



PAW Prints

Menands | UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

BUDGET AT A **glance**

BUDGET 2025

PROPOSED BUDGET
\$12,976,198

TAX LEVY INCREASE
4.14%

VOTING INFORMATION: **Tuesday, May 20** Menands School Noon to 8 p.m.

19 Wards Lane District Office Entrance
Absentee and mail ballots
must be received by 5 p.m.



Also on the ballot:

- A \$6.67 million Capital Project to upgrade and maintain building systems and provided an expanded learning environment.
- Two candidates for two open board of education seats.
- The Menands Public Library proposed budget of \$306,423.
- The transfer of the Village Library property to the Library Board of Trustees.

Annual budget vote to be held May 20

Capital Project, village library transfer also on the ballot

Menands residents will go to the polls on Tuesday, May 20 to vote on a proposed \$12.9 million budget for the 2025-2026 school year.

In addition to the annual budget, voters will consider two separate propositions: A \$6.67 million Capital Project and the transfer of the village library property to the Library Board of Trustees.

The proposed budget represents a \$521,553 —4.19%—increase in spending. The increase is offset by anticipated revenue from property taxes, state aid, interest earnings, tuition from non-resident students, and the district's fund balance.

The budget includes a tax levy increase of 4.14%, which remains within the state's allowable tax cap. As such, the proposal requires a simple majority, 50% plus one vote, for approval.

A public hearing on the proposed budget was held on Wednesday, May 7, at 6:30 p.m. in the Menands School Library.

Superintendent Jennifer Cannavo said the proposal reflects the district's continued commitment to academic excellence and fiscal responsibility. It maintains all current programming and allows for enhancements in key areas, including:

- Health and safety measures, including the presence of a school resource officer
- Support for a wide range of extracurricular activities across many grade levels, including flag football, STEM, drama, and community service opportunities

- Implementation of the district's strategic plan focused on student achievement, social-emotional learning and equity
- Transition of the PreK program to district control, ensuring the best possible opportunities for our youngest learners
- Middle school opportunities, including yearly health and art instruction, Innovation Lab for 7th grade, and social-emotional learning supports to assist 6th grade students
- Increased community-building in the middle school, including regular community circles and advanced coursework that is available to all students and allows them to enter high school with up to four credits
- Ongoing support of the Riverside Collaboration for Special Education, which enables Menands students to be educated in-district and generates tuition revenue from neighboring districts
- Safety improvements to school grounds and maintenance of campus facilities

THE EVENING OF THE ARTS *Shining a light on the talents of our students*

Join us at May 20, 6 p.m. for a performing and visual arts show and exhibit.



The three-part budget

All public schools in New York State are required to report appropriations in three categories: administrative, program and capital. The following data shows how the Menands School budget breaks down under this formula:

PROGRAM BUDGET		
2025-26	\$9,798,510	75.51%
2024-25	\$9,587,410	76.98%

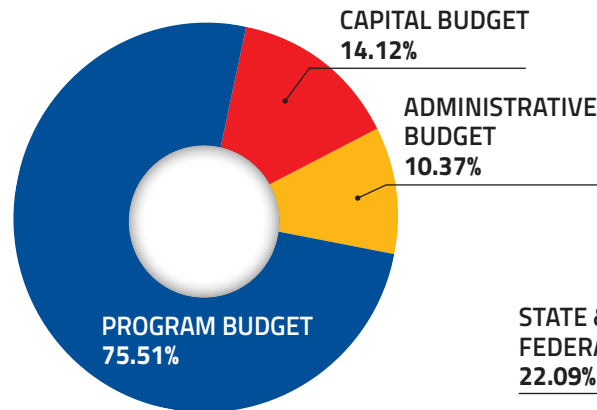
The Program Component of the budget provides funding for all expenditures that directly relate to the students of the Menands School District. Expenditures cover all salary and benefits for all teachers and other professionals that provide direct and indirect instruction and support to students. Tuition, including high school, for any instructional program is covered here along with all transportation expenses for students both in and out of district. Interscholastic and extracurricular programs are included here as well.

CAPITAL BUDGET		
2025-26	\$1,831,902	14.12%
2024-25	\$1,595,239	12.81%

The Capital Component of the budget covers all expenditures that relate to the upkeep and maintenance of our building and grounds including the salary and benefits of all the maintenance and custodial staff. Expenditures for debt service and any applicable interfund transfers are included here as well.

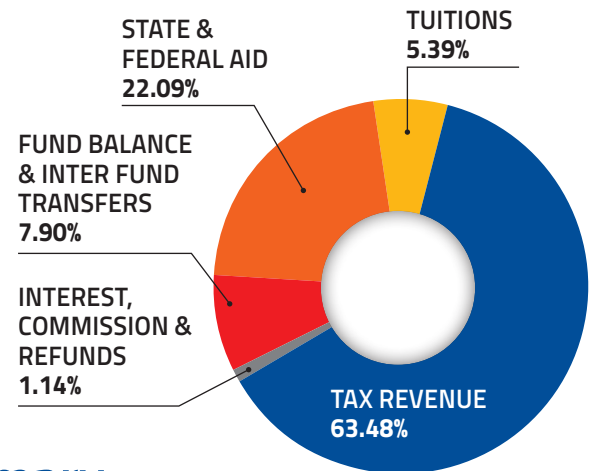
ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET		
2025-26	\$1,345,786	10.37%
2024-25	\$1,271,996	10.21%

The Administrative Component of the budget provides funding for the overall general support and management activities of the district. This includes the salaries and benefits of all professional personnel who spend their time performing administrative, supervision, curriculum or professional development duties. Also included here are the salaries and benefits of the personnel that support the leaders of the school or work in the business office. Other expenditures covered in the administrative component are legal services, auditing services and public information expenses.



Expenditures

Revenues



Revenue Summary

	2025-26 Proposed	2024-25 Budget	Dollar Increase/Decrease	% of Change
Real Property Taxes	\$7,965,735	\$7,649,284	\$316,451	4.14%
Other Payments In Lieu of taxes (PILOTS)	\$270,303	\$238,655	\$31,648	13.26%
Interest/Earnings	\$76,217	\$55,000	\$21,217	38.58%
Commissions	\$500	\$500	\$-	0.00%
Refund prior year	\$68,000	\$68,000	\$-	0.00%
Tuition Other Schools	\$700,000	\$650,000	\$50,000	7.69%
Misc- Gifts & Donations- Erate	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$-	0.00%
State and BOCES Aid	\$2,841,971	\$2,734,734	\$107,237	3.92%
Medicaid	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$(5,000)	-16.67%
Debt Service Transfer	\$125,472	\$125,472	\$-	0.00%
Fund Balance and Reserves	\$900,000	\$900,000	\$-	0.00%
TOTAL	\$12,976,198	\$12,454,645	\$521,553	4.19%

* A portion of the tax levy will be paid by the state under the School Tax Relief (STAR) program.

A report of tax exemptions, showing how much of the total assessed value on the final assessment roll or rolls used in the budgetary process is exempt from taxation, is included with the budget document, which is available at Menands School, 19 Wards Lane, Menands, NY 12204 or www.menands.org.

Capital Project addresses current, future needs

Classroom space would be increased and infrastructure updated

Village residents will consider on May 20 a \$6.67 million Capital Project that will provide additional classrooms to address fluctuations in student enrollment and educational mandates.

The project was approved following a public hearing and information session in April. A separate proposition for the school district’s annual budget will also appear on the ballot, as will propositions for the Menands Public Library.

Superintendent Jennifer Cannavo said the project would have a minimal impact on taxpayers, with a yearly tax increase forecast of \$16 for seniors with a STAR tax exemption; \$21 for all property owners with a STAR exemption; and \$24 for those without the exemption. The estimate is based on a \$250,000 assessed property value.

The project would address a critical need for 3,585-square-feet of new space while expanding educational opportunities for students, Cannavo said.

“Over the last few years, we have had to move fifth grade into the Middle School to accommodate larger class sizes and the addition of the PreK program. At the same time, we have increasing special education demands and an overall shortage of space,” she said.

For example, the guidance office meeting space and the district’s food pantry is now situated in what used to be an entranceway and lobby to the district offices.

The project will also address long-term issues within the school, including aging infrastructure.

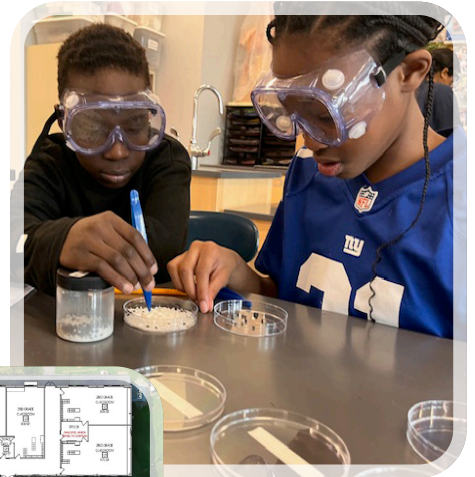
“The project would ensure that our

students now—and in the future—have the proper environment to grow and thrive in,” she said.

Specifically, the project would include the:

- Replacement of two boilers that are over 30 years old with new condensing boilers, pumps and system; remaining vintage ventilators, water heaters and storage tank with a condensing domestic hot water (DWH) system; aging piping; flooring on the stage, older suspended hallway ceilings and faulty, leaky windows
- Addition of air conditioning in the Middle School and completion of the air conditioning in the primary school
- Renovation of restrooms and locker rooms to accommodate physical and occupational therapy near the cafeteria
- Addition of two-tier lockers for fifth-grade students
- Installation of additional lighting to the exterior of the school and replacement of existing lights
- Additional emergency lighting and replacement of signage
- Replacement of exterior doors on the lower level
- Additional fencing around the primary playground

School officials said the project



addresses the immediate needs of the district as outlined in a building conditions survey while also meeting the changing and diverse needs of the district’s population.

One example is the district’s increasing special education population that has resulted in the creation of the Riverside Special Education Collaborative. Launched in September to provide the “least restrictive educational environment” for students in the Menands, Cohoes, Green Island and Watervliet schools, the collaborative has allowed many Menands students to receive the services they need in the district’s self-contained classrooms for students with developmental disabilities, autism and complex communication needs.

Through the collaborative, each district pays the costs associated with their students, no matter where the student is educated.

“We have three classrooms here in Menands that can serve up to 25 students, and they are completely full,” said Pupil Personnel Services Director Audrey Koslowski.



Students open a new chapter on knowledge thanks to new curriculum

A new English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum is allowing Menands students to start a new chapter on literacy and the sciences.

The change to the American Reading Company curriculum for ELA at the start of this school year is part of a larger Board of Education initiative to update and modernize the learning taking place in Menands.

Updates to the Kindergarten-Grade 5 science curriculum and the school-wide math curriculum are scheduled for the coming school year, Superintendent Jennifer Cannavo said.

School officials say they are already seeing results from the ELA change.

“Our students have done some pretty amazing writing recently, some of which has even been featured at the Menands Public Library,” Cannavo said.

The curriculum ensures that students in every grade level read and write daily and that they have the opportunity to go into the library and read actual books and research, said Keonda Adih, a literacy coach with the American Reading Company.

Each grade level has a different topic they focus on, but all the topics are based in the sciences. For example, second grade students are reading about, writing about and learning about bugs while students in another grade level have focused on the climate.

Principal Kathleen Wylie said the school’s ELA team of faculty and administrators chose the curriculum because it was focused on real books and on knowledge building.



“One of the things that drove us to the curriculum was the knowledge building. [The curriculum] is also a very rigorous when it comes to writing” Wylie said.

“We wanted kids to pick up and read books and see the writing and the beautiful pictures,” the principal added.

Adih visits Menands once a month and meets with teachers, as well as students to see how the curriculum is being implemented and to provide any assistance necessary.

Students said they liked the new learning style.

“I think ELA is a lot of fun because I love writing,” said second grade student Jizelle Roco.

Classmate Kinsley Lipari agreed.

“I like it because I like learning about ladybugs,” Kinsley said. “They bring you luck anytime you see them.”

Menands to oversee PreK program for 2025-26 school year

The Menands School will offer PreK on its own next year instead of contracting with an outside entity to provide the program.

The school board decided earlier this spring to take over operation of the classroom following the Colonie Youth Center’s decision to cease overseeing the program.

The change will take effect for the 2025-26 school year.

“Our commitment is to ensure that a full-day program is continued to be offered in Menands and to ensure it meets the educational and social needs of our students and community,” said Superintendent Jennifer Cannavo.

The program will be centered in one classroom and serve 18 students. If more students are enrolled, a lottery system will be used to select families.

Children must be 4 years old by December 1, 2025, and reside in Menands.

While the state provides PreK funding, it will not cover the full cost of the program. Those costs, including the need to hire a teacher and aides, are factored into the proposed 2025-26 school year budget.

Cannavo said operating the program internally gives the district great autonomy.

“The board feels strongly that providing the education in house is the best way to meet the needs of our youngest learners,” Cannavo said.



Two candidates vie for two seats on the Board of Education

There are two vacancies on the Board of Education, one for a term of four (4) years commencing on July 1, 2025, and expiring on June 30, 2029, and the second for the remaining balance of an unexpired term that commenced on July 1, 2021, and expires on June 30, 2026, with the successful candidate for such unexpired term being eligible to take office immediately upon being elected and duly qualified.

You may vote for two persons, one for each of the vacant seats.

The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected to the four (4) year term and the candidate with the second highest number of votes shall be elected to fill the remainder of the unexpired term.

The candidates are:

Jason Hoffman is an eight-year Menands resident with two children in the school district. He serves on the Menands CYO Basketball Board of Directors and also assists the Menands Baseball program. He is also a member of Audit Committee.

Patrick Semexant has been a Menands resident for nearly a decade. A current Board of Education member, he is also a Menands CYO Basketball coach and a member of the DEI Committee. A parent of two Menands students, he often volunteers at school events.



Proposition would transfer ownership of library property to library trustees

Voters will consider on May 20 whether ownership of the Menands Public Library should be transferred from the school to the library Board of Trustees.

The vote will take place from noon until 8 p.m. in the District Office, located at 19 Wards Lane in the village.

Under an agreement reached this year, the library Board of Trustees will pay \$1 and assume ownership of the building, giving the directors more autonomy in making improvements and updates without the regulatory hurdles associated with being owned by a school district.

Superintendent Jennifer Cannavo said the transfer is essentially a paperwork deal, as there will be no impact on the public's use of the library and the Board of Trustees and the Menands School will continue to have a working relationship. This will include the district continuing to conduct the annual budget vote for the library, collecting taxes and transferring them to the Library Board of Directors.

"The library has maintained the property and managed daily operations independently for years. Transferring ownership will give the library board a greater ability to improve the structure without first seeking state regulatory approval, which is a requirement of any projects that involve school district buildings," Cannavo said.

"The school and library have a strong, valued partnership. This change ensures that both entities can continue working together to benefit the community," Cannavo said.

The district has owned the library since 1982 after acquiring it from St. Joan of Arc for \$1.



Program helps Menands School students LEAD the way

An innovative program being taught by Menands police officers is helping Menands School students make the right decisions in life, whether it's in their educational or personal lives.

Law Enforcement Against Drugs & Violence, better known by the acronym LEAD, is in its second year at the school. Initially, the program was launched for Menands students in 2nd and 5th grades with assistance from a grant secured from the LEAD organization, but it was expanded this year to include 3rd grade.

The goal of the program is to "create safer, healthier communities, schools, youths, and teens, with substance use prevention, anti-bullying, and violence reduction initiatives throughout our country and ultimately the world."

Through the LEAD program, students learn what it takes to set reachable goals, learn to stop and consider the consequences (good & bad) before making decisions, learn how to identify and manage emotions, learn how to manage stress, learn how to communicate effectively, learn how to build deeper lifelong relationships and friendships with their classmates. Students also learn about differences between prescription and over-the-counter medications, the effects of alcohol, nicotine and vaping. In 5th grade students learn about the negative effects of marijuana.

"It's been a fantastic initiative," said Superintendent Jennifer Cannavo.

"[Community Resource Officer P.J. Stone] has been great and the students have been very responsive."

While Stone works with Cannavo, the administration, faculty and staff to build the program, the Menands Police Department administration and other

officers have been integral to the program's success. Those include officer Josh Kullman, who often joins Stone in teaching all three grade levels LEAD classes. Another Menands police officer, Joe Yanni, will attend the second LEAD training the Menands Police Dept.



Beyond overseeing the program, Stone and other officers undertake many other activities and develop a rapport with students that will have a long-lasting impact.

"From assisting in the 4th grade egg drop science lesson to helping run the Toys for Tots campaign on campus,

Officer Stone has become a valuable and trusted presence on campus for our students," said Cannavo.

Students praise LEAD

"LEAD is my favorite thing in school. It is so fun! LEAD helps us avoid drugs and helps us be safe and aware of our surroundings. All of the officers are so kind. LEAD is the best," said 3rd grade student Nora Lemyre.

Another third grade student Jessie Thomas echoed those sentiments.

"I like LEAD because it's fun and helps us and it helps us learn. I like to learn with Officer Stone," Jessie said.

is hosting with a goal of becoming certified in August. All of the officers who teach LEAD are also certified school resource officers.

"I really enjoy being able to get to know the students on a deeper level, while making connections with them in the classroom. Especially, having the 2nd graders from last year again and seeing their growth," Stone said.

Return of the community resource officer

The newly expanded program is one of the many benefits of the Board of Education's decision a few years ago to implement the community resource officer program.



Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2024-25 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2025-26 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2025-26 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$12,454,645	\$12,976,198	\$12,656,748
Increase/Decrease for the 2025-26 School Year		\$521,553	\$202,103
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		4.19%	1.62%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.95%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$7,649,284	\$7,965,735	
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)	\$7,649,284	\$7,965,735	\$7,649,284
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$344,268	\$366,723	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$7,305,016	\$7,599,012	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$7,305,016	\$7,599,012	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$1,271,996	\$1,345,786	\$1,267,036
Program Component	\$9,587,410	\$9,798,510	\$9,646,810
Capital Component	\$1,595,239	\$1,831,902	\$1,742,902

* In the event of a defeated budget, the 2025-26 tax levy may not increase beyond the 2024-25 tax levy. Under a contingency budget the District may not purchase any equipment, various materials and supplies, including planned technology upgrades, or provide salary increases to non-contractual personnel.

Description	Amount
None	\$0
	\$
	\$

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2025-26 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$470

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2025-26 by the qualified voters of the Menands Union Free School District, Albany County, New York, will be held at Menands Union Free School in said district on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 between the hours of 12 p.m. and 8 p.m., prevailing time in the Menands Union Free School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

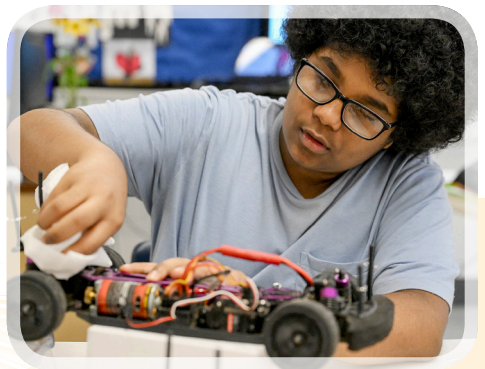
¹ The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.



Working to build knowledge and skills.



Providing opportunities outside of the school day to develop well rounded students.



Building a life-long love of STEM through camps and lessons.

19 Wards Lane
Menands, New York 12204

EDDM
NON-PROFIT
PAID
Albany, NY
Permit #F421

Superintendent

Mrs. Jennifer Cannavo

Principal

Mrs. Kathleen Wylie

Board of Education

Bill Nevins, *President*
Courtney Jaskula, *Vice President*
Charles Luke
Elangovan Raman
Patrick Semexant

*Produced in cooperation with the Capital Region
BOCES Engagement & Development Services.*

**Residential Customer
Menands, NY 12204**

Voter Eligibility

- You are eligible to vote if you are a U.S. citizen, 18 or older and a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the vote.

Absentee and Mail Ballots

- Absentee or mail in ballots are available to residents. To request an application for an absentee or mail in ballot, please contact Trisha O’Connell in the district office at 518-465-4561 ext. 101 or at toconnell@menands.org by May 13 if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter or by May 19, if the ballot is to be delivered in person by the voter. All ballots must be received by the district office no later than 5 p.m. on May 20.

Questions

- Contact our board clerk, Trisha O’Connell at 518-465-4561 ext. 101 or email toconnell@menands.org.



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BUDGET 2025

Menands | UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Annual Evening of the Arts
Tuesday, May 20, 2025**

ART EXHIBIT / 6 PM

SPRING CONCERT / 6:30 PM

Menands School

Come and enjoy the special talents of our Menands students after you visit the polls during the annual budget vote!



Menands | UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT