cyclical order to cost effectively maintain our buildings, and improve learning spaces while also taking full advantage of state building aid and other incentives," Dr. Crankshaw said.

"Capital projects are strategically funded by interest-gaining reserves that are set up years before the actual work is done, so there is as little impact as possible to our tax payers," he added. "Whenever possible, the District plans capital projects in concentrated areas that can be underway at the same time, to minimize any disruption to learning."

Artistic students find creative outlets at GJSD

GJSD is a strong advocate for students who express interest in the field of art. With four art teachers to serve the District, students take general art classes from pre-K through eighth grade. Pleasant Avenue and Warren Street Elementary Schools host annual art shows for families to view student artwork on display. New at Knox Middle School this year, students in grades 5-7 can participate in Art Club as an after-school enrichment program.

Once a student reaches high school, they have many opportunities to explore their love of art. High school students can take many different art electives including studio art, painting & drawing, advanced art, ceramics, sculpture, media arts, and Art 103 (Arts & Culture) through FMCC. As part of their classwork, students often have the opportunity to create, draw and paint murals on the walls throughout the school. Students are encouraged to showcase their artwork in local community art shows and submit their art in competitions.



Pre-K students in Miss Thiessen's class collaborated with high school students in Miss Kelly's sculpture class this year to create shape monsters.



Students at JHS often have the chance to help beautify the hallways of their school, by creating murals as part of their classwork.



Sophomore Camilla Ventura (pictured with her parents), senior Emma Smith, and junior Elliot Brownell had artwork displayed at a local FMCC exhibition this spring. Brownell (middle picture) also received honorable mention for the Traditions Award at the Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts' 7th annual Regional Art Show.



Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2023-24 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2024-25 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$42,222,306	\$43,488,975	\$42,988,157
Increase/Decrease for the 2023-24 School Year		\$1,266,669	\$765,851
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		3.00%	1.81%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.12%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$11,764,841	\$12,265,659	
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)	\$11,764,841	\$12,265,659	\$11,764,841
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$1,259,591	\$1,224,312	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$10,505,250	\$11,041,347	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$10,505,250	\$11,041,347	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$3,281,945	\$3,370,695	\$3,370,695
Program Component	\$30,722,830	\$31,528,297	\$31,027,479
Capital Component	\$8,217,531	\$8,589,983	\$8,589,983

* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2024-25 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law. The District cannot levy any more than the 2023-2024 fiscal year, resulting in a zero percent cap, thereby diminishing our ability to maintain a stable, and consistent long-range financial plan and continue to offer a comprehensive academic program, given the escalating costs for healthcare, retirement, and other contractual obligations. GJSD is also prohibited in spending on community use of facilities (without a fee), new equipment purchases, nonessential maintenance, non-emergency capital expenditures, and student supplies. Further, the District would be required to explore reducing critical instructional positions necessary to advance our academic program and support the social and emotional needs of our students.

** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)

Description	Amount
	\$

¹ The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$447.00

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2024-25 by the qualified voters of the Greater Johnstown School District, Fulton County, New York, will be held at the Johnstown High School in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 between the hours of 11 a.m. and 8 p.m., prevailing time in the Johnstown High School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.



GJSD's fourth grade Odyssey of the Mind team won first place at this year's regional competition! Teammates include Ava Ilnicki, Kennedy Nellis, Reese Baker, Sadie Maas, Zoey Engel, Boone Hazzard, and Ezra Blanc.

Senior Ryan Hoyt is a three-sport athlete at Johnstown who is also enrolled in the CTE cyber security program at HFM BOCES. He currently holds six school records for football, including single season rushing yards, and most career touchdowns. In lacrosse, he holds records for season and career points/goals, and scored his 200th goal this season. He will continue his academic and athletic career at Herkimer College, where he will major in cyber security and play lacrosse.



Field hockey at GJSD has a long tradition of success and the program is currently thriving at every level. Congratulations to four of our senior student-athletes who will continue to play field hockey in college: Parker Klingbeil, Mansfield University (D2), Cole Krempa, Drexel University (D1), Ava Barker, Roberts Wesleyan University (D2), and Jena Barker - SUNY Brockport (D3).





District Offices
Johnstown High School
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Johnstown, NY 12095
www.johnstownschoosls.org

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2024-25 **SCHOOL BUDGET**

VOTE

Tuesday, May 21
11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Johnstown High School
Auditorium Lobby

\$43,488,975
Budget proposal
for 2024-25
school year

Go to www.johnstownschoosls.org/budget-school-taxes/ for more information.



Absentee Ballots & Early Mail Voting

Qualified voters may vote by absentee ballot or participate in early mail voting if they are unable to vote in person on May 21. Voters must first fill out an application with the district clerk. There are separate applications for early mail voting or absentee ballot, but the application process and deadlines are the same for both. Applications are available on the District website or by contacting the district clerk, Larraina Carpenter, at (518) 762-4611, ext. 3119. Completed ballots must be received by the District by mail or drop-off no later than 5 p.m. on May 21. Go to the District website for more information and specific deadlines.

Board of Education Election

Voters will elect three members to the Board of Education for three-year terms to begin on July 1, 2024. Please visit the District website for information about the candidates running for three open seats on the Board of Education.

