

Budget 2024 News from

# Jamesville-DeWitt

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Proposed budget maintains student programs and supports

### TAX LEVY INCREASE WOULD SUPPORT 2.77% SPENDING INCREASE

Jamesville-DeWitt Central School District residents will vote Tuesday, May 21, on a proposed \$71,356,980 spending plan for the 2024-25 school year. It calls for a \$1,922,535, or 2.77%, increase in spending over the current year's budget.

The administration and board of education, like many districts across New York, were faced with a significant deficit while developing the proposed budget for the 2024-25 school year. Even though the district is seeing a small tax levy and foundation aid increase, it's not enough to cover rising costs in other areas related to inflation and contractual obligations. The district and board worked collaboratively to tackle a \$3.1 million budget gap.

"Some very difficult decisions had to be made. We had to find the right balance between what our community could support and the cost of providing students with the highest quality education possible," said Superintendent Peter Smith. "We went line by line to develop a spending plan that was responsible, but also stays true to district priorities like building a strong culture of wellness; offering a robust curriculum; and providing a safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environment."

Careful considerations have been made to right size the budget and address factors like a 10% decrease in enrollment over the past five years (see graph on page 4). In response, proposed cuts include a reduction

### BUDGET AT-A-GLANCE

**Proposed Budget:** \$71,356,980

**Tax Levy Change:** \$808,682 / 1.82%

**Estimated tax impact on \$100,000 home:** \$25.28 Yr. / \$2.11 Mo.



**BUDGET HEARING**  
Monday, May 13, 2024  
7 p.m. In-person and  
via Zoom. For link, visit  
jamesvilledewitt.org

**BUDGET VOTE**  
Tuesday, May 21, 2024  
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
J-D High School Gymnasium  
6845 Edinger Drive

in BOCES services, supplies, and materials. The district will also reduce the workforce by approximately 14 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions through attrition and layoffs.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 →

## inside

- 2 THREE-PART BUDGET SUMMARY
- 3 PROPOSED EXPENDITURES
- 4 PROPOSED BUS PURCHASES
- 5 BUDGET FAQS
- 5 OTHER BALLOT PROPOSITIONS
- 6 SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES
- 7 SCHOOL NEWS
- 8 ABSENTEE/EARLY VOTING BALLOTS



Jamesville-DeWitt elementary schools will provide supplies for all Pre-K to grade 4 students, eliminating the need for supply lists and ensuring equity for all students. Learn about additional plans to create a rich and secure learning environment on page 4.

# Three-part budget summary

All New York state public schools are required by law to report their spending in three categories: administrative, capital, and program. The state dictates which portions of the budget belong in each respective category.

## Administrative Component

**\$6,546,000**      **9%**

The administrative component of the budget represents district and building oversight along with support services for all areas of operations. It represents 9% of the proposed budget and includes the superintendent and district office staff, building principals, clerical employees along with general areas of expenditures such as legal representation, district communications, information technology systems, audit services and various insurance coverages. The administrative component would decrease 0.73% from 2023-24. By controlling administrative costs, the district is able to dedicate more of its resources directly into the classroom.

## Capital Component

**\$11,699,318**      **16%**

The capital component of the budget represents the expenses required to operate, maintain and secure district facilities. Other items required to be reported here include debt service and funds transferred to the Capital Fund for work to be performed on district facilities. The capital component represents 16% of the total budget. The capital component also includes funding to enhance security throughout the district, along with preventative maintenance on operating systems including boilers, HVAC, fire alarms and communication systems. The capital component would increase 2.1% from 2023-24. You can learn about specific projects on page 3.

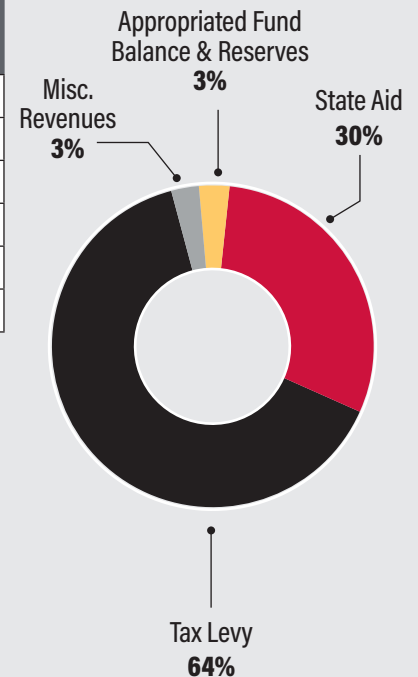
## Program Component

**\$53,111,661**      **75%**

The proposed program budget reflects the district's commitment to excellence. The program budget represents 75% of the total budget and includes instructional costs such as teachers and classroom support, pupil support services, co-curricular activities, athletics and the operational cost of transporting students. The budget also maintains all existing programs including art, music, extra-curricular activities like drama clubs, and athletics. Jamesville-DeWitt dedicates maximum resources to classroom instruction and aims to provide an exceptional educational program focused on meeting the needs of the district's diverse student population.

## Proposed Revenues

	2023-24 Budget	2024-25 Proposed Budget	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Tax Levy	\$44,550,015	\$45,358,697	\$808,682	1.82%
State Aid	\$21,663,766	\$21,763,861	\$100,095	0.46%
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$2,424,045	\$2,164,422	\$(259,623)	-10.71%
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$796,619	\$1,320,000	\$523,381	144.78%
Appropriated Reserves	-	\$750,000	\$750,000	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$69,434,445</b>	<b>\$71,356,980</b>	<b>\$1,922,535</b>	<b>2.77%</b>



## Appropriated Fund Balance

Like a savings account, districts use fund balance when they need to fill a gap in revenues or anticipate that expenses may exceed revenues in a given year. Over the past decade, the district has appropriated anywhere from \$796,619 to \$1,365,900 in a given year to help balance any projected deficit. In the event expenditures come in under projections or revenues are higher than anticipated, this savings is returned to fund balance.

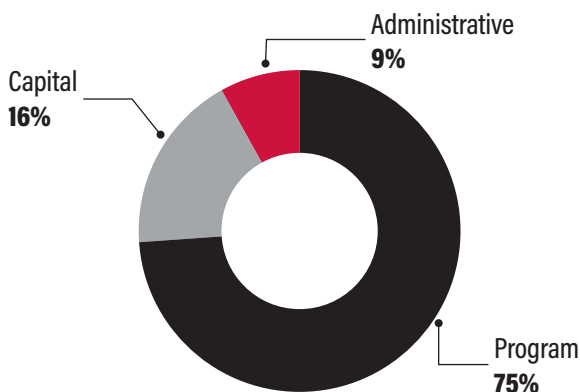
The district intends to appropriate \$1,320,000 in fund balance and \$750,000 from reserves in order to help balance the projected deficit. In order to rely on fund balance and to provide financial sustainability in the coming years, the district is focused on long-range financial planning.



## Proposed Expenditures

	2023-24 Budget	2024-25 Proposed Budget
<b>Administrative Component</b>	<b>\$6,594,036</b>	<b>\$6,546,000</b>
Board of Education & Annual Meeting	33,534	33,666
Central Administration	284,150	307,857
Business & Financial Operations	514,637	528,373
Central Services: Communications, Personnel & Legal Services	322,789	691,387
Central Services: BOCES Services, Data Processing & Insurance	1,523,843	1,400,931
Curriculum, Instruction & Supervision	2,403,606	2,139,296
Employee Benefits	1,501,477	1,444,490
<b>Capital Component</b>	<b>\$11,458,693</b>	<b>\$11,699,318</b>
Operations & Maintenance	3,648,368	3,831,884
Security	466,000	511,600
Refund of Real Property Taxes & Other Judgements/Claims	38,229	36,550
Capital Outlay & Debt Service	6,179,989	6,132,278
Employee Benefits	1,126,107	1,187,006
<b>Program Component</b>	<b>\$51,381,716</b>	<b>\$53,111,661</b>
Instruction: Regular & Special Education	25,175,829	25,860,490
Instructional Media: Library & Technology	2,802,915	2,349,613
Pupil Services	3,108,393	3,217,607
Extracurricular & Athletics	1,371,837	1,475,833
Transportation	2,781,871	3,315,012
Employee Benefits	16,140,871	16,893,106
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$69,434,445</b>	<b>\$ 71,356,980</b>

■ Jamesville-DeWitt's proposed 2024-25 spending is detailed in the chart above. If voters approve the budget proposal, the district would spend the largest portion of its budget, 75%, on the program component.



## Capital Outlay Projects

Capital Outlay funds can only be used for facility upgrades and cannot be used to fund items that fall under Administrative or Program Components. The state dictates which portions of the budget belong in each category.

### 2024-25 CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECT: \$100,000

- Continue to replace exterior high school doors. Building aid will be received in full in the 2025-26 school year.

### HS FITNESS ROOM WHEELCHAIR LIFT PROJECT: \$136,500

- Replace the current J-D High School fitness room lift with a safer and more modern lift to improve accessibility.

### E-RATE PROJECT: \$150,000

- E-Rate is a federally-funded program that provides funds to schools to enhance telecommunications or internet connectivity. J-D receives 50% reimbursement through this program and is currently exploring an uninterrupted power supply to support district buildings.

### IP PAGING & ACCESS CONTROLS PROJECT: \$250,000

- Complete security and paging system upgrades, hardening of building exteriors, upgrading the emergency notification system (see photo below), the addition of lock down buttons and interior door access controls. The bulk of funding will come from the Federal America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and will use remaining funds from the 2019 Capital Project.



■ These devices are so much more than clocks! They can be used to get visual and audio messages out.



## Bus purchases would keep maintenance costs down

### BALLOT PROPOSITION 2

The Jamesville-DeWitt Central School District is proposing the purchase of four new school buses. This will keep the district's bus replacement plan on track, which aims to keep maintenance costs low and provide safe transportation for students.

All school buses must pass a rigorous state inspection that typically occurs twice annually. The district normally replaces its buses when it is no longer cost effective to make the repairs necessary to meet the state's safety standards.

The district plans to buy three 65-passenger

2025 Bluebird buses for \$163,223 each and one 48-passenger 2025 Bluebird wheelchair accessible bus for \$194,688 for a total of \$684,357.

If voters approve the proposed purchase on May 21, the state would reimburse the district over a five-year period for approximately 71% of the cost of the new vehicles. These vehicles would replace four buses that have reached the end of their useful life. The trade-in values of the buses would offset a portion of the purchase, and local property taxes would pay the remainder of the cost.



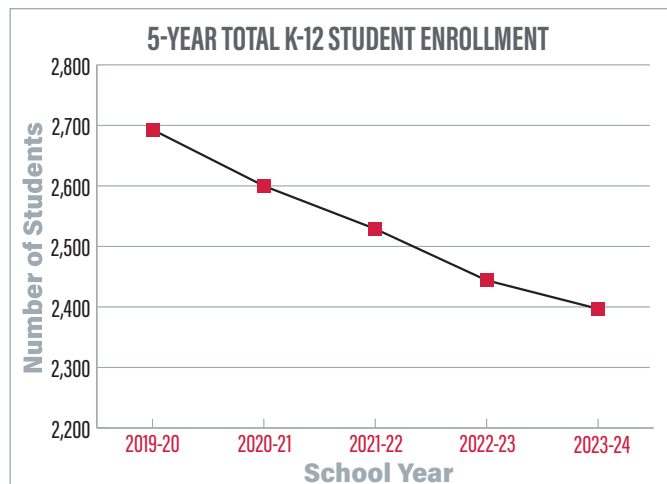
■ We're proud of our safe buses! J-D's vehicles have passed the last three years of New York State Department of Transportation bus safety inspections with a 100% rating. This is a great indicator of how hard our Transportation Department works to help keep maintenance costs down while ensuring the safety of our students and staff. We appreciate your hard work!

#### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 →

“We started by reviewing the non instructional side of the budget for potential reductions. Then we looked at the instructional side. We were very strategic about which positions were eliminated. We tried to minimize the impact on any one school, grade level, or department. The cuts include a mix of teaching positions, teaching aides/assistants, and clerical roles. The staff at Jamesville-DeWitt are second to none and reductions are incredibly painful, but these were appropriate adjustments based on declining enrollment,” said Smith.

Despite budgetary challenges, the district is dedicated to providing a rich educational experience for all students in a safe and nurturing environment. All programs will be maintained and any changes to class sizes will be minimal. A few highlights include:

- **Student support systems:** J-D will provide counseling, Pupil Personnel Services, social and emotional learning programs, and access to Promise Zone Specialists.



- **Educational opportunities:** we are committed to providing students with responsive, evolving, robust STEM opportunities and experiences in and out of the classroom.
- **Safety related upgrades and support:** a School Resource Officer (SRO) will be added to each school building. The I.P. Paging and Access Controls Project will enhance the physical security of each building. To close the gap while keeping taxes stable and maintaining current

programs, funding for the 2024-25 school year would come from four areas: state aid (\$21,763,861), tax levy (\$45,358,697), fund balance and reserves (\$2,070,000), and other revenue (\$2,164,422) from interest income and other miscellaneous sources.

The tax levy is the total amount of money collected from district property owners to support the budget. The proposed tax levy increase is at the district's state-imposed limit, or cap, which is an increase of 1.82%, compared to the current school year's tax levy.

Because the proposal is within the district's tax levy limit, a simple majority of voters would need to approve the budget for it to pass. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., May 21, at the J-D High School gymnasium.

# Budget FAQs

## ? What will my actual tax rate be?

Tax rates are calculated in August once property values are finalized by town, county or state assessors in addition to receiving final equalization rates from the New York State Office of Real Property Tax Services. The school tax levy is only one portion of the tax rate formula. The estimated projected tax per \$100,000 of assessed home value with basic STAR exemption is \$1,417.76, which would be a monthly increase of \$2.11 or \$25.28 annually.

## ? What happens if the budget is defeated?

Under New York state law, if the school budget is defeated, the board of education can either put the same or a modified budget up for another vote, or adopt a contingent budget. If residents defeat the proposed budget during a second vote, the board must adopt a contingent budget.

## ? What is a contingent budget?

State law mandates that under a contingent budget a school district must adopt a budget with no tax levy increase and eliminate all non contingent expenses, such as certain student supplies, school bus replacements, capital outlay projects, certain equipment purchases and the free community use of school facilities. The administrative budget would also be subject to certain restrictions. If J-D adopts a contingent budget for 2024-25, it would reduce the budget to \$70,334,278. The adoption of a contingent budget and subsequent reductions would be at the discretion of the board of education.

## Voters to decide whether to retain student board member

### BALLOT PROPOSITION 3

On May 21, voters will decide whether the Jamesville-DeWitt Central School District Board of Education will continue the practice of including a non-voting student member on the board.

In 2019, voters approved a proposition to include an ex-officio student board member, which they must reauthorize every two years. There is no financial compensation for any board member, including a student member. Students serve for a one-year period, attend all public board meetings and are allowed to participate in all public

discussions and voice their opinions.

The student does not attend executive or exempt sessions, which are portions of the meeting in which the law allows board members to privately discuss such matters as proposed, pending or current litigation.

If approved, J-D High School students will annually elect their representative, who must be a high school senior and have been in good standing with the district for at least two years.

## Community Library of DeWitt & Jamesville ballot proposition

### BALLOT PROPOSITION 4

On May 21, when Jamesville-DeWitt Central School District residents vote on the proposed 2024-25 school budget, they will also have the opportunity to vote on a proposition to levy and collect a tax in the amount of \$1,612,518 for the Community Library of DeWitt & Jamesville.

New York state education law allows libraries to place a funding proposition on school district ballots and requires districts, at the libraries' requests, to levy and collect taxes for libraries. Libraries are separate legal entities from the school district, with their own funding

and budgets. The school district does not endorse, control or recommend any aspect of how libraries spend money.

If voters approve the proposition, the school district would annually levy and collect taxes in the new amount for the library beginning in the 2024-25 fiscal year. The amount authorized for library services is listed as a separate line on residents' tax bills.

More information about the library is available on its website: [www.cldandj.org](http://www.cldandj.org).



■ Celebrating our exceptional music program!

For the fifth consecutive year, Jamesville-DeWitt has earned the prestigious Best Communities for Music Education designation from the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation.

The award recognizes districts for their commitment to music education and their efforts to ensure access to music for all students as part of a well-rounded education.

Thank you to our committed staff and school community for supporting music education at Jamesville-DeWitt. This designation would not be possible without your dedication and passion for music education.





# Board of education candidates

On May 21, district residents will elect three members to the Jamesville-DeWitt Central School District Board of Education. Two candidates filed nominating petitions. Voters will also have the option to submit a write-in candidate. The three candidates with the highest number of votes will fill the available seats. If a third candidate cannot be determined from write-in votes, the Board of Education will select the best process to fill the open seat as outlined by NYS law. Each term will run from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2027.

**Lynn Cortese** is seeking her first term on the J-D Board of Education. She is an 8-year resident of the district. She and her husband Ben Cortese have two children: one at Moses DeWitt and the other is in the J-D UPK program at RECC. Prior to the summer of 2022, she was the Director of the Office of Access, Opportunity, and Achievement at Ithaca College for five years. Her responsibilities included grant writing and reporting, budget oversight, and developing partnerships with key student service offices, administrators, and faculty. She has a master's degree in Social Work from Syracuse University, a bachelor of science degree in Psychology and Social Work from SUNY Brockport, and a high school diploma from Scotia-Glenville. She serves as the Moses DeWitt Parent-Teacher-Student-Association secretary and also serves on the CNYLA Advisory Board.

**Candidate statement:** *As the daughter of an elementary school teacher, my passion for education began at a very young age, inspiring me to pursue a degree in social work and a career in higher education focused on increasing educational access, cultivating*

*student success, and breaking down barriers to academic achievement. My experiences in data-driven decision-making, budget development and management, and engaging key stakeholders to enhance student outcomes will foster success as a board member. If elected, I will listen to the concerns of all constituents and seek collaborative, creative solutions in service of our students and school community.*

**Jalal Zoghby** is seeking his second term on the J-D Board of Education. He is an 18-year resident of the district. He and his wife Eileen have four children, two of which are still attending J-D schools: one at J-DHS and one at Moses DeWitt. He attended high school at Saint Joseph School in Lebanon and earned a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in international business from Syracuse University through Utica College. He is a self-employed licensed sales representative providing insurance and financial service through a State Farm Insurance office that he runs with his wife. He has taught religious education at Holy Cross Church for the past 23 years.

**Candidate statement:** *What I do professionally is listen to people's concerns and needs and help them find solutions. As an immigrant, I understand that culture and diversity is what makes up our community. When working with clients, not everyone responds the same way. I carefully deal with individuals on their terms, so we can work together to solve problems. This is how I approach raising my children. As a father of four with a special needs child who had medical challenges, I quickly understood that every child has different needs. I will use this knowledge combined with the experience that I gained over the past three years as a school board member to help make decisions that benefit our district.*

## About the J-D board of education

The board of education is the official policy-making body of the district. It establishes operational policies, sets educational goals and standards, evaluates program effectiveness, develops the annual school budget and balances educational needs with community resources. Find out more about the board, including minutes of past meetings and future meeting dates, on the district website.

■ **Play ball!** *The district hosted an opening ceremony and ribbon cutting to celebrate renovations to the Lyndon Field Softball Complex on Tuesday, April 9. The project was part of phase 2 of the district's \$33 million Capital Project which was approved by district residents in December 2019. It was largely funded by state building aid. The Jamesville-DeWitt Varsity Softball team along with dedicated coaches, families, and community members also helped raise over \$64,000 for the project through the Swing for the Fences campaign. This project would not have been possible without the support of the entire community. Go Red Rams!*





# More news from within our schools



## Jamesville Elementary School

Jamesville Elementary School combined its Open Night and Art Show for the first time this year. There was a wonderful turnout in celebration of the hard work and creativity of all JES students.



## Tecumseh Elementary School

Tecumseh Elementary School has been working to build a greater sense of community and belonging in alignment with the district's Strategic Plan.

In March, students and staff were given new Tecumseh CARES t-shirts. The back spells out the meaning behind CARES: C - cooperation, A - assertion, R - responsibility, E - empathy, and S - self control. These are all character traits Tecumseh focuses on throughout the school year.

In a show of solidarity, students and staff wore the shirts for the first time during a March Madness Assembly. Students enjoyed a staff basketball shootout and a special visit from J-D's Remmy the Red Ram and Syracuse University's Otto.



## Moses DeWitt Elementary School

Learning about a once in a lifetime event: the solar eclipse! Moses DeWitt students in Elizabeth DeLaRoca's second grade class learned about the eclipse and completed a special craft project prior to the April 8 phenomenon. Every J-D student was provided with a pair of ISO-approved solar eclipse glasses.

## J-D Middle School

PHOTO (Courtesy: Post-Standard | Syracuse.com)

We're excited to share that J-D Middle School seventh-grader Simran Sanders will be competing in the 2024 Scripps National Spelling Bee! Preliminaries begin Tuesday, May 28. Congrats and good luck Simran!



## J-D High School

Meet Olive! This certified therapy dog with Pet Partners of Central New York spends time at Jamesville-DeWitt High School to support mental health and wellness initiatives. Studies show pet therapy can enhance socialization, foster health and wellbeing, and lessen stress and anxiety. It's easy to see Olive is already having a positive impact! The high school has also welcomed Cooper from Paws of CNY.



## Connect with J-D

You can follow the district on Facebook for good news and highlights!

THE DISTRICT NEWSLETTER  
IS PRINTED THROUGHOUT THE  
SCHOOL YEAR BY THE  
JAMESVILLE-DEWITT BOARD OF  
EDUCATION IN COOPERATION  
WITH THE CAPITAL REGION BOCES  
COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE.

**Dr. Peter Smith**  
District Superintendent

8  Newsletter **Budget 2024**

## Absentee/Early Voting Ballots

**New this year:** all qualified Jamesville-DeWitt voters are eligible to vote with a mail-in ballot. Applications are available for early voting and absentee ballots.

**Early voting ballots:** all qualified district residents are eligible to vote early with a mail-in ballot for any reason.

**Absentee ballots:** voters must complete an absentee application and state the reason they will not be able to appear in person on the day of the district election/vote. An absentee ballot can be used if a qualified district resident is a patient in a hospital or unable to appear because of illness or disability; is required or on vacation outside the country; or is detained in jail awaiting conviction for an offense other than a felony. Forms returned without this information will be processed as an early mail ballot. If you are registered as a permanently disabled absentee voter with the Onondaga County Board of Elections, an absentee ballot will automatically be provided to you.

Completed applications must be received by the District Clerk at least seven days (May 14) before the election/vote if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or the day before the election/vote (May 20) if the ballot is to be delivered personally to the voter.

Completed ballots must be received by the District Clerk by 5 p.m. on the day of the vote, May 21. A secured drop-off box is located outside the district office at J-D High School.

For more information, contact Tish Hauser at [thauser@jd.cnyric.org](mailto:thauser@jd.cnyric.org) or 315-445-8304. You can also visit the district office at 6845 Edinger Drive, DeWitt, NY.

### How to Reach Us

Board of Education:	315-445-8304
District Office:	315-445-8300
J-D High School:	315-445-8340
J-D Middle School:	315-445-8360
Jamesville Elementary School:	315-445-8460
Moses DeWitt Elementary School:	315-445-8370
Tecumseh Elementary School:	315-445-8320

 Follow the district on Facebook for good news and highlights!

# VOTE

**BUDGET HEARING**  
Monday, May 13, 2024  
7 p.m. In-person and  
via Zoom. For link, visit  
[jamesvilledewitt.org](http://jamesvilledewitt.org)

**BUDGET VOTE**  
Tuesday, May 21, 2024  
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
J-D High School Gymnasium  
6845 Edinger Drive

## Qualifications

- United States citizen.
- At least 18 years of age.
- A school district resident for at least 30 days prior to May 21, 2024.



J-D's special education classroom, The Tecumseh Learning Pad, hosted its popular annual lemonade stand the first week of April. All school buildings participated. Together, they raised \$7,273 for Central New York Autism Society of America and ARISE Adaptive Design. Awesome job!