



# DEPEW NEWS

[www.depewschools.org](http://www.depewschools.org)

**Budget 2023**

## **Proposition No. 1**

### **2023-2024 Budget**

The budget for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024 is \$51,542,003.

## **Proposition No. 2**

### **Expenditure From Vehicle and Equipment Reserve Fund**

The Board of Education shall be authorized to expend up to \$629,303 from the District's Vehicle and Equipment Reserve Fund to purchase three 65-passenger buses and one 30-passenger bus.

## **Proposition No. 3**

### **Purchase of Real Properties**

The Board of Education shall be authorized to purchase five parcels of real property, including two on Giele Avenue, two on Monroe Street and one on Woodlawn Avenue, for the price of \$25,000, without the necessity of borrowing. An Environmental Assessment Form has been completed for the purchase of these properties and found that such purchase will not result in a significant adverse impact on the environment.

## **Proposition No. 4**

### **Ex Officio Student Member of the Board of Education**

The Board of Education shall be authorized to have a student attending high school within the District serve as an ex officio student member of the Board of Education, who can attend all public meetings of the Board and participate in all Board hearings and meetings, but not vote, attend executive session and/or be entitled to receive compensation for participating at Board meetings. The Board of Education also shall be authorized to establish a process for selecting such ex officio student member.

## **Board of Education Candidates**

The two candidates with the highest number of votes will each serve a three-year term, from July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2026.

1A Nicholas LaMarca

2A Amy Doody

## **Budget Hearing**

A public hearing on the budget will be held Tuesday, May 9 at 6:30 p.m. in the Depew High School Cafeteria, 5201 Transit Road, Depew, NY 14043, and will be livestreamed on the Depew Schools YouTube Channel: [youtube.com/@DepewUnionFreeSchoolDistrict](https://youtube.com/@DepewUnionFreeSchoolDistrict).

## Message from the Superintendent

Dear Community Members,

I would like to thank you for welcoming me to the Depew family over the past school year. I have been fortunate to enjoy so many wonderful experiences in our school and community. The concerts, competitions, musicals, spirit week and community support are all things I have grown to truly appreciate. I continue to welcome anyone who would like to share with me their personal experiences and vision for the future of our schools.

The primary focus of this newsletter is to provide you with accurate information about the proposed school budget and other items that will come up for a vote on Tuesday, May 16, 2023. Depew Union Free School District is committed to providing our community the necessary information to make sound decisions.

The proposed budget and additional resolutions included in the budget balance the needs of our children and the taxpayers of the Depew School community in a manner that demonstrates current and future fiscal responsibility. The total proposed 2023-2024 school budget is \$51,542,003, an increase in spending of \$1,801,001 from last year's budget. If approved, the budget would result in a 2.07% tax levy increase, which is within the mandated tax levy cap.

This budget would add a full-day pre-kindergarten program for our children and continue to reinforce the District's efforts around quality educational programs, improved academic achievement, school safety, and the social-emotional needs of our students and staff. It maintains athletic opportunities, student clubs and activities and student support services such as counseling and nursing services. A Capital Outlay project of approximately \$100,000 will be utilized to improve our heating and ventilation systems at the Middle School.

Proposition 2 would expend \$629,303 from our Capital Reserve for Vehicle and Equipment to purchase a new school bus as part of our replacement schedule. We also ask you to consider a third proposition of \$25,000 to purchase five parcels of land adjacent to our school District to expand our footprint and allow for additional athletic and community play areas to the west of the current tennis courts, located at 5161 Transit Road. Finally, as a result of our Board of Education's interest in increasing students' voice, you will also find a proposition on the ballot creating a non-voting student representative to the Board of Education.

In the event the budget vote is unsuccessful on May 16, the Board of Education will be forced to implement a contingency budget and thus require decreases in a number of areas, including our Capital Outlay plan, some classroom equipment and any facility used by the public without full reimbursement of expenses.

For additional information on our budget process, please feel free to visit our website at [www.depewschools.org/page/budget-and-election](http://www.depewschools.org/page/budget-and-election). We hope you will make informed decisions on May 16. Voting on the budget, propositions and Board of Education members will take place Noon - 8:00 p.m. in the Depew High School gymnasium.

Sincerely,

Hank Stopinski, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



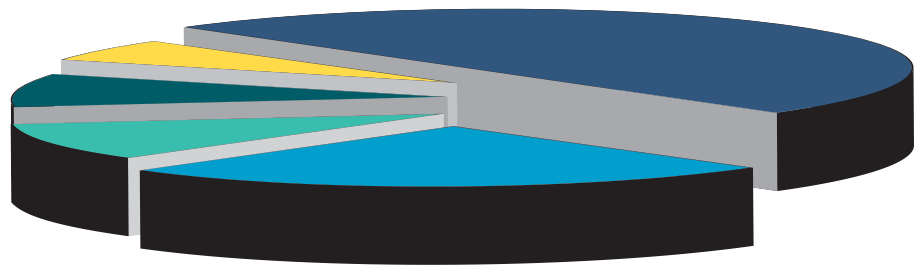
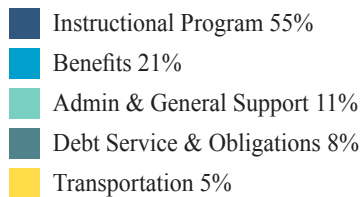
## **Budget Vote & Election**

**Voting on the budget and Board of Education candidates will take place on Tuesday, May 16 from 12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. in the Depew High School Gymnasium, located at 5201 Transit Road, Depew, NY 14043.**

## Budget Revenues & Expenditures

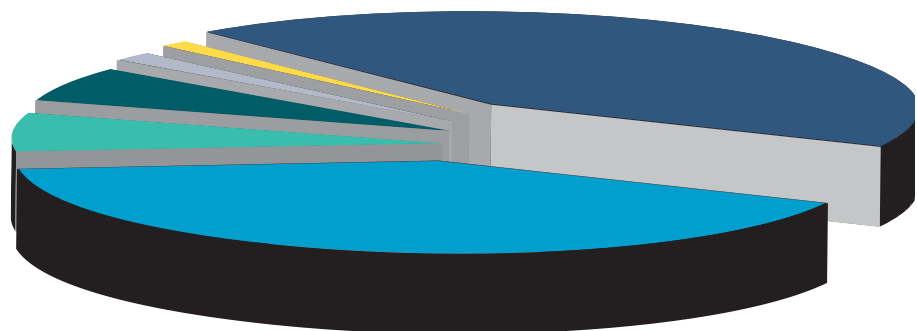
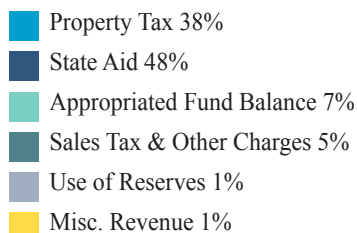
### Budgeted Expenditures

Area	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Proposed	Difference
Administration & General Support	\$4,844,992	\$5,562,285	\$717,293
Instructional	\$27,235,067	\$28,320,819	\$1,085,752
Transportation	\$2,531,275	\$2,534,956	\$3,681
Benefits	\$10,834,725	\$10,821,050	-\$13,675
Debt Service	\$4,294,943	\$4,302,893	\$7,950
<b>Total General Fund Budget</b>	<b>\$49,741,002</b>	<b>\$51,542,003</b>	<b>\$1,801,001</b>
Vehicle Reserve Purchases	\$596,768	\$629,303	\$32,535
<b>Total General Fund Budget with Vehicles</b>	<b>\$50,337,770</b>	<b>\$52,171,306</b>	<b>\$1,833,536</b>



### Budgeted Revenues

Area	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Proposed	Difference
State Aid	\$22,323,556	\$24,705,732	\$2,382,176
Sales Tax & Other Charges	\$2,210,304	\$2,514,500	\$304,196
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$4,276,552	\$3,500,000	-\$776,552
Use of Reserves	\$1,114,410	\$600,000	-\$514,410
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$366,764	\$370,068	\$3,304
Tax Levy	\$19,449,416	\$19,851,703	\$402,287
<b>Total General Fund Budget</b>	<b>\$49,741,002</b>	<b>\$51,542,003</b>	<b>\$1,801,001</b>



# DEPEW UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

## History of Tax Levy & Budget

### TAX LEVY

School Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 Est.
Tax Levy	\$18,132,057	\$18,483,284	\$19,036,522	\$19,449,417	\$19,851,703
Dollar Change	\$245,147	\$351,227	\$553,238	\$412,895	\$402,287
Percent Change	1.37%	1.94%	2.99%	2.17%	2.07%

### BUDGET

School Year	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 Est.
Budget	\$45,046,149	\$46,429,263	\$47,942,534	\$50,337,770	\$51,542,003
Dollar Change	1,077,831	\$1,383,114	\$1,513,271	\$2,395,236	\$1,801,001
Percent Change	2.45%	3.07%	3.26%	5.00%	2.39%

\* Includes Vehicle Purchases

### TAX RATE (per thousand of assessed valuation)

School Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 Est.
Cheektowaga	\$21.72	\$21.76	\$16.91	\$16.53	\$17.23
	0.06 %	0.18%	-22.29%	-9.14%	12.00%
Lancaster	\$23.97	\$18.06	\$16.91	\$17.65	\$20.91
	4.49%	-24.66%	-6.37%	4.42%	18.00%

## Estimated Dollar Change In Homeowner's Tax Bill

The tax rate is estimated at \$15.68 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, representing an estimated increase of approximately \$1.87 in Cheektowaga and \$3.26 for Lancaster residents.



## Factors that Alter Tax Rates & Why

There are several factors that dictate how an individual's school tax bill is calculated after a school district sets the final tax levy – none of which are within the district's control. (This calculation process did not change under New York's property tax cap law.)

### Assessment Totals:

Tax bills continue to be calculated by using a property's assessed value (as determined by the local town assessor) and the tax rate – or the amount paid in taxes per \$1,000 of assessed value.

### Equalization Rates:

Tax rates are not solely determined by the tax levy approved by voters. They are often adjusted by the state using equalization rates, designed to equally distribute the tax burden across municipalities within a district. When the equalization rate falls below 100%, it gives the appearance of a higher tax rate, but in fact the homeowner's property value has gone up and it is not reflected in their assessment value shown on their tax bill.

Tax bills can also be affected by STAR or other exemptions, such as the Veterans' Tax Exemption, for which individual taxpayers may qualify.

The equalization rate for Cheektowaga is 100% and Lancaster is 87%. The actual tax rate will not be finalized until August 2023.

### Voter Qualifications:

- 18 years old
- U.S. resident
- Resident of the school district for a period of 30 days immediately prior to the vote date

### Proposed Budget is Available

Copies of the District's proposed budget are available in each of our schools main offices. For further information or questions, we encourage residents to visit our website at [depewschools.org/page/budget-and-election](https://depewschools.org/page/budget-and-election).



**Budget Vote & Election**  
Tuesday, May 16, 2023 • 12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
Depew High School Gymnasium



## Candidates for Board of Education

The two candidates with the highest number of votes will each serve a three-year term, from July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2026.

Running for a seat on the Board of Education are:

### Nicholas LaMarca - 1A

My name is Nicholas M. LaMarca and I am running for reelection for the Depew Union Free School District School Board for a second term. I am married with 2 children currently attending school in the district (6th Grade and 4th Grade). I am a United States Army Veteran and currently work at the VA Western NY Healthcare System as head of Volunteer Services prior to that I spent over 10 years as an Addictions Counselor. I have an extensive history of community involvement including being a board member of a local youth sports organization and coaching my daughter's softball team for several years. I have been on the Depew school board for 3 years. In that time I have served as the district representative to the Erie County School District Budget committee. I also served on the school board during the difficult times caused by the COVID pandemic. One of my accomplishments during my tenure was to spearhead with a colleague an effort to add a student representative to the board which will be on the ballot this year for approval. When my daughter first starting attending school at Cayuga Heights for kindergarten my wife and I were thoroughly impressed by the environment created in the school for the students and families. I attend as many school events as I can with my family ranging from sporting events to STEAM nights to musical performances. My goal as a school board member is to continue to help the district create that environment for all students to thrive and to be a voice for all district residents who may need it. I hope to have your vote on election day!



### Amy Doody - 2A

As a mother, Alumni, and community member I have a vested interest in the Depew School District. It truly has been an honor to be an active member of the Board for the past 6 years. During this time, it has always been my goal to make sure we collaborate, develop, and implement a budget that is both fiscally responsible and considers the needs of our students as well as maintains programs and staff.

We are still seeing the negative impacts from the pandemic and its effects on our students. They are still struggling both mentally and emotionally, thus it is important to make sure we have services and programs in place to help support them and their families. It is also important to me to ensure that we continue to provide students with opportunities to prepare them to be college and career ready upon graduation. I want students to have memories that last a lifetime.

As part of the Board, I currently serve on the Erie County School Boards Association Delegate Assembly. I am also a middle school mathematics teacher. When I am not teaching or attending board meetings, I can be found at the softball field cheering on my daughter who plays for the Varsity team. She is currently in her sophomore year and is also actively involved in the Academy of Finance and was a partner for the Unified Bowling team. In my spare time, I also enjoy gardening, reading and spending time with my husband and daughter.

Once a wildcat, always a wildcat!

**Please note that statements from candidates have been printed as submitted and were not edited in any manner.**



## Cayuga Heights Land Purchase

During the design and development process of our current Capital Improvement Project, the District realized that the proposed project adjacent to the Cayuga Heights playground, tennis and basketball courts was very close to the right-of-ways owned by Erie County and the Town of Lancaster. In addition, five parcels of land adjacent to the school's property are privately owned and undeveloped. As we looked at our long-range facilities and grounds needs, we realized that purchasing these parcels could benefit the District and community.

We approached Erie County and the Town of Lancaster to transfer their right-of-ways to the District upon our purchase of the parcels. The landowner and District came to an agreement on a sales price of \$25,000. If approved, this purchase will allow the District to create additional recreational opportunities for the community, as well as secure land in the event the District may need to expand its buildings.

## Treasured Trash

Innovation Lab Students at Depew High School take trash and turn it into treasure. Calvin Rowland and Paige Borodzick take an old table and restore it to a luster worthy of some Wildcat Pride. Great job on the restoration of this table!





## Capital Improvement Project Update

We are thrilled to announce that we are scheduled to break ground in late May 2023 for the Capital Project voted on and approved in December of 2021! Thanks to your ongoing support and input, we have been able to embark on a path to preserve, upkeep and reinforce our buildings, infrastructure and facilities. With over \$34 million in capital project improvements, we are excited to start construction and share our progress with everyone.



Phase 1 is set to start construction in May 2023. This phase involves several improvements to different areas within the district, such as replacing the underground fuel storage at the Bus Garage with an above-ground system, making HVAC improvements to the AC systems at Cayuga Heights, renovating toilet rooms at Cayuga Heights, constructing an auditorium and classroom addition at Cayuga Heights and implementing district-wide upgrades to the PA system and lockdown control systems. Overall, Phase 1 encompasses a range of projects aimed at improving safety, comfort and functionality in various areas of the district.

Phase 2 is set for construction starting in May of 2024 and focuses on the High School and Middle School. The design team is currently working on this phase and hopes to submit their plan to the State Education Department for approval later this year. Phase 2 aims to improve the physical and technological infrastructure of the High School and Middle School to provide students with a better learning environment.

We want to thank you for the ongoing support we have received from the community over the past decade. Going back to Renovations 2016 and through to today's Capital Improvement Project 2021, support and input from the community has allowed us to embark on a path to preserve, upkeep and reinforce our building infrastructure and facilities. We look forward to continuing to work with you to make our District the best that it can be.

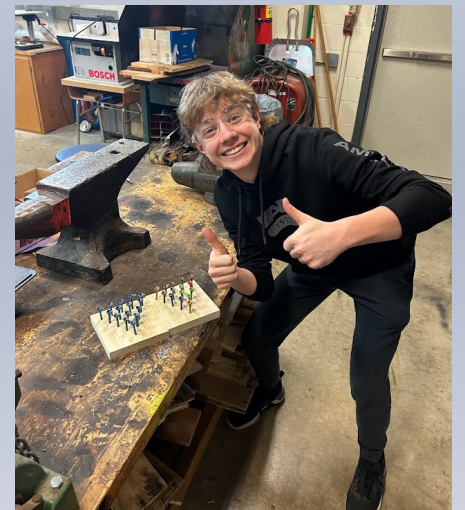
## Wildcats on Ice

Mrs. Marks' class at Depew Middle School wrapped up their season with SABAH, an adaptive ice-skating program held at Cazenovia Rink. As a culminating event, participating classes from all around WNY learned an ice-skating routine that was filmed. Their performances will then be shown at an



end-of-season celebration at the Buffalo Convention Center. Students pictured from left to right are sixth-graders Yusef Ayad, Caitlyn Wheeler, Dominic Beauchamp and Madysen Hinton and seventh-grader Jake Gallo.

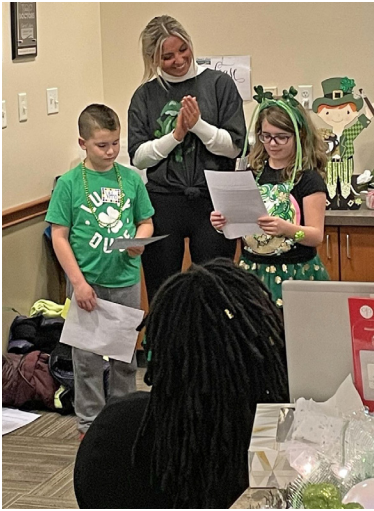
## Learning Made Fun





## Spreading Kindness Through the District

Each month, Kindness Club dedicates their meetings to share kindness stories and discuss ways in which they can help others come together to work on various projects. In March, they colored pictures and created around 75 cards to give to a local cancer center. Miss Tedesco and two kindness club leaders, Zoey Coyle and Vito Napierala, met each other and delivered these cards to the facility for their patients. During this visit, Miss Tedesco and the leaders spoke in front of all medical staff to explain our mission statement, as well as their



“WHY.” It is important for the community to hear the reasons on why we come together to show kindness and support for not only our school, but others in our area. These students were presented with kindness awards for dedicating their time after school to spread kindness. We are proud of all the wonderful things the Kindness Club has to offer!

## What's New in STEAM at Cayuga Heights

Our STEAM program keeps growing every year with new and exciting challenges for our students. Kindergarten celebrated St. Patrick's Day and STEAM Literacy in the library by engineering rainbow arches. They read *Elmer and the Rainbow*, sang a ROY G BIV song, and constructed rainbows with pipe cleaners and Play-doh. A pot was then placed on top of the rainbows and we counted to see how many gold coins our pots could hold before tipping over.

Grade 1 learned about chromatography and exploring colors with our Watercolor Moon Challenge. Grade 2 was busy being architects by planning and creating 3-D buildings and objects with Magnatiles and Legos. Students in Grade 3 celebrated Black History Month using Makey Makeys and Scratch coding to create interactive projects on astronaut Mae Jemison.

Grade 4 completed a Winter Sports Escape Room Challenge. Students raced against the clock to solve math and science challenges to get the codes to unlock the boxes. If they “escaped,” they moved on to the next round, which included a makerspace challenge where they designed and engineered ski lift chairs that were sent down a zip line.

Grade 5 finished a Stop Motion Paper Animation Project. Students wrote a story line and then designed the background and all the characters and props from paper. They then used the Stop Motion app to animate their stories to make them come to life. This was a very time-consuming project, but the students persevered and came up with very creative and fun animations.



## Skrek the Musical





## 2nd Annual Skilled Trades Expo

Depew Middle and High School students had the opportunity to attend the 2nd Annual Skilled Trades Expo with their families in March. It was a great event to hear from representatives in construction, manufacturing, agriculture, health care, service fields and the military about training and apprentice programs, employment and career options.

Employers throughout New York State report they are facing labor shortages in the skilled trades. These shortages are expected to worsen in the coming years, due to a combination of demographic (e.g., retiring baby boomers) and economic (e.g., increased demand for workers in the skilled trades) factors. Thank you to the dozens of local labor unions, schools and companies that helped make the event so successful.



## STEAM in Action



## Girls Make History

The Varsity Girls Basketball team (right) became the first Boys or Girls Basketball team in school history to make the NYS Basketball Tournament this winter, finishing with an overall record of 23-3. They compiled a 57-10 record and a 49-3 record against schools similar in size to Depew.

Loretta White (far right) finished in 3rd place in the NYS Girls Indoor Track Public Championship and 4th place in the Federation Championship this winter. Her weight throw of 44' 11" broke her personal best distance for the 4th time this school year.





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## DEPEW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

5201 S. Transit Road  
Depew, New York 14043

### Board of Education

David Sheff, President  
Todd Bush, Vice President  
Amy Doody  
Nicholas LaMarca  
Patrick Law  
Bartholomew McGloin  
Justin Young

Hank Stopinski, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

[www.depewschools.org](http://www.depewschools.org)

## DEPEW SCHOOL RESIDENT

### Depew Union Free School District Budget Notice

### Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2022-23 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2023-24 School Year
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$49,741,002	\$51,542,003	\$51,139,716
Increase/Decrease for the 2023-24 School Year		\$2,473,228	\$412,895
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		3.62 %	2.81%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		3.30%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$19,449,417	\$19,851,703	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	-	\$	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	-	\$	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	-	\$	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$19,449,417	\$19,851,703	\$ 51,552,611
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$0	\$0	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$19,449,417	\$19,851,703	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$19,449,417	\$19,851,703	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$0		
Administrative Component	\$4,210,848	\$4,527,953	\$4,337,972
Program Component	\$38,018,478	\$39,164,028	\$39,062,281
Capital Component	\$7,511,676	\$7,850,022	\$7,745,414

The proposed 2023-2024 budget is equal to the tax cap limit, thereby needing approval of a simple majority of voters (50% + 1). If the Depew UFSD had to enact a contingency budget, an additional \$396,337 of budget cuts would be needed. The above figures are exclusive of the separate resolution below.

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
Vehicle Bus Purchase	\$635,562
Purchase of Real Property	\$25,000

#### Under the Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings <sup>1</sup> Cheektowaga/Lancaster	\$527 / \$507
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The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2023-24 by the qualified voters of the Depew Union Free School District, Erie County, New York, will be held at the Depew High School in said district on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 between the hours of 12:00 pm and 8:00 pm, prevailing time, in the Depew High School Gymnasium, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

<sup>1</sup> The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.