



City School District of
ALBANY

Capital Education

Budget 2020

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School budget vote, board election



All voting by
absentee
ballot due to
COVID-19.

All ballots due by Tuesday,
June 9 at 5 p.m.

See below for more information.

2020-21 budget proposal minimizes tax impact

Facing challenging and unprecedented times, the City School District of Albany Board of Education has proposed a \$261.6 million budget for the 2020-21 school year that would contain spending and minimize the local tax impact while continuing to support nearly all of the district's current programs and services.

The proposal would eliminate 142.6 positions, about 8% of the current workforce, to close a \$15 million gap.

The proposal represents an increase of less than half a percent – 0.47% – over the current year's budget. It includes a 1.96% tax-levy increase, which is equal to the district's tax cap. This is the seventh consecutive year that the district has proposed a tax-levy increase of less than 2%. The average annual proposed increase over that period has been 1.02%.

"Our school district is focused every year on the balance between what our students need and deserve, and what our community can afford," said Board of Education President Anne Savage. "That's especially true in times like those we are facing now."

"While we know the superintendent and her staff have been forced to make many incredibly difficult decisions that will impact the programs and services the district will be able to offer our students, the board was committed to putting forward a budget proposal that represents the highest level of service we can provide for our students while maintaining the fiscal responsibility that we know our community needs in these difficult times."

The proposal would reduce the number of administrative positions by 7.2% of the current workforce in that employee group, the number of teaching staff and related positions by 7.5% of the current workforce in that employee group, and the number of support staff positions by 8.9% of the current workforce in that employee group.

The proposal also would reduce the number of management confidential and other staff by 4.4%.

The proposed reductions would return district staffing to the levels of the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years, when district-wide enrollment was about 5% higher than it is today.

Unknowns due to COVID-19

The district is planning for 2020-21 in an uncertain environment due to the COVID-19 closure. As it does every year, the proposed budget represents a spending cap for the school year ahead. School districts have flexibility to allocate funds within that amount depending on student needs.

That flexibility could be more important than ever for school districts in 2020-21, if the state announces more funding reductions, or if COVID-19 continues to limit a full return to school buildings. Regardless of these uncertain times, the district remains committed to the academic and social-emotional well-being of all of our students.

Proposed program implications

While the budget proposal would maintain most of the district's current programs and services for the 2020-21 school year, there would be reductions due to the proposed staffing adjustments.

These would include larger class size caps, reductions in supports to general education classrooms, reductions in instructional coaches and elimination of the district-wide second-grade swimming program (*see the budget glance on page 2 for more information*).

Elementary instrumental music lessons, which currently begin in third grade, would begin in fourth or fifth grade. The district is committed to beginning lessons in fourth grade if possible.

What happens if the budget is not approved?

If voters do not approve the budget, the board will have two options: Put up the same proposal or a revised proposal for a second vote at an estimated cost of \$150,000, or adopt a contingency budget.

A contingency budget would require an additional \$2.3 million in cuts (*see page 4 for more information*).

Voting during COVID-19

As with all school districts in New York, the annual budget vote and board election in the City School District of Albany will be conducted entirely by mail this year due to the COVID-19 crisis.

The district mailed absentee ballots to all qualified voters May 26. Qualified voters include all voters registered with the Albany County Board of Elections by May 22, and those who registered directly with the school district by May 26.

To check your voter registration status, you can visit vip.ntsteamed.com. You also can contact Board Clerk Tanya Bowie at tbowie@albany.k12.ny.us or (518) 475-6015 to check your status or have a ballot sent to you if you have not received one.

Completed ballots must be received at district headquarters at Academy Park by **Tuesday, June 9 by 5 p.m.** You can mail in your ballot, or hand-deliver it to Academy Park and deposit it in one of two lock boxes that will be available during business hours, beginning Friday, June 5. Ballots received after 5 p.m. on June 9 will not be counted, even if they are postmarked prior to the deadline.

Ballot deadline:
Tuesday, June 9
by 5 p.m.

Questions? Call:
(518) 475-6015



2020-21 budget at a glance

Total – \$261.6 million

Tax-levy increase – 1.96%

- The seventh consecutive year the proposed increase has been less than 2%. The average proposed increase over that time has been 1.02%.

What the budget supports

- Full-day prekindergarten for nearly 1,000 3- and 4-year-olds
- Three magnet elementary schools
- The bilingual Dual Language Program at Delaware Community School
- STEM/STEAM-focused initiatives at all grade levels
- Band, chorus and orchestra starting in elementary school
- 57 athletic teams serving more than 1,100 students in grades 7-12
- Community Schools initiatives at seven schools
- Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and University in the High School courses at Albany High
- AVID college- and career-readiness programs at Albany High, all middle schools and three elementary buildings
- All current Career and Technical Education pathways at Albany High's Abrookin Career and Technical Center
- Albany Marching Falcons band and color guard (including winter guard)
- Albany High's Theatre Ensemble program
- Albany International Center for refugee and immigrant students in grades 6-12
- Grant-funded professional development aligned with our Vision, Mission and Goals (focus on equity)
- Culturally relevant teaching and learning practices
- Restorative practices

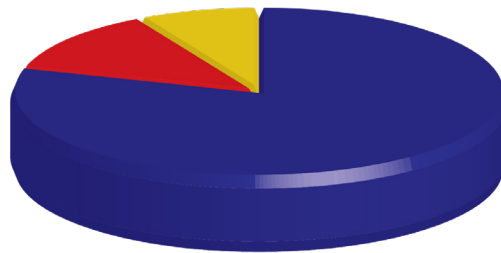
Staffing adjustments

- The proposal would reduce 142.6 positions, with at least 64.6 positions through attrition. The total reduction would be about 8% of the district's current workforce.
- 7.2% of the administrative workforce (five positions out of 69)
- 7.5% of the teaching and related workforce (73.4 positions out of 982)
- 8.9% of the support staff workforce (59.5 positions of 665)
- 4.4% of management confidential and other staff (4.5 positions out of 102)
- The superintendent, all Cabinet members and all management confidential staff will have a pay freeze for 2020-21.

Program adjustments

- Increased maximum class size guidelines in some areas:
 - Kindergarten – from 23 to 24
 - Grades 1-3 – from 23 to 25
 - Grades 4-5 – from 25 to 26
 - Grades 6-8 – remains at 30
 - Grades 9-12 – remains at 30
- Reducing staff supports to general education classrooms: teaching assistants, behavior specialists, reading teachers, speech teachers and others who support classroom teachers
- Reduction in instructional coaches
- Small-group instrumental lessons beginning in fourth or fifth grade, rather than third. No other music changes are proposed district-wide.
- Elimination of freshman boys' and girls' basketball at Albany High School; mod-9 boys' soccer. Student-athletes would still have the opportunity to play on teams at other levels.
- Elimination of the district-wide second-grade swimming program
- Reduction in off-site field trips and other enrichment programming supported by discretionary funds at each school

Revenue & expenditures



Estimated revenue

- Federal aid 0.70%
- Fund balance 0.92%
- Local revenue 6.86%
- State building aid 4.75%
- Other state aid 40.62%
- Use of reserves 0.23%
- Property tax 45.92%

Estimated expenditures

- Capital 12.44%
- Administrative 7.87%
- Program 79.69%

Estimated revenue, or where the money will come from

	2019-20	2020-21	\$ Change
Federal aid	\$2,000,000	\$1,820,000	-\$180,000
Fund balance	\$4,786,637	\$2,400,000	-\$2,386,637
Local revenue	\$17,619,500	\$17,963,500	\$344,000
State building aid	\$12,700,000	\$12,417,254	-\$282,746
Other state aid	\$104,935,896	\$106,241,199	\$1,305,303
Use of reserves	\$500,000	\$607,402	\$107,402
Property tax levy	\$117,813,113	\$120,118,833	\$2,305,720
Total revenue	\$260,355,146	\$261,568,188	\$1,213,042

Proposed expenditures, or where the money will be spent

	2019-20 adopted	2020-21 proposed	\$ Change
Program budget	\$207,921,814	\$208,439,485	\$517,671
Instruction	\$160,335,974	\$159,916,163	-\$419,811
Charter school payments	\$36,620,945	\$37,329,399	\$708,454
Pupil transportation	\$9,802,952	\$10,097,217	\$294,265
Athletics	\$1,161,943	\$1,096,706	-\$65,237
Capital budget	\$31,966,547	\$32,539,454	\$572,907
Operations/maintenance	\$10,711,732	\$10,884,342	\$172,610
Utilities	\$2,735,000	\$3,026,017	\$291,017
Building rentals	\$170,111	\$41,840	-\$128,271
Debt payments and borrowings	\$17,349,704	\$17,987,255	\$637,551
Tax refunds and judgments	\$1,000,000	\$600,000	-\$400,000
Administrative budget	\$20,466,785	\$20,589,249	\$122,464
General support	\$18,250,236	\$18,410,375	\$160,139
Property and liability insurance	\$633,800	\$704,930	\$71,130
Printing, mailing and data processing	\$1,257,049	\$1,243,798	-\$13,251
Legal and other services	\$325,700	\$230,146	-\$95,554
Total expenditures	\$260,355,146	\$261,568,188	\$1,213,042



Your tax bill: making sense of the numbers

Q: How will the proposed 2020-21 budget affect my taxes?

A: The City School District of Albany is proposing to increase its tax levy by 1.96% for 2020-21. However, your overall tax bill may change by a different percentage:

- If the value of your property changed;
- If your STAR reimbursement changed; or
- If the proportion changes for school taxes paid by homeowners.

Q: How are my final school tax bill and tax rate set?

A: Your school tax bill and tax rate are determined by combining four factors, three of which are outside the district's control.

1. School tax levy: The total amount of money a school district needs to collect from property owners each year – \$120.1 million in the 2020-21 proposed budget. There is a 1.96% increase proposed for 2020-21, which is equal to the district's tax "cap" of 1.96%.

2. The state School Tax Relief Program, or STAR: Partial school tax exemptions for owner-occupied homes. Basic STAR savings next year will be \$644. Enhanced STAR savings for senior citizens will be \$1,370.

(Please note that the estimates provided in the table below include only these first two factors. The following additional factors are not yet available and are determined before the Board of Education sets the tax rates in late summer.)

3. Property assessments: Estimates of the value of how much a property would sell for under normal conditions. This information is determined by the City of Albany.

4. Homestead vs. non-homestead proportion: In late summer, the New York State Office of Real Property Tax Services confirms the percentages of local taxes to be paid by homeowners and business owners. This is the final factor in determining the school tax rate.

Once all factors are set, the final tax rate determines how much of the total tax levy each property owner pays.

Estimated school tax bill for a typical taxpayer whose home is valued at \$150,000*			
School tax	2019-20	2020-21	Estimated change*
Without STAR exemption	\$3,220	\$3,283	\$63
With Basic STAR	\$2,576	\$2,639	\$63
With Enhanced STAR for seniors	\$1,850	\$1,913	\$63

* The final tax rate will be set in late summer after the City of Albany finalizes its tax assessments and those assessments are reviewed by the New York State Office of Real Property Tax Services.

By the numbers

0.47

Percent of the proposed budget increase for next school year – less than 1%

1

Place that Albany High senior Amelia Colafati took in this year's Albany-Tula Alliance Essay Contest

1.96

Percent tax-levy increase in the proposed 2020-21 budget

3

Themed elementary magnet schools: ASH, Montessori Magnet School and TOAST

6

Albany High student-artists whose work was accepted for the 2020 Regional Juried Art Exhibition

6.63

Number of seconds it took Albany High senior André Woods to win the Section 2 title in the 55 meters

7

Consecutive years the proposed tax-levy increase has been less than 2%

9

Number of district schools in Good Standing (up from four in 2018)

23

Buses delivering meals to students during the COVID-19 crisis

50

Languages spoken by district students

68

Albany High's graduation rate (up from 50 in 2010)

732

Albany High students who made Principal's List (90+) or Honor Roll (85+) in the second quarter

1,398

Points Albany High senior Ahniysha "Baby" Jackson scored during her basketball career

1,873

People following the district on Twitter @albanyschools

3,592

Chromebook computers distributed to students during the COVID-19 crisis

6,936

People signed up for School News Notifier (albanyschools.org/snn)

8,828

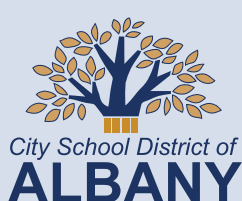
People following the district on Facebook @albanyschools

39,000

Square feet in Albany High's new music and art building, which will open this fall

227,395

Number of meals distributed to students during the COVID-19 crisis as of May 20



Capital Education is published by the City School District of Albany. Please direct comments about the newsletter, story ideas and questions to either:

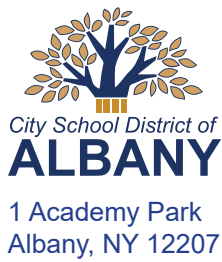
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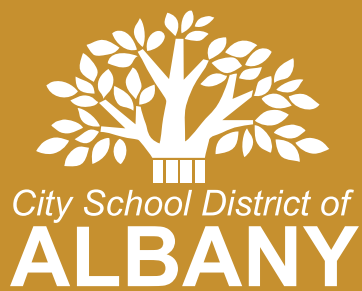
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in this newsletter and more at:

albanschools.org



Our guiding principles

Our vision

The City School District of Albany will be a district of excellence with caring relationships and engaging learning experiences that provide equitable opportunities for all students to reach their potential.

Our mission

The mission of the City School District of Albany is to work in partnership with

our diverse community to engage every learner in a robust educational program designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for success.

Our goals

Increase student achievement; Enhance the delivery of quality instruction; Build our leadership capacity and increase accountability; Empower families; Partner with our diverse community



Board election: three candidates seek open seat

Three candidates are vying for one open seat on the City School District of Albany Board of Education in this year's board election.

Victor Cain, Hassan Elminyawi and Edith Leet submitted petitions to run for the board seat in advance of the May 11 filing deadline. Elminyawi was appointed last summer to fill a vacancy and his term expires June 30.

Also on the ballot: Proposition #2

This year's ballot also will include Proposition #2, a proposal to purchase a piece of property adjacent to Delaware Community School for \$13,300. The purchase would use funds from the district's capital reserve and would have no tax impact.

If voters approve the purchase, the property would be used for additional recreational space for students at Delaware Community School.

Library vote information

In addition to the school-related items on this year's ballot, residents also will be asked to vote for two seats on the Albany Public Library Board of Trustees. Each seat carries a five-year term.

There will be no vote on the library's annual budget this year, since there is no tax-levy increase proposed.

For more information about the library trustee vote, call Stephanie Simon at (518) 708-3912.

What voters will see on the ballot

Albany residents will be asked to consider two propositions and vote for one Board of Education member this year. All voting will be conducted by absentee ballot due to the COVID-19 crisis (see *related story on page 1 for more information*).

The first proposition asks voters to consider the proposed \$261.6 million school budget for 2020-21. Here's what will appear on the ballot:

Proposition #1

Shall the resolution adopted by the Board of Education on May 14, 2020, authorizing the City School District of Albany to expend the sum in the amount of \$261,568,188 during the 2020-2021 school year, and to levy a tax therefore be approved?

Yes No

The second proposal asks voters to consider a property purchase that would have no additional tax impact. The proposal would allow the district to purchase a small piece of property adjacent to Delaware Community School to use for student recreational space.

Proposition #2

Shall the Board of Education, Resolution approved on April 2, 2020, be authorized to acquire for school operating needs approximately 0.14+/- acres of land located within Tax Parcel 76.61-4-54 in the City of Albany, State of New York, located near Delaware Community School, at a cost not to exceed \$13,300, plus any and all customary closing costs, to be paid from the available Capital Reserve Fund balance?

Yes No

What happens if the budget is not approved?

If voters do not approve the budget, state law gives the Board of Education two options:

Put up the same proposal or a revised proposal for a second vote.

- Due to the additional expenses of full absentee voting during the COVID-19 crisis, that would cost approximately \$150,000.

Adopt a contingency budget.

- A contingency budget would require approximately \$2.3 million in additional cuts.

If the board opted for a second vote and it also failed, state law would require the district to adopt a contingency budget.

State law closely regulates any district operating under a contingency budget. It prohibits spending on student supplies, equipment and certain raises, to name a few items. Community groups also are required to pay to use school buildings when a district is operating under a contingency budget.