



Budget Edition

CENTRAL SCHOOLS

May 2025

2025-2026 PROPOSED BUDGET

BUDGET VOTE: Tuesday, May 20 • 1 - 9 pm • Jr/Sr High School Lobby

Dear LaFayette Central School District Residents

We are pleased to announce that our proposed 2025-2026 school district budget maximizes school district tax dollars for the benefit of all our students. Here are a few examples of your past tax dollars at work:

- ◆ 97% graduation rate for June 2024 from the LaFayette Jr/Sr High and Big Picture (95% district-wide graduation rate for students in all programs).
- ◆ Several students in grades 8-12 received awards from the CNY Scholastic Arts Awards
- ◆ The High School Musical in March was a stellar performance that showcased the talent of our students
- ◆ Lancer fans had the chance to experience several great performances by our student athletes and coaches
- ◆ Strong participation in career and technical education courses at OCM BOCES with over 19 juniors and seniors pursuing career and technical education training courses
- ◆ Personalized learning and internships for students enrolled at the Big Picture School
- ◆ Continued commitment to Onondaga Language instruction for High School students from the Onondaga Nation

As a district, our mission and vision statements and core beliefs have always guided our decision-making process. Our district mission is to educate, honor, and develop students who have self-respect, a commitment to the community, and a passion for excellence. Our district vision is to inspire, empower, and prepare all students to achieve excellence. Our tagline captures the distinct identity of our school community while also aligning us to a common goal for all students- "Four Schools, Three Buildings, Two Nations, One Goal: Excellence!" Our strategic plan focuses on improving student academic performance and addressing the social, emotional, and mental health needs of our school community.

To achieve our school improvement efforts, we need your continued engagement and input as a school community. Here are some highlights of our 2025-2026 school district budget:

- ◆ Sustained support of the health and safety needs of our school building occupants



- ◆ Continue to fund social workers at all school buildings to support the social, emotional, and mental health needs of our students
- ◆ Continued support for students enrolled in fine arts programming
- ◆ Small class sizes
- ◆ Continue our 1:1 technology initiative providing all students with an electronic device to support learning
- ◆ Continue our maintenance equipment replacement plan
- ◆ Keep our tax levy under the allowable tax cap
- ◆ Maintain one of the lowest school tax rates in Onondaga County
- ◆ Maintain the financial condition of the district in alignment with our long-term financial plan

Thank you to our Board of Education for their service, leadership, and continued support for our students. I appreciate the continued encouragement from our school community, parents and caregivers, students, and staff. You continue to set a standard of excellence that shines with Lancer Pride! We look forward to seeing you at the polls for our school district budget vote. The budget vote will be held on Tuesday May 20, 2025 from 1:00-9:00 pm at the LaFayette Jr/Sr High School Main foyer. If you have any questions regarding our proposed budget, please do not hesitate to contact me - jbelfield@lafayette-schools.org or 315-529-9550 (cell).

Sincerely,
Jeremy Belfield, Superintendent of Schools

STAR School Tax Exemption

You may be eligible for the following tax exemptions resulting in a reduction of your 2025-26 school tax bill. Contact your Town Assessor's office for more information. Estimates are based on a home assessed at \$100,000.

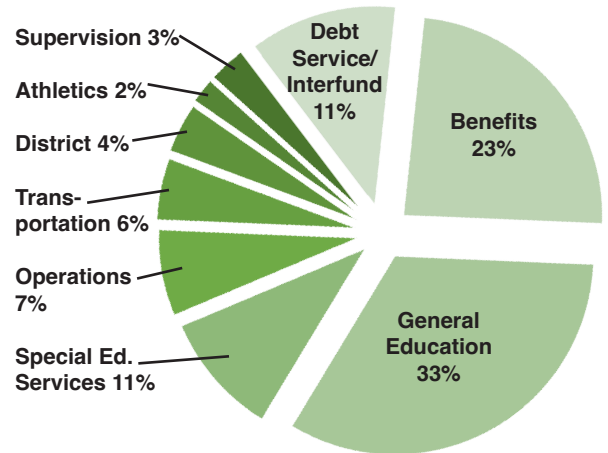
Basic Exemption: \$436 Est. Tax Savings

- Available for owner-occupied, primary residences;
- The income limit for the Basic STAR credit is \$500,000 (the income limit for the Basic STAR exemption is \$250,000);
- Based on the first \$30,000 of the full value of a home

Enhanced Senior Exemption: \$1,164 Est. Tax Savings

- Available on primary residence for 65+ years of age
- Household income of less than \$107,300 per year
- All Enhanced STAR recipients are required to participate in the Enhanced STAR Income Verification Program (IVP). In the first year that you apply for the Enhanced STAR exemption, your assessor will verify your eligibility based on the first \$86,100 of the full value of a home for the 2025-2026 school year.

Where the Money Goes



Historical Budget Analysis

SCHOOL YEAR	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	PROJECTED 2025-26
Budget Appropriations	\$18,964,918	\$19,567,132	\$20,324,251	\$20,631,885	\$21,389,579	\$23,721,781	\$24,195,663	\$24,732,137
\$ Budget Increase	\$229,603	\$602,214	\$757,119	\$307,634	\$757,694	\$2,332,202	\$473,882	\$536,474
% Budget Increase	1.23%	3.18%	3.87%	1.51%	3.67%	10.90%	2.00%	2.22%
Budgeted State Aid	\$9,448,217	\$9,510,217	\$9,656,458	\$9,751,904	\$10,392,042	\$11,863,307	\$11,469,869	\$11,506,870
\$ State Aid Increase	(\$224,599)	\$62,000	\$146,241	\$95,446	\$640,139	\$1,471,265	(\$393,438)	\$37,001
% State Aid Increase	(2.32%)	0.66%	1.54%	0.99%	6.56%	14.16%	-3.32%	0.32%
Tax Levy	\$5,994,765	\$6,145,312	\$6,327,190	\$6,466,481	\$6,595,164	\$6,726,408	\$6,994,792	\$7,133,988
\$ Tax Levy Increase	\$145,589	\$150,547	\$181,878	\$139,291	\$128,683	\$131,244	\$268,384	\$139,196
% Tax Levy Increase	2.49%	2.51%	2.96%	2.20%	1.99%	1.99%	3.99%	1.99%

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JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

♦ WIN Time = Student Success

This year, we launched a WIN (What I Need) schedule, designed to provide targeted academic support and enrichment opportunities. Whether students needed extra help in a subject, time to catch up on assignments, or access to enrichment activities, WIN time became a powerful tool for personalized learning. We've already seen significant gains in student performance, confidence, and engagement.

♦ Celebrating Community Through Music

We had the honor of hosting the United States Air Force Band for a community concert—a truly memorable evening that brought together students, families, and community members to celebrate music, service, and unity.

♦ Giving Back: Fundraisers & Volunteerism

Our students organized and participated in several fundraisers to support local scholarships, helping ensure future graduates can pursue their college and career dreams. We also expanded volunteer opportunities, encouraging students to give back through local service projects, mentoring, and community outreach—building not just strong scholars, but responsible citizens.

♦ Student Recognition & Achievement

Students shined in the **Scholastic Art Awards** and **Key Club** competitions, with several winners recognized at the regional and state level for their creativity, leadership, and service. **The Robotics Team** had an outstanding season, earning a spot at the State Competition, showcasing their innovation, teamwork, and technical skills.

Board of Education Candidates

The terms of office for current board members Amy Roe-Ryan and Anthony Moore will expire on June 30, 2025. There will be two 3-year terms (7/1/25 - 6/30/28). The two candidates receiving the most votes will be elected to the 3-year terms. See website for full candidate bios.



Scan this QR code to see the full bios of the board candidates.

Colleen Cameron

Resident of LaFayette for 8 years. I am a Certified Child Life Specialist and a Special Education Teacher with experience teaching across the developmental continuum. I plan to support the needs of students from pre-k to 12th grade by listening and learning from students, families and community members and incorporating interdisciplinary guidance that aims to promote the healthy development of children and youth in all developmental domains.

Margaret (Peggy) Durant

Resident of LaFayette for 9 years. I am a lifetime educator who puts education first. I have a strong belief in public education for current and future students. I see continued proof of what wonderful students, staff, programming and traditions are here in LaFayette. I would like to share my knowledge and experiences in and out of the classroom to make LaFayette the best district in NY State.

Amy Roe-Ryan

Resident of LaFayette for 20 years. I am an incumbent of the LaFayette School Board, serving since 2021. I plan to be an advocate for a solid educational foundation for all our children. I believe that everyone can be at their best when they are treated with dignity, respect, and compassion and are given a supportive and safe environment in which to learn and work.

Mark Whitney

Resident of LaFayette for 40 years. I previously served the LaFayette School Board from 2010 to 2019. I plan to support students through policy making and approving curriculum standards to ensure that students receive a comprehensive and relevant education, and to support special education and student counseling services.

How You Can Cast Your Vote

In-person voting: Qualified voters* of the District may vote in person via voting machine or paper ballot on **May 20, 2025**, at 3122 Route 11 LaFayette, New York, between the hours of 1:00 P.M. and 9:00 P.M. prevailing time.

Early voting ballot or absentee ballot: Qualified voters* of the District may obtain an application for an absentee ballot or an early voting ballot from the office of the Clerk of the District. Application requests to be mailed must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on May 13, 2025. All other completed applications

must be received by the Clerk of the District no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 19, 2025, and can be picked up in person. Completed absentee and early voting ballots must be received at the District Office by 5 p.m. on May 20, 2025. A voter who casts a ballot via early voting or absentee voting will not be eligible to vote in person on May 20, 2025.

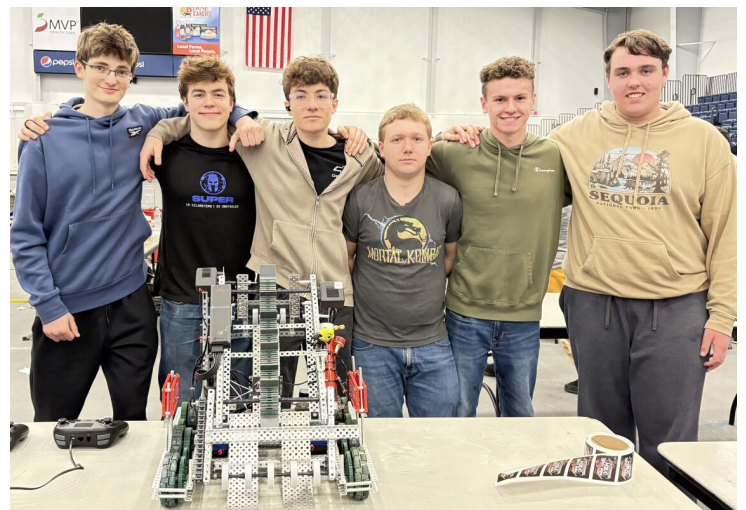
*A qualified voter must be (1) a citizen of the United States, (2) at least 18 years of age, and (3) a resident of the school district for a period of at least 30 days preceding the meeting or election at which you seek to vote.

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JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

◆ Supporting Mental Health: Sources of Strength

We proudly launched the Sources of Strength club, a peer-led mental health initiative focused on building hope, help, and strength among students. The program trains student leaders to promote well-being and connect peers to trusted adults. Through campaigns and positive messaging, the club has helped reduce stigma and build a stronger sense of community and belonging in our school.



Program Component

This budget category is the largest of the three budget components, representing 72.0% of the total components. It includes all expenditures directly related to the student educational program. Included are monies for all instructional personnel and programs including general education, occupational education, special education, technology, staff development and summer school. Also included are student services, such as health, guidance, social workers, psychologists, libraries, co-curricular activities, athletics, transportation, census, and employee benefits for these programs.

	2024/25 Adopted Budget	2025/26 Proposed Budget	\$ Change
Regular Instruction K-12 Salaries, textbooks, supplies, equipment, BOCES, tuition, contractual expense	\$6,004,499	\$6,016,196	\$11,697
Special Education Salaries, supplies, equipment, textbooks, tuition, contractual services, BOCES	2,350,413	2,673,728	323,315
Technology Staff stipends, computer equipment, BOCES support, software	579,341	737,462	158,121
Prevention Summer School, BOCES Services	231,460	223,390	(8,070)
Student Support Services Books, BOCES, computer equipment, contractual services, periodicals, salaries, software, and supplies	1,049,575	1,108,304	58,729
Co-Curricular Advisors, supplies, equipment	106,839	120,848	14,009
Athletics Coaches, equipment, officials, uniforms	414,153	411,288	(2,865)
Pupil Transportation Salaries, bus maintenance, supplies, repairs, fuel	1,293,737	1,408,096	114,359
Employee Benefits NYS Retirement, Health/Dental Insurance, FICA, Unemployment, Worker's Comp	4,807,343	5,095,625	288,282
TOTAL PROGRAM COMPONENT	\$16,837,360	\$17,794,937	\$957,577

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BIG PICTURE SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ **Recognized for Excellence!** We have welcomed 50 visitors from PTech, CA BOCES, the Syracuse STEAM School, Belfast (Ireland), NYC schools, Manitoba (Canada), and ACES Middle School (Broome-Tioga BOCES) to learn about our unique practices.
- ◆ **Prioritizing Mental Wellness**
A Community Mental Health Educator from Contact visited to speak with students about mental health and how to support their peers.
- ◆ **Award-Winning Programs**
We were awarded a \$1,500 Bee Grant to support student-driven learning and sustainability efforts.



Administrative Component

As defined by the NYS Education Department, this budget category includes monies for the majority of the instruction support services in the District. It is comprised of a general support section, an instructional supervision section, and a section for employee benefits for personnel in associated areas. This component represents 8.3% of the components. The categories marked with * and ** represent 78% and 65%, respectively, of the total expense to operate these services; the balance is expensed to the State for administering and maintaining financial records for the Onondaga Nation School.

	2024/25 Adopted Budget	2025/26 Proposed Budget	\$ Change
Board of Education*			
Membership, District Clerk, district meetings	\$23,596	\$24,472	\$876
Central Administration*	204,549	215,742	11,193
Chief school administration, salaries, supplies, contractual services			
Finance** Salaries - payroll, accounts payable, tax collection, auditing, purchasing, business administration, supplies, contractual services	294,420	308,869	14,449
Legal / Personnel / Public Information*	92,305	91,901	(404)
Contractual services, negotiations, employee assistance program, public information			
Central Services	90,627	91,191	564
Paper, copying supplies, contractual services			
Special Items	144,267	154,529	10,262
Insurance, appraisals, BOCES administrative charges			
Curriculum Development / Planning	76,329	111,033	34,704
Staff stipends, supplies, BOCES, contractual services			
Supervision of Instruction	614,717	626,679	11,962
Salaries, supplies, equipment, materials			
Employee Benefits	481,617	432,076	(49,541)
NYS Retirement, Health/Dental Insurance, FICA, Unemployment, Worker's Comp.			
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION COMPONENT	\$2,022,427	\$2,056,492	\$34,065

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BIG PICTURE SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ **College-Ready Students**
Our students are enrolled in 17 courses at OCC (Onondaga Community College), gaining valuable college experience while still in high school.
- ◆ **Podcast Success!**
Our student-created podcast, Behind the Picture, continues to grow and was recently featured as a guest on WCNY's Innovate to Educate podcast.
- ◆ **Leading the Nation!** We have the largest number of IBPLC-credentialed students in the United States, demonstrating our commitment to real-world learning.
- ◆ **Real-World Experience**
80% of our students have internships, gaining hands-on experience in their fields of interest.



BUDGET VOTE: TUESDAY, MAY 20 • 1-9 PM • JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL LOBBY

Capital Component

The Capital budget category, as defined by NYS Education Department, consists primarily of monies for the operation and maintenance of district facilities. Also included are related employee benefits, and debt services payments on long-term obligations. This component represents approximately 19.7% of the components.

	2024/25 Adopted Budget	2025/26 Proposed Budget	\$ Change
Operation of Plant (Custodial) Salaries, supplies, equipment, utilities, contractual services	\$1,251,349	\$1,279,171	\$27,822
Maintenance of Plant (Buildings) Salaries, supplies, equipment, repairs, contractual services, special projects	544,037	533,156	(10,881)
Employee Benefits NYS Retirement, Health/Dental Insurance, FICA, Unemployment, Worker's Comp.	498,167	415,148	(83,019)
Debt Service Bonds & Notes, Principal and Interest, Bus Debt	3,042,323	2,653,233	(389,090)
TOTAL CAPITAL COMPONENT	\$5,335,876	\$4,880,708	(\$455,168)

Three-Part Budget Summary

	2024-25 Adopted Budget	Percent of Total Budget	2025-26 Proposed Budget	Percent of Total Budget
Administrative Component	\$2,022,427	8.4%	\$2,056,492	8.3%
Program Component	5,335,876	21.1%	4,880,708	19.7%
Capital Component	16,837,360	69.9%	17,794,937	72.0%
TOTAL BUDGET	24,195,663		24,732,137	

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GRIMSHAW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

◆ PBIS, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support:

We began the year again by explicitly teaching what it looks like to be safe, respectful, and responsible throughout Grimshaw. During the school year, we provide reteaching of the expectations to keep them at the forefront of everything we do. Each month, we have grade level challenges and celebrate students following expectations. This school year we added monthly school-wide assemblies and a Golden Spoon Award specifically for the cafeteria to reinforce being safe, respectful, and responsible.



2025/2026 Propositions

Proposition I - Budget

Shall the proposed budget of \$24,732,137 for the LaFayette Central School District, as recommended by the Board of Education for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, be adopted, and shall the Board of Education be authorized to levy the necessary taxes therefore?

Proposition II - Transportation

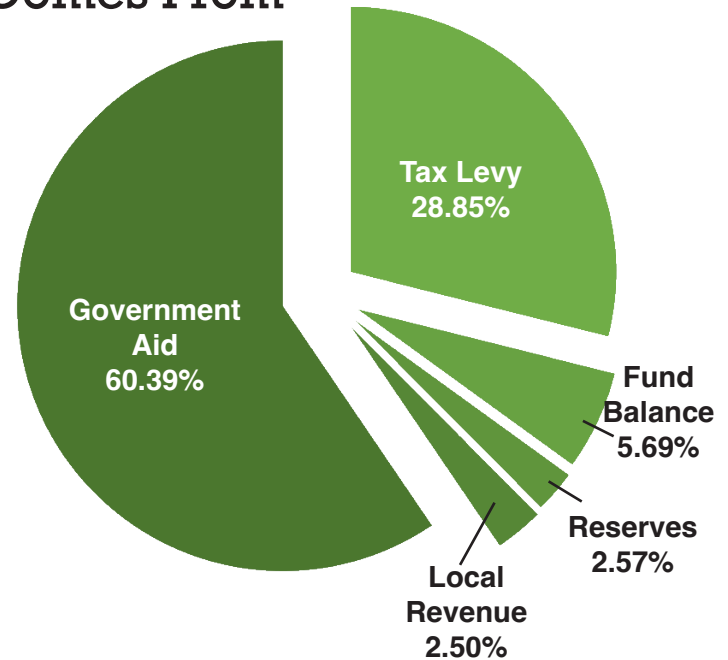
Shall the Board of Education of the LaFayette Central School District be authorized to purchase and finance two (2) 65-passenger diesel school buses and one (1) Suburban for student transport, including necessary furnishings, fixtures, and equipment and all other costs incidental thereto, and expend a total sum not to exceed \$460,000 which is estimated to be the total maximum cost thereof, and said amount, or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be raised by the levy of a tax upon the taxable property of said School District and collected in annual installments as provided by Section 416 of the Education Law; and, in anticipation of such tax, obligations of said School District, in the principal amount not to exceed \$460,000, shall be issued.



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- ◆ **Fostering a Positive Learning Environment:** In addition to the amazing opportunities we have happening in classrooms, Grimshaw is proud to have an incredible Support Team! Our Support Team consists of our School Social Worker, Renee Pierce, our School Counselor, Mr. O'Leary, our School Psychologist, Kaitlin Alibrandi, and our Promise Zone Student Engagement Specialist, Bobbie Henson. They work collaboratively to support our students and families every day.
- ◆ **Dear Edwina:** Our fall musical was Dear Edwina! It was a great show featuring 47 of our talented students in the cast and crew.

Where the Money Comes From



How is the Budget Funded?

	2025/26
Property Taxes	\$7,133,988
Government Aid	
New York State	\$11,506,870
Other State Aid	\$3,400,000
Medicaid Reimbursement	\$30,000
Total Government Aid	\$14,936,870
Local Sources	
County Sales Tax	\$26,000
Interest and Earnings	\$150,000
PY Refunds and Other	\$442,400
Total Local Sources	\$618,400
Use of Reserves	
Retirement Reserve	\$480,000
Unemployment Reserve	\$15,000
Employee Benefit Liability Reserve	\$150,000
Total Use of Reserves	\$635,000
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$1,407,879
TOTAL REVENUE	\$24,732,137

LaFayette CENTRAL SCHOOLS

5955 Route 20, West
LaFayette, NY 13084

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage Paid
PERMIT NO. 3
LaFayette, NY 13084

OCCUPANT
Rural Route/Boxholder
LaFayette, NY 13084

Overall School District Budget Proposal

	Adopted Budget 2024-2025	Proposed Budget 2025-2026	Dollar Change	Percent Change
Administrative Component	\$2,022,427	\$2,056,493	\$34,066	1.7%
Capital Component	5,335,876	4,880,708	(455,168)	(8.5%)
Program Component	16,837,360	17,794,937	957,577	5.7%
TOTAL BUDGET	\$24,195,663	\$24,732,137	\$536,474	2.2%

Proposed Tax Levy Increase for 2025-26: 1.99%

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2025-2026 by the qualified voters of the LaFayette Central School District, Onondaga County, New York, will be held at LaFayette Jr/Sr High School in said District on May 20, 2025 between the hours of 1:00 pm and 9:00pm.

LaFayette Tax-On-True Rate per \$1,000 Assessed Value

Current Rate 2024/25	Est. Proposed Rate for 2025/26	Est. Annual Change
\$13.31	\$13.57	\$0.26

