



Vote Tuesday, May 19, on the '26-'27 Budget & Board of Education

Propositions on the Ballot

On Tuesday, May 19, 2026, Schodack Central School District community members will be asked to vote on whether to approve the following propositions. **See the back page for how and where to vote.**

1. Proposed budget for the 2026–27 school year
2. Purchase of 2 gasoline-fueled school buses
3. Establishment of a capital reserve fund
4. Castleton Public Library funding proposition

Community members will also be asked to vote for three seats on the Schodack Board of Education. **See page 2 for candidate information.**

What is the Proposed 2026–27 School Year Budget?

The proposed budget for the 2026–27 school year is \$31,050,000. This budget represents a 2.48% tax levy increase, which meets the allowable New York State Property Tax Cap.

What Will the Budget Be Used For?

The proposed budget is broken down for use in three categories each year:

- **Program (71.72%):** Teaching & student support staff salaries/benefits (this includes health services, guidance, library, occupational education, computer-assisted instruction, extracurricular and athletics staff), textbooks, instructional supplies, BOCES program costs, student transportation services, and more.
- **Capital (16.95%):** Salaries/benefits for custodial, maintenance & grounds staff, utilities, building repairs, operations & maintenance supplies, retiree benefits, and other district facilities-related expenses.
- **Administrative (11.33%):** Salaries/benefits of administrative staff, plus the salaries/benefits of supervisory, clerical, and other administrative support staff. Includes expenses for school board costs, curriculum development, building supervision, central printing & data processing, contracts for services, postage & copy costs, insurance, and other administrative-related expenses.

Transfer to Capital for Maple Hill Security & Cooling Updates

The proposed budget includes a \$100,000 transfer to capital, to be allocated for improvement work at Maple Hill Jr./Sr. High School. If the budget is approved, this money will be used for security updates and adding air conditioning to select areas and/or classrooms at the school.

School Bus Purchases

The district asks voters to consider approval for the purchase of 2 gasoline-powered school buses at a cost of no more than \$441,000. This number represents the purchase price before the district receives NYS aid, which will ultimately reduce the final impact on taxpayers.

Capital Reserve Fund Proposition

Voters will be asked to consider approval for the establishment of a new capital reserve fund. Capital reserve funds are a place for school districts to set aside savings at the end of the year. This money is used to help finance future repairs, maintenance and improvements. Voter approval is needed to create capital reserve funds and to spend money from them. If this fund is approved, up to \$6,000,000 could be set aside over the next 10 years (the fund's lifespan). The fund would reduce the amount of money the district needs to borrow from New York State for future projects, meaning less future impact on taxpayers.

Castleton Public Library Proposition

Separate from the school district's budget vote will be a proposition on the ballot for the Castleton Public Library that will read: "Pursuant to Education Law, Section 259, the Board of Education of the Schodack Central School District is authorized to levy and collect an annual tax, separate and apart from the annual school district budget, in the amount of one hundred sixty-two thousand dollars (\$162,000), which shall be paid to the Castleton Public Library for the support and maintenance of the library; with this appropriated amount to be the annual appropriation until thereafter modified by a future vote of the electors of the Schodack Central School District."



2026 Board of Education Candidates

Residents of the Schodack Central School District will vote for three (3) seats on the Schodack Board of Education. Each seat is for a 3-year term (July 1, 2026–June 30, 2029). This year’s candidates and a statement from each in their own words are listed below. Candidate names are listed in the order they will appear on the ballot.

ANDRIS BLUMBERGS

I am a U.S. Coast Guard Veteran and currently serve as Director of Planning and Development for the Town of Colonie. In my role, I oversee hundreds of development projects and guide long-term planning initiatives. I bring over a decade of local government experience, which gives me a unique and practical perspective on leadership and accountability.

Beyond my professional work, I have coached student athletes as a Head Freestyle Ski Coach, working with individuals of all abilities—from first-time skiers to elite competitors. My wife has been a teacher at CES for the past seven years, giving me a close, personal perspective on the needs of students, families, and educators. I am running for the Board of Education to bring a new perspective, strengthen communication, improve accountability, and support well-managed schools that provide consistent opportunities for all students.

SHELLEY PALMER

My name is Shelley Palmer, and I have had the honor to serve our community as a member of the Board of Education for the past seven years. My husband, Zac, and I have two children, Vivienne and Andrew, who are members of the class of 2028. You are likely to find us on the sidelines of a Maple Hill sporting event or music performance. I currently work for NYS at the Division of Criminal Justice Services. I have degrees in Chemistry and Forensic Science. I spent 10+ years in science education.

As a member of the Board, I am proud to have worked together to update the district’s vision and mission. I am seeking reelection to continue to support and advocate for the resources to provide the students of Schodack Schools with an education that will provide them with the tools to be successful in their future endeavors.

MARY YURISTA

Schodack is a special place. As a member of this community for over 35 years, I’m privileged to have served on the Board of Education for 12 years as a member and as Vice-President. We’ve carefully transformed our facilities into a 21st-century learning environment and enhanced our educational model during that time. With the support of the Schodack BOE, I also serve on the Board of our educational partner, Questar III.

In my professional life (BS-SUNY Oswego, MBA-SUNY Albany), I have served in various technical capacities, leading and participating in projects that have brought innovation and improvement. The private sector offers beneficial guidance and progressive ideas that allow us to sustain and improve the quality of education and everyday life for all. As a parent and grandparent, I want the same success for every student that my children (three Maple Hill graduates) have been able to enjoy. I would be honored to be able to continue to help the BOE meet the challenges we face in our schools to facilitate the well-being and future success of our students in this new, uncertain environment and economy.

Castleton Elementary Leadership Update

As the end of the year approaches, Castleton Elementary School is preparing to say farewell to one principal and welcome its first new one in a decade. The current principal, James Derby, will step down at the end of the school year. In February, Mr. Derby was appointed as the next Principal of Red Mill Elementary School in the East Greenbush Central School District, effective July 1, 2026. Mr. Derby joined Schodack Central School District as Principal of the Middle School in 2013, eventually moving to his current role at Castleton Elementary in 2016. During these last thirteen years, Mr. Derby has had an immeasurable positive impact on countless Schodack students, families and employees. He will be missed by the many individuals who have had the pleasure of working with and knowing him in the district.



“As I prepare for my transition to Red Mill Elementary, I’ve found myself reflecting on the incredible years spent here in Schodack and at Castleton Elementary. I’m so deeply grateful for the support of this community during that time, and I’m delighted that Ms. Sullivan has been appointed as the next CES Principal. Her leadership will be a wonderful asset to our students and staff as they continue to grow.”

— **James Derby,**
Current CES Principal

Shortly after Mr. Derby accepted his new position, the district began searching for the next Principal of Castleton Elementary, ensuring ample time for a smooth school leadership transition. This thorough process involved working with a volunteer panel of district parents and employees to conduct stakeholder interviews and site visits with final candidates.

After careful consideration, Megan Sullivan was offered the job of Castleton Elementary Principal, which she happily accepted. Many in the district are already familiar with Ms. Sullivan, as she has been the Assistant Principal of Castleton Elementary since July 2024. Ms. Sullivan’s proven track record of strong relationships, an understanding of the school community, and a readiness to step into this new role made it clear she was the best person for the job.

While it will be difficult to see Mr. Derby leave, the district congratulates him on his well-deserved next step. He will provide outstanding leadership and support at Red Mill Elementary, just as he has in Schodack’s schools.



“Over the past two years, I’ve had the privilege and joy of working alongside Mr. Derby, and I’m so grateful for the time we’ve had together. I’m sad to see him leave, but I’m also thrilled for him as he pursues his next chapter. As the next Principal of Castleton Elementary, I look forward to building upon all the hard work he’s done here, and I’m excited to continue working with an incredibly talented and dedicated group of educators, staff, students, and families.”

— **Megan Sullivan,**
Incoming CES Principal

International Delegates Visit Maple Hill for Global Exchange

On March 10, delegates from around the world visited Maple Hill High School to talk with students about how major global athletics events intersect with economic prosperity. The district organized this international exchange in partnership with Questar III BOCES and the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP).

Much of the day was spent in small rotating breakout sessions, where 20+ Maple Hill students engaged with these international experts in athletics, journalism, digital media, sports management and more. The visiting delegates shared a wide variety of experiences and perspectives with students, and in turn asked to hear those of the students. Just some of the topics discussed included career pathways, global collaboration, athlete wellness and the role of sports/athletics in community building.

This unique experience was an opportunity for the students to see real-world connections between their interests and potential careers, expand their cultural understanding and improve their communication skills.



- **Bolivia:** Jorge Alejandro Riveros Gómez
- **Canada:** Reid Cameron Bilben
- **Czech Republic:** Veronika Zemanova
- **Democratic Republic of the Congo:** Rolly Kitambala Kayumba
- **Egypt:** Hassan Atef Gabr Soliman
- **Ghana:** Veronica Commey-Mensah
- **Hong Kong:** Susanna Thng
- **Jamaica:** Suzzette Ison
- **Jordan:** Yasmeen Keelani
- **Liberia:** Aletha Massaquoi
- **Libya:** Ahmed Al Bargathi
- **Morocco:** Mobarak Amine El Majdoubi
- **Paraguay:** Benjamin Hockin
- **Rwanda:** Achille Kamali
- **Saudi Arabia:** Fares Sait
- **Sweden:** Gabriel Monidell
- **Uganda:** Ronnie Kalema
- **Vietnam:** Nguyen Ngoc Huyen Trang

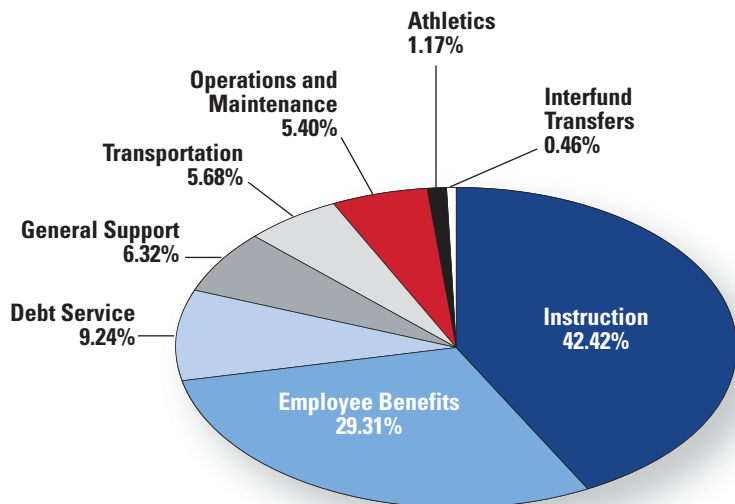
Expenditures

Category	2025-26 Proposed Budget	2026-27 Proposed Budget	Budget to Budget Change	% of Budget
Instruction	\$ 12,699,848	\$ 13,170,266	\$ 470,418	42.42%
Employee Benefits	\$ 8,233,469	\$ 9,100,629	\$ 867,160	29.31%
Debt Service	\$ 2,826,747	\$ 2,867,998	\$ 41,251	9.24%
General Support	\$ 1,866,981	\$ 1,963,018	\$ 96,037	6.32%
Transportation	\$ 1,766,553	\$ 1,765,156	\$ (1,397)	5.68%
Operations and Maintenance	\$ 1,656,596	\$ 1,677,104	\$ 20,508	5.40%
Athletics	\$ 291,516	\$ 362,346	\$ 70,830	1.17%
Interfund Transfers	\$ 132,150	\$ 143,483	\$ 11,333	0.46%
Total Expenditures	\$29,473,860	\$31,050,000	\$780,334	100.00%

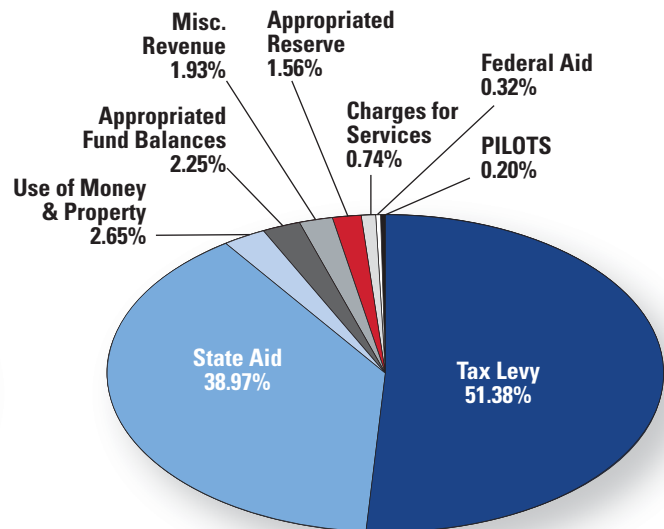
Revenue

Category	2025-26 Proposed Budget	2026-27 Proposed Budget	Budget to Budget Change	% of Budget
Tax Levy	\$ 15,567,824	\$ 15,953,235	\$ 385,411	51.38%
State Aid	\$ 11,460,501	\$ 12,101,414	\$ 640,913	38.97%
Use of Money and Property	\$ 769,052	\$ 821,382	\$ 52,330	2.65%
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$ 700,000	\$ 700,000	\$ -	2.25%
Misc. Revenue	\$ 492,593	\$ 600,686	\$ 108,093	1.93%
Appropriated Reserve	\$ 175,893	\$ 483,281	\$ 307,388	1.56%
Charges for Services	\$ 149,500	\$ 229,000	\$ 79,500	0.74%
Federal Aid	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -	0.32%
PILOTS	\$ 58,497	\$ 61,002	\$ 2,505	0.20%
Total Revenue	\$ 29,473,860	\$ 31,050,000	\$ 1,576,140	100.00%

Expenditure Summary



Revenue Summary



SCHODACK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET NOTICE

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2025-26 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2026-27 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2026-27 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 29,473,860	\$ 31,050,000	\$ 30,664,589
Increase/Decrease for the 2026-27 School Year		\$ 1,576,140	\$ 1,190,729
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		5.35 %	4.04 %
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.63%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$ 15,567,824	\$ 15,953,235	
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)	\$ 15,567,824	\$ 15,953,235	\$ 15,567,824
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$ 830,682	\$ 735,576	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$ 14,737,142	\$ 15,217,659	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D)	\$ 14,737,142	\$ 15,217,659	
I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$ 0	\$ 0	
Administrative Component	\$ 3,380,844	\$ 3,516,991	\$ 3,478,066
Program Component	\$ 20,949,590	\$ 22,270,704	\$ 22,024,218
Capital Component	\$ 5,143,426	\$ 5,262,305	\$ 5,162,305

* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2026-27 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.

Description	Amount
Bus Purchase (Not to Exceed)	\$441,000
Capital Reserve Establishment (Limit)	\$6,000,000
	\$
	\$

** 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)

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

Under the Budget Proposed
for the 2026-27 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings¹

\$ 524

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2026-27 by the qualified voters of the Schodack Central School District, Rensselaer County, New York, will be held at Maple Hill JR/SR High School in said district on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 between the hours of 6:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the Maple Hill JR/SR High School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

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



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VOTING FAQ

What am I voting on?

Residents will vote on a proposed \$31,050,000 budget for the 2026–27 school year, a proposition to purchase school buses, the establishment of a new capital reserve fund and a Castleton Public Library funding proposition. Additionally, residents will elect three (3) individuals to sit on Schodack's Board of Education.

When and where is the vote?

Voting will take place in the Maple Hill Jr./Sr. High School Gym on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, from 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM.

Who can vote?

You must be at least 18 years old and a U.S. citizen. Advance registration is not required; however, voters will be asked to swear or affirm that they are residents of the district and have been for at least 30 days before the vote.

Can I vote by absentee ballot or vote early?

Completed applications for absentee ballots or early mail ballots must be received by the District Clerk at least seven (7) days before the election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or the day before the election if the ballot is to be given personally to the voter. Any qualified voter may request an early mail ballot. To request an absentee ballot application or early mail ballot application, please contact the District Office at (518) 732-2297 ext. 2310.

What if I have questions?

For further information, please call the District Office at 518-732-2297 or visit the district website: www.schodack.k12.ny.us

New York State Election Law Update

Due to a new New York State law - the **Dr. John L. Flatau Voting and Elections Database Act** - school districts are now required to collect and report additional voter information as part of a statewide elections database. The stated goal is to increase transparency and public access to election information.

Because of this, Schodack voters will notice that the process of providing their name and address at voter check-in on Tuesday, May 19, will be different than in years past. When checking in, voters will have the option to submit their name and home address through an online form on a district-provided laptop, or check-in table volunteers may submit this information through the online form on their behalf. Voters will still be asked to write their signature on paper after completing the online submission.

If you want to learn more about the **Dr. John L. Flatau Voting & Elections Database of New York Act**, visit www.elections.ny.gov/flatau-database.