

Budget Newsletter

EAST GREENBUSH CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

www.egcsd.org



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**BUDGET
VOTE
& BOARD
ELECTION**

2024-25 School Budget Maintains All Programs & Increases Pre-K Capacity

The East Greenbush Central School District has proposed a school budget for next year that maintains all programs and services with a 0.55% tax levy increase, which is within the NYS tax cap. The proposed budget, totaling \$111,660,557, would maintain current average class sizes, expand the Pre-K Program from 97 students to 165 students, continue the district's 1:1 chromebook program, and upgrade the wireless network and other technology systems.

Residents will also vote on a \$116 million capital project that would improve school facilities and grounds across the district with no impact to local taxpayers, the replacement of eight school buses, which if approved by voters, will be fully paid for by the Bus Purchase Reserve Fund, and elect three individuals to the Board of Education.

The Budget Vote and Board of Education Election is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 21, 2024.**

Tax levy increase of 0.55% is within the NYS Property Tax Cap

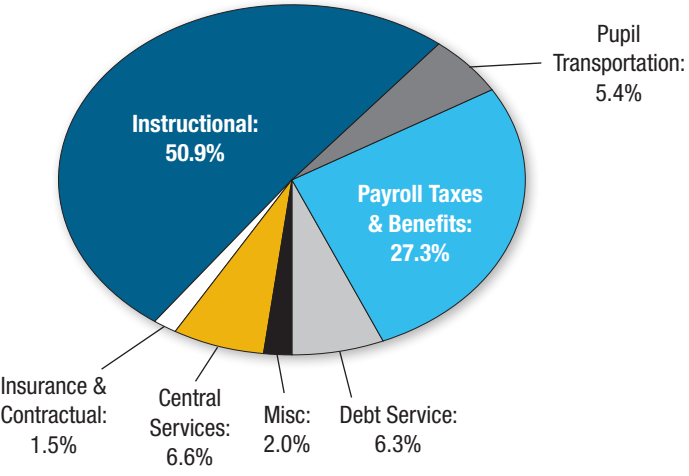
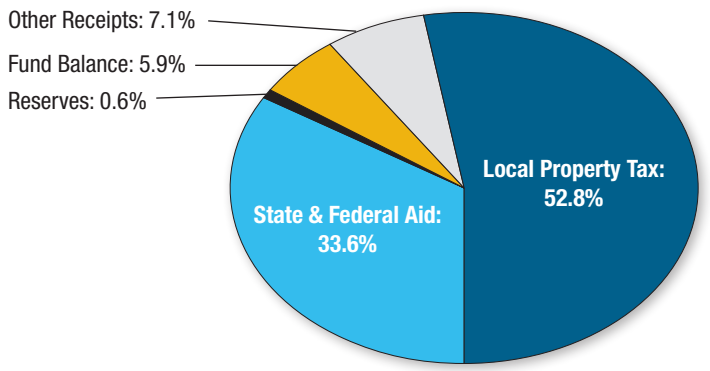
WHAT'S ON THE BALLOT?

- Proposition 1: School Budget of \$111,660,557
- Proposition 2: Bond Proposition (Capital Project)
- Proposition 3: Replace Eight School Buses from Bus Purchase Reserve Fund
- Election of Three Board of Education Members



BUDGET REVENUES

Category	Current Budget 2023-2024	Proposed Budget 2024-2025
Local Property Tax Levy	\$ 58,666,419	\$58,989,333
Other Receipts	7,636,905	7,893,850
Fund Balance	6,829,322	6,603,413
Reserves	\$0	680,000
State and Federal Aid	35,680,236	37,493,961
Totals:	\$ 108,812,882	\$111,660,557



BUDGET EXPENDITURES

Category	Current Budget 2023-2024	Proposed Budget 2024-2025
Board of Education, Central Administration Operations, Legal Services, Personnel & Public Information	\$ 2,021,329	\$ 2,210,907
Central Services	7,203,011	7,333,014
Insurance & Contractual Items	1,694,950	1,717,077
Instructional Programs	55,985,820	56,777,520
Pupil Transportation	6,050,380	6,068,962
Payroll Taxes & Benefits	28,877,381	30,479,003
Debt Service	6,980,011	7,074,074
Totals:	\$ 108,812,882	\$ 111,660,557

The East Greenbush CSD has stayed within the state tax cap every year since its implementation.

2023-24 Highlights

- All district schools are in “Good Standing” according to the NYS Education Department.
- Our graduates attend top colleges and universities, enlist for military service and contribute to the workforce.
- Voted “Best School District” the last three years in the Times Union Best of the Capital Region contest.
- Goff ranked #1 middle school in Capital Region (U.S. News).
- District ranked #1/ELA and #2/Math in the Capital Region for 2023 NYS assessments.
- Expanded Pre-K Program this school year to serve 97 four-year-old children.
- Added four interscholastic sports this school year (Girls’ Wrestling, Boys’ Swim, Girls’ Swim and Girls’ Flag Football).
- Nearly 90 students are enrolled in Career and Technical Education programs such as Culinary Arts, Certified Nursing Assistant, Heavy Equipment Operations and STEM.
- DPS Kindergarten Teacher Shondra Conyers was selected to the NYS Master Teacher Program.
- Genet Kindergarten Teacher Julie Hammill was selected as News Channel 13 Top Teachers this school year.
- DPS Principal Jack Alvey was named Principal of the Year by the Capital Area School Development Association.
- A group of Columbia students raised more than \$90,000 for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society through Columbia Kicks Cancer.
- Madison Wagoner ’24, Addison Brannock ’26 and Aeris Corrodero

- ’26 had their artwork accepted to the highly competitive 25th annual High School Regional Art Exhibition at the Opalka Gallery.
- The Columbia Girls’ Bowling team won a NYS Championship.
- Six Columbia teams have won Section 2 Championships this season — Girls’ Soccer, Girls’ Volleyball, Boys’ Bowling, Girls’ Bowling, Boys’ Indoor Track, Girls’ Indoor Track.
- Kennedy Ring was named a High School All American for girls’ soccer.
- The East Greenbush CSD launched its own podcast “Let’s Learn Together” to share positive stories and information about the district in a new way.
- For the 21st consecutive year, the East Greenbush CSD has received the School Safety Excellence Award from Utica National Insurance Group.
- The East Greenbush CSD has hosted a number of community events this school year including musical concerts, Veterans Day celebrations, Winterfest, the District-wide Art Show and a Multicultural and Tolerance Fair.
- For the 11th straight year, East Greenbush CSD received a “no designation” fiscal stress score from the New York State Comptroller’s Office, indicating a low level of fiscal stress.
- Avoided costs of approximately \$449,763 last year as part of energy savings program and more than \$6.7 million since its inception in September 2007.



BY THE NUMBERS

(as of April 12, 2024)

0 Cuts to programs or services in the proposed school budget for 2024-25

3 Students had artwork accepted to the 25th annual High School Regional Art Exhibition at the Opalka Gallery

5 Teams advanced to the Odyssey of the Mind State Tournament (two from DPS and one each from Genet, Green Meadow and Red Mill)

20 Board of Education meetings hosted in person and live streamed for the public so far this year

21 Years in a row the district has received the School Safety Excellence Award from Utica National Insurance Group

30 Goff students performed at the All-County Winter Music Festival

43 Research projects presented by students at the Genet STEM Fair

52 Columbia students donated blood at the school blood drive in March

357 Students taking college-level courses at Columbia High School this year

336 News stories posted on www.egcsd.org since the first day of school

1,306 Downloads of our new podcast Let's Learn Together

1,177 New Chromebooks distributed to students this school year to replace end of life units

2,012 Followers of our instagram ([egreenbushcsd](https://www.instagram.com/egreenbushcsd))

4,156 Total number of students in the East Greenbush CSD, who we care for and teach every day!

90,855 Dollars raised for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society by students on the Columbia Kicks Cancer team

235,263 lunches served to students this school year

Budget Q&A

Q: Who creates the school budget?

A: School administrators develop a budget in coordination with the Board of Education and members of the community.

Q: Is the property tax cap really 2 percent?

A: No. Each school district is required to calculate their unique property tax cap using an eight-step formula provided by New York State. Some school districts will have a tax cap higher than two percent and others will have a tax cap lower than two percent dependent upon the values of all eight factors in their school calculation. The only factor in the entire calculation relating to two percent is the inflationary factor, which is the lesser of 2 percent or the Consumer Price Index.

The tax cap for the East Greenbush CSD in 2024-25 is 0.55%.

Q: Where should I vote on May 21, 2024?

A: The school district is divided into election zones as follows:

1. Bell Top – Residents of the Town of North Greenbush
2. Goff – Residents of the Town of East Greenbush
3. Donald P. Sutherland – Residents of the Towns of Sand Lake or Chatham or Residents with a Nassau mailing address
4. Green Meadow – Residents of the Town of Schodack who do not have a Nassau mailing address

Voter Lookup Website:



EAST GREENBUSH CSD BUDGET NOTICE

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2023-24 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2024-25 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 108,812,882	\$ 111,660,557	\$ 111,166,029
Increase/Decrease for the 2024-25 School Year		\$ 2,847,675	\$ 2,353,147
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		2.62%	2.16%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.12%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$ 58,666,419	\$ 58,989,333	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$ 0	\$ 0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$ 0	\$ 0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$ 0	\$ 0	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$ 58,666,419	\$ 58,989,333	\$58,666,419
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$ 3,441,646	\$ 2,436,775	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$ 55,224,773	\$ 56,552,558	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$ 55,224,773	\$ 56,552,558	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$ 0	\$ 0	
Administrative Component	\$ 12,750,096	\$ 12,984,153	\$ 12,533,625
Program Component	\$ 80,137,240	\$ 80,787,179	\$ 80,743,179
Capital Component	\$ 15,925,546	\$ 17,889,225	\$ 17,889,225
* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2024-25 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.			
The District's contingency budget reductions will be from the non-student equipment budget in the amount of \$494,528.			
** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)			
	Description	Amount	
	Capital Project - Proposition #2	\$ 116,092,000	
	Bus Purchases from Reserve - Proposition #3	\$ 1,044,301	
		\$	
		\$	

*NOTE TO SCHOOL DISTRICT BUSINESS OFFICIALS: Please submit an electronic version (Word or PDF) of this completed form to: emscmgt@nysed.gov

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹

\$430

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2024-25 by the qualified voters of the East Greenbush Central School District, Rensselaer and Columbia Counties, New York, will be held at D.P. Sutherland, Green Meadow, Bell Top, and Howard L. Goff schools in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 between the hours of 7:00 am and 9:00 pm prevailing time in the above mentioned schools at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine. ***Districts should include information according to Executive Orders and as advised by legal counsel.***

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

Proposition 2: Bond Proposition (Capital Project)

The East Greenbush CSD has proposed a Capital Project that would improve facilities and grounds at all seven schools. The estimated cost for the proposed project is \$116,092,000, but due to state building aid and expiring debt, it is estimated there would be no additional impact to local taxpayers.

It is estimated that the state will reimburse the district approximately 72% of eligible costs for this project resulting in no additional tax burden for district residents.

Scope of the Capital Project:

- HVAC Upgrades to Improve Indoor Air Quality
- Install Air Conditioning in All Elementary Schools
- Renovate Library Media Centers in All Schools
- Classroom Additions
- Interior Spaces
- Safety/Security
- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Exterior Doors/Weather Protection
- General Site Improvements
- New Roof at Columbia
- New Lighting/Sound System in Columbia Auditorium
- Redesigned Four-Lane Entrance to Columbia with Pedestrian Walkway
- New and Reconstructed Sidewalks/Parking Lots
- Removal of Hazardous Materials
- Buildings and Grounds Improvements

“This project looks to secure a bright future for our students and our community,” said Superintendent Jeff Simons. “With the support of our residents, as we retire debt, we seek to make use of the state funding that is available now to modernize our educational spaces, improve health and safety for students and enhance our athletic facilities within the community. We can accomplish all of this without any additional impact on our taxpayers.”

• Athletic Fields/Courts/Playgrounds

COLUMBIA

- Reconstructed Tennis Courts
- Reconstructed Basketball Courts
- Improvements to Baseball and Softball Fields
- Improvements to Grass Fields
- Install New Fiber Runs from School to Turf Field
- Replace PA System
- Add Visitor Bleachers to Turf Field

GOFF

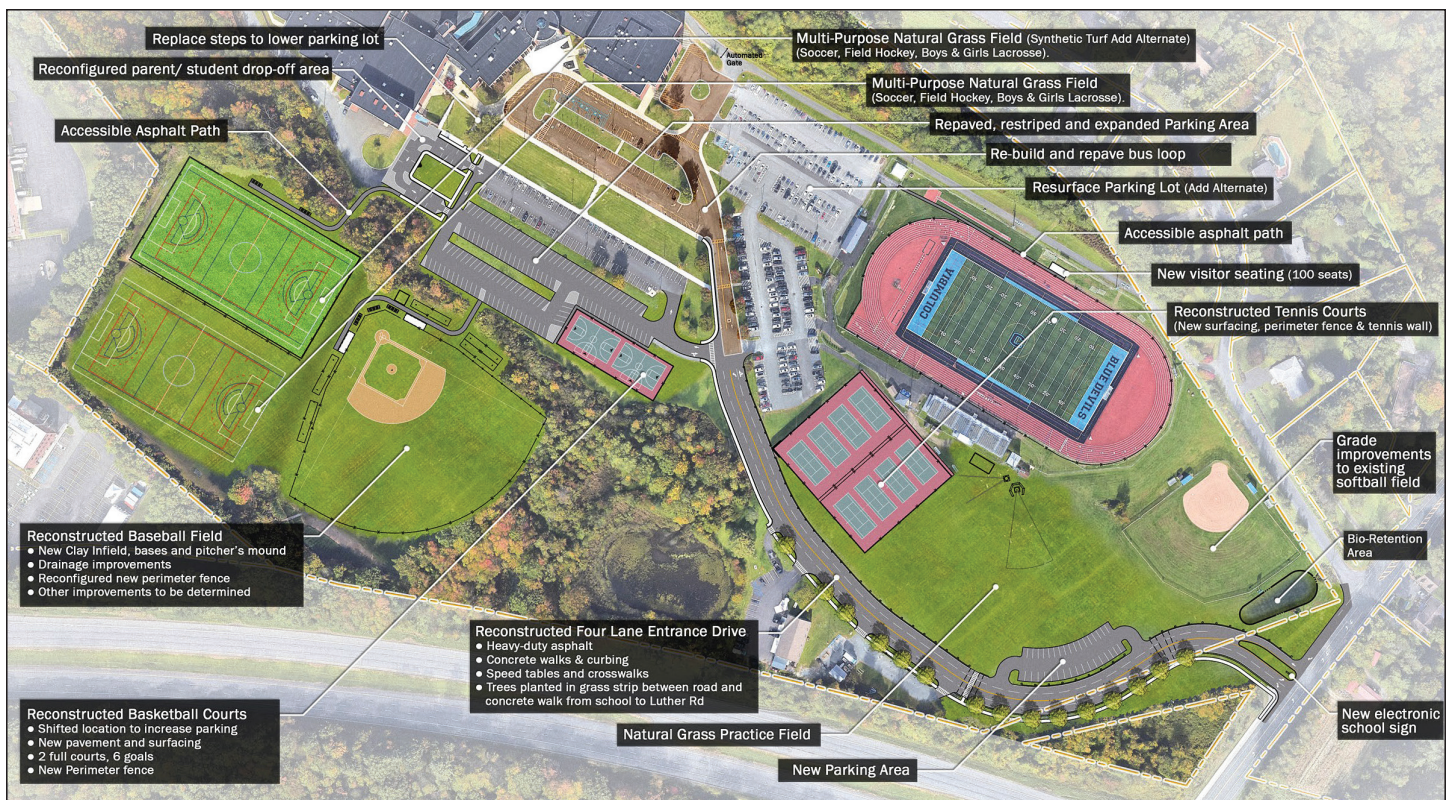
- New Multipurpose Turf Field with 6-Lane Track
- Two New Elevated Practice Fields with Drainage
- New Access Roadway with Parking Lot
- New Tennis/Pickleball/Basketball Courts
- Reconstruct Locker Rooms

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- New Playgrounds
- New Softball Backstops
- Improvements to Grass Fields

Learn more about the proposed Capital Project by visiting www.egcsd.org/capitalproject.

Watch Capital Project Video:

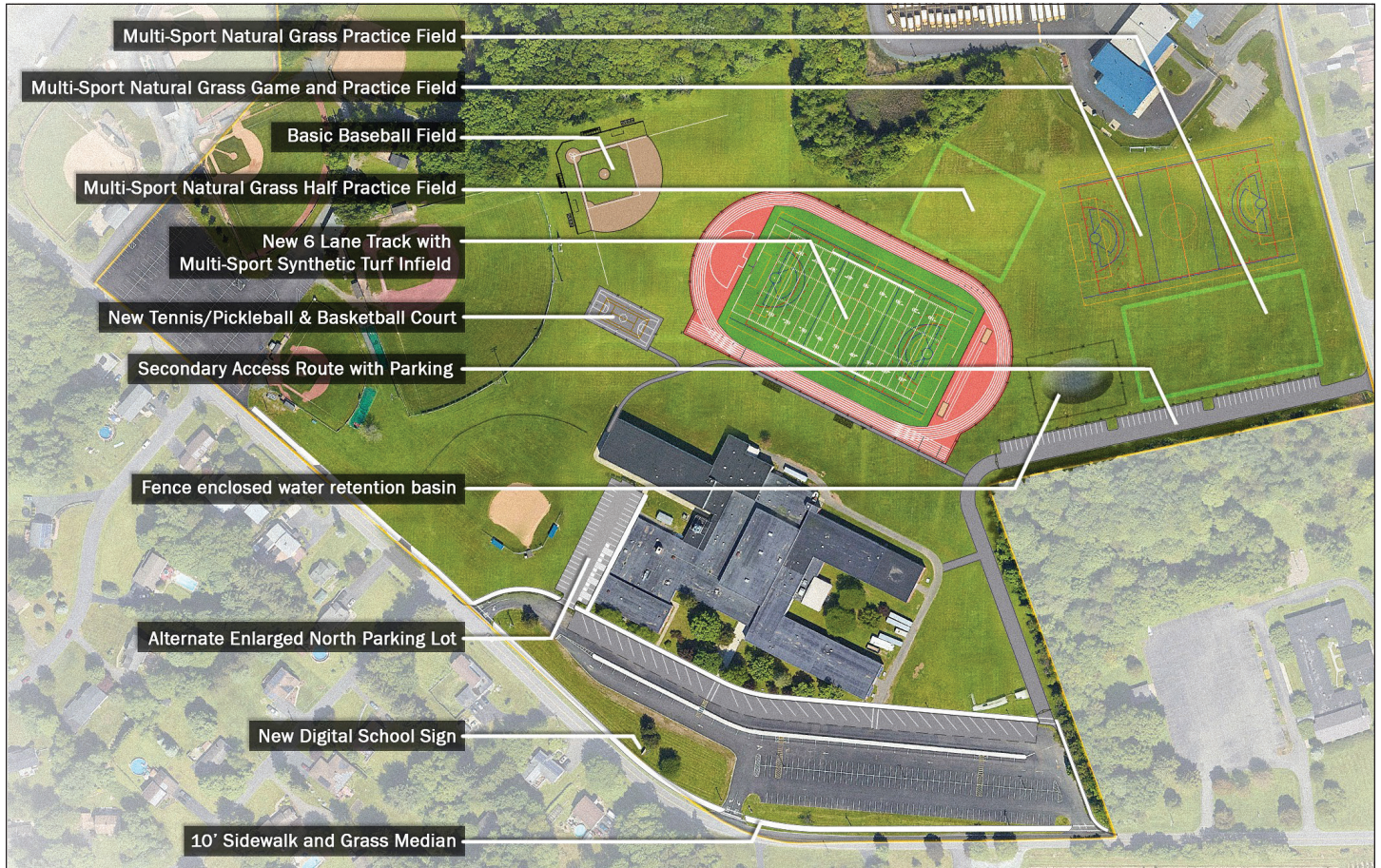


Cost:

The estimated cost for the proposed project is \$116 million, but due to state building aid and expiring debt, there would be no additional impact to local taxpayers.

- STATE AID:
 - NYS Building Aid will fund 72% of eligible project costs
 - The district anticipates 84% of project costs will be eligible for building aid

- CAPITAL RESERVE: Voter-approved savings from previous years
 - Contribution: \$2 million from the capital reserve to offset project costs
- DEBT PAYOFF:
 - District nearing final payoff of debt from prior capital projects
 - Older debt payments will drop off and comparable new debt payments will be added
 - Result: Local taxpayer share is projected to be tax neutral



Proposition 3: Bus Purchase from Reserve Fund

In addition to the school budget, voters will decide on the replacement of eight school buses, which will be fully paid for by the Bus Purchase Reserve Fund with no impact to taxpayers. The Bus Purchase Reserve Fund acts like a savings account, allowing the district to store money for the sole purpose of purchasing buses. It also helps the district avoid the costs that come with borrowing.

Bus Type	Quantity	Reserve (Proposition 3)
66-Passenger (Diesel)	2	\$ 316,955
66-Passenger (EV or Diesel)*	2	\$ 340,000
Wheelchair Bus	2	\$ 217,418
28-Passenger	2	\$ 169,928
Total	8	\$ 1,044,301

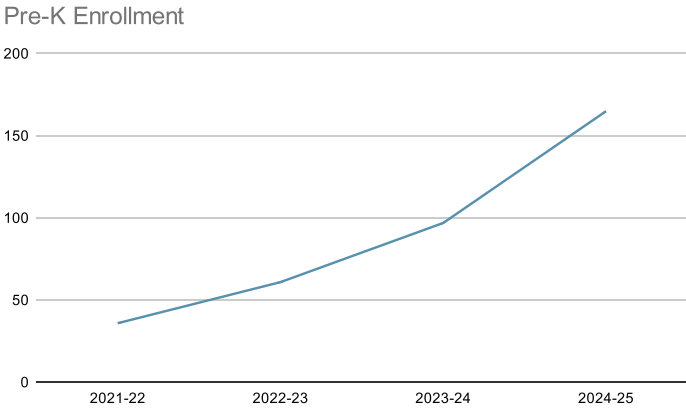
* Electric powered (EV) bus purchases are dependent on award of rebate and grant funding. Absent this funding, diesel buses would be purchased.



With voter approval, New York State reimburses the District for approximately 69.4% of the total bus purchase.

East Greenbush CSD Invests in Pre-K Expansion

The East Greenbush CSD began offering full day pre-k in 2021-22 for 36 students using new UPK State Aid and COVID federal funds. Based on research studies that show the value of pre-k, the success of the program and demand from families, the district has expanded the program in each subsequent year utilizing additional UPK State Aid to cover program costs. This year, there are 97 students enrolled in pre-k, and the proposed budget for 2024-25 would provide spots for 165 students.



Goff Cell Phone Policy Leads to Improved Academics & Behavior

Howard L. Goff Middle School began enforcing the district's existing cell phone policy this year which states that cell phones and other personal electronic devices (such as smart watches) are not permitted during the instructional school day. A letter from Goff Interim Principal James McHugh to parents/guardians in August cited distractions in class, decreased social interaction, bullying and mental health issues as reasons to prohibit cell phones during the school day.

That decision was also informed by a U.S. Surgeon General advisory about youth mental health issues caused by cell phones and social media. The advisory recommended creating "tech-free zones that better foster in-person relationships." "Given how much time students spend in our care, we believe schools have a role to play as well," Mr. McHugh wrote in his August 21 letter to parents. "By limiting cell phone use at school, we can eliminate some of the concerning behavior we have observed at Goff and put the focus back where it

should be – learning and personal growth." Discipline data and survey feedback confirm the effectiveness of the policy. Importantly, 98% of staff saw a decrease in cell phone use during the school day. They also noticed students were less distracted in class, and they were socializing more with each other and staff.



As the school year has progressed, students have adapted to the new policy and a primary benefit includes a renewed focus on academics. "Thirty percent of families say that their students are doing better academically. I think if there's anything we can change to make 30 percent of our students do better, that's a win," said Assistant Principal Mike Neumann. "Twenty-three percent of parents agree that they're (children are) less anxious. That's a win."

Shondra Conyers Selected as a NYS Master Teacher

Donald P. Sutherland Elementary School kindergarten teacher Shondra Conyers was selected as a NYS Master Teacher this past fall. She is one of 10 educators selected to the program from the Capital Region.

As a NYS Master Teacher, Mrs. Conyers will participate in STEM professional development and attend leadership workshops over the next four years.



"There's always a way to grow and get better," said Mrs. Conyers. Mrs. Conyers is the sixth teacher from the East Greenbush Central School District to be selected as a NYS Master Teacher (Diana Prout, Jessica Hladik, Heidi Gleason, Tom Ross, Sue Schreck).

Columbia Girls' Bowling Wins NYS Championship

The Columbia Girls' Bowling team won the NYSPHSAA Championship in March, completing an outstanding season. Columbia finished the regular season with an undefeated 16-0 record, won the Suburban Council Championship Tournament and the Section 2 Championships Tournament. Congratulations!



Board of Education Candidates: There are three open seats for the Board of Education.

Qualified district residents may vote for up to three individuals to fill these positions. The following candidates filed nominations:



CHERYL KENNEDY

I am seeking a second term as a member of the East Greenbush Board of Education. My background and my profession is in finance and accounting. On the Board I strive to foster quality education together with fiscal responsibility for our students and our community. Currently I serve on the BRAC Committee in addition to the Education Foundation. I also continue to serve as the Board's Assistant Clerk.

My family and I have been East Greenbush residents for over 24 years.

My husband and our three children were all educated by the East Greenbush Central School District. I have experience volunteering in each grade level, K-12. I have coordinated fundraisers, movie nights, the Goff High Honors Dinner and Teacher Appreciation Luncheons. My experience serving as a PTO Board Member, as Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary have and will serve me while continuing on the Board of Education.

I am a graduate of SUNY Brockport majoring in Finance, and have my MBA from the Sage Colleges. It is an honor being affiliated with the East Greenbush Central School District and I look forward to continuing to serve the community through the Board of Education.



SAMANTHA PHILLIPS

I have 20 years of experience including roles in the public and private sectors and academia. I am adept at collaborating, building partnerships, and have a keen understanding of what makes organizations thrive. I have extensive leadership experience and have served on various forums and in advisory positions.

My experiences include an appointment by Governor Charlie Baker to serve as the Director of the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency and serving under two

mayors as the Director of Emergency Management for the City of Philadelphia. I also led a research and training center at SUNY Albany and served as a Professor in Practice/adjunct lecturer at SUNY Albany and Temple University. I have a B.S. from American University and an M.P.H. and M.A. from the George Washington University and the Naval Postgraduate School, respectively.

I moved to Schodack with my family in 2017 and I am an active community member. I am excited by the opportunity to serve as a member of the East Greenbush Board of Education. I believe strongly in supporting our communities through investments in public education. If elected, I will take a holistic approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities facing our public school system through collaboration and dialogue.



JOANN TAYLOR

My name is JoAnn Taylor and I am seeking reelection to the Board. My husband and I have lived in the community for 34 years; and are the parents of two Columbia graduates.

I have served on the Board for 15 years, and have participated in many committees. They include: Education, Curriculum, BRAC, Policy, Safety, Education Foundation, Appendix D and liaison to the Transportation Department. I helped

with the "Food for Families" program during the pandemic.

Education changes, especially in current times. Many children need additional support. We must be prepared for their academic, social and emotional needs, yet we cannot forget to move forward. Students deserve updated curriculum and new opportunities within the classroom. We must provide this in a fiscally responsible manner for our taxpayers, being mindful that current times have left families in precarious financial situations.

Every student is important. We must provide an environment that is academically rich, safe and nurturing. If reelected, I will work to provide an atmosphere where all students find success.



KIMBERLY TURNER

I have been a resident of East Greenbush for 23 years. I am a proud parent of Alexandra (8th grade) and Nicholas (11th grade). I have a master's degree in criminal justice from SUNY Albany and worked for the Division of Parole until I resigned to stay home with my son (and later, my daughter).

I have been actively involved as Treasurer for both Genet and Goff PTOs as well as one of the

primary PTO contacts for all events and activities at Goff. Since 2019, I have served as the parent representative on the district's Advocacy Committee. I am also highly involved in Girl Scouts as both a troop leader and as a service unit cookie manager.

With my children getting older, I feel like the timing is right to take on a new role in our district. I'm extremely grateful for the quality education that my children are receiving in the EGCS and I want to be a part of ensuring that our district continues to excel. In support of that goal, it is important to make sure that students, teachers, and staff are provided the opportunity and support they need to be successful within a safe and inclusive environment.



CATHERINE VAN ORDEN

I have lived in East Greenbush with my husband for 17 years, and my two children attend Goff. I have my degree in English from Williams College, my teaching certification from MCLA, and my Master's from Westfield State University. I am the Tutor Coordinator for the Siena College Higher Education Opportunity Program. Previously, I was the Wellness Director at the Greenbush Area YMCA, I led youth programs at the YMCA, and I

taught high school English in Massachusetts.

I serve on the Advisory Council of the Greenbush Area YMCA and on the Parish Council for the Church of St. Mary's in Clinton Heights. I also volunteer at the Goff Middle School book fair, and while my children were at Genet, I was a library volunteer and I taught an Explore and Grow class.

I feel blessed to live in the EGCS. The quality of the teachers and the variety of activities offered make this one of the best school districts in the Capital Region. I am seeking a seat on the Board of Education to ensure we maintain our level of excellence by supporting our faculty and staff and developing innovative ways to help our students achieve their goals.



East Greenbush Central School District
 ADMINISTRATION CENTER
 29 Englewood Avenue
 East Greenbush, NY 12061

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2023-2024 Board of Education

- Michael Buono, President
- John J. Dunn, Jr.
- Cheryl Kennedy, Assistant Clerk
- Mark Mann, Vice President
- Jennifer O'Brien
- Michele Skumurski, Deputy Treasurer
- Emily Steinbach
- JoAnn Taylor
- Jesse Temple

DATED MATERIAL – PLEASE MAIL IMMEDIATELY

The East Greenbush Central School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or marital status, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by State or Federal law in any of its employment decisions; and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, and NYS Human Rights Laws.

BUDGET VOTE
TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2024

Voting Information

POLLING SITES

- **Bell Top Elementary School** – Residents of the Town of North Greenbush
- **Howard L. Goff Middle School** – Residents of the Town of East Greenbush
- **Donald P. Sutherland Elementary School** – Residents of the Towns of Sand Lake or Chatham, or residents with a Nassau mailing address
- **Green Meadow Elementary School** – Residents of the Town of Schodack who do not have a Nassau mailing address



DATE OF THE ELECTION:
Tuesday, May 21, 2024

VOTER REGISTRATION:

You are already registered to vote if you have voted in a school election within the last 4 years (or are registered with the County Board of Elections).

To register:

- Go to the Office of the District Clerk, 29 Englewood Avenue, East Greenbush, from 8 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on regular days of business
- Bring photo ID with a current address
- If you have moved, also bring other means of residential identification, such as a utility bill, phone bill or other official document

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

- Age 18 or older
- U.S. Citizen
- Resident of the district for at least 30 days prior to the vote
- Registered to vote

VOTING BY ABSENTEE BALLOT

Qualified district residents who are unable to go to the polls may cast their votes by absentee ballot. An application is required first and may be obtained by calling the District Office at 518-207-2535. Applications are also available on the District's website at www.egcsd.org. The due date for applications is Tuesday, May 14, 2024 if received by mail or Monday, May 20, 2024 if received in person at the District Office.

Once a completed application is approved, an absentee ballot is issued to the voter; it must be returned to the District Clerk's Office by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 21, 2024. Note that individuals designated as permanently disabled by the Rensselaer County Board of Elections will automatically receive an absentee ballot.

EARLY VOTING BY MAIL

Early voting by mail for school budget votes and board elections is now available to New York State residents. Registered, qualified voters of the school district may apply for an early mail ballot by requesting an application from the District Clerk.