

# BINGHAMTON TODAY

**2026-2027 Budget Edition - May 2026**

Dear Binghamton Residents,

On May 19th, registered voters in the Binghamton City School District have the opportunity to shape the future of our community one student at a time.

The proposed 2026-27 BCSD budget of \$160,891,854 represents a 1.98% tax increase, which is lower than last year's increase, and consistent with the district's 1.6% average annual increase over the past decade. That's a fiscally responsible investment in something that matters deeply: giving every Binghamton student the education, support, and opportunity they deserve.

This budget is about more than numbers. It reflects our shared belief that every child in this district deserves to walk into a classroom feeling confident, connected, and ready for the future. It reflects the district's mission to create a school community where all students believe in themselves, feel that they belong in their classrooms amongst their peers, and that with strong academic and extracurricular offerings, they are on a path to become successful in life. Through strategic investments, we've brought cutting-edge technology into our classrooms, opened new career pathways for students preparing for life after graduation, expanded extracurricular programs that keep kids engaged and inspired, modernized our buildings and facilities, and strengthened the safety measures that make our schools welcoming for everyone.

We also know that responsible stewardship of your tax dollars matters. District leadership worked hard to keep this increase as low as possible. While rising health insurance costs, higher transportation expenses, and modest gains in state foundation aid drove the budget upward, we offset those pressures with more than \$5 million in reductions. Through the natural attrition of retirements across the district and right-sizing classroom environments, we were able to reduce staffing by 45.6 positions without a single layoff. Declining enrollment and the temporary dispersal of Roosevelt students allowed us to make these adjustments thoughtfully and fairly. We also continued to deepen our

shared services partnerships through BOCES and trimmed contracted services based on need and impact.

The result is a budget that supports our students without losing sight of our responsibility to you, the taxpayer.

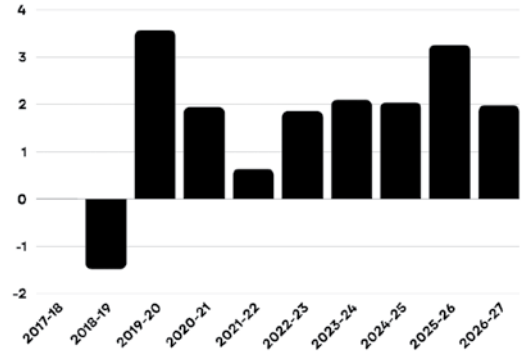
This budget newsletter will provide additional details on the costs and savings throughout the district. We also invite you to learn more about the prospective candidates running for the two open seats on the Binghamton Board of Education, so you can cast a fully informed vote.

Thank you for your continued support of our schools, our students, and the future we're building together.

With Patriot Pride,

Dr. Tonia Thompson  
Superintendent of Schools

**TEN-YEAR TAX LEVY HISTORY**  
Percentage Change



<b>The Bottom Line</b>	
<b>Total budget</b>	<b>\$160,891,854</b>
<b>Budget increase</b>	<b>4.10%</b>
<b>Total tax levy</b>	<b>\$49,115,480</b>
<b>Tax Levy Increase</b>	<b>1.98%</b>

*See polling locations on last page*



**Public Hearing**  
May 5 at 7 p.m.  
164 Hawley Street  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Community Room

**School Board Election & Budget Vote**  
May 19, 2025  
11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

# 2026-2027 Proposed Budget

The laws pertaining to budget votes require that budgets presented to residents be divided into three sections: Administrative, Program and Capital components. Although presented in three components for information purposes, the vote cast will be on the total budget. The district makes a commitment to equitably distribute increases across all three budget components.

Three-Part Budget				
	2025-2026	2026-2027	Difference	% of Total
Administrative Component	\$16,482,263	\$17,120,708	\$638,445	10.64%
Program Component	\$115,792,837	\$120,427,973	\$4,635,136	74.85%
Capital Component	\$22,284,887	\$23,343,173	\$1,058,286	14.51%
<b>TOTAL BUDGET:</b>	<b>\$154,559,987</b>	<b>\$160,891,854</b>	<b>\$6,331,867</b>	

**Administrative** - This component contains the fiscal resources intended to provide the necessary support for district functions. This category includes all expenses for the Board of Education, superintendent, business office, auditor, tax collection, fiscal agent, legal services, personnel office, records management, public information, central printing and mailing, property and casualty insurance, BOCES administrative share, and supervision of instruction. The increase to the Special Items category is a result of the November 2023 regional voter-approved BOCES Capital Project. These dollars will be used to support instructional improvements on the campus of BOCES in the area of trades and special education. The increase will be offset by additional BOCES aid. This is the third year of a planned three-year increase.



Administrative Component			
Name of Account	2025-2026	2026-2027	Difference
Board of Education	\$39,290	\$39,290	\$0
Central Administration	\$366,863	\$382,329	\$15,466
Finance	\$489,885	\$501,134	\$11,249
Legal Services	\$106,000	\$140,350	\$34,350
Personnel	\$566,726	\$572,594	\$5,868
Public Information	\$629,886	\$691,418	\$61,532
Central & Financial Services	\$2,565,823	\$2,605,790	\$39,967
Special Items	\$1,879,284	\$1,988,314	\$109,030
Curriculum Development & Supervision	\$1,839,289	\$1,662,354	(\$176,935)
Supervision - Regular School	\$3,908,307	\$4,017,505	\$109,198
Research, Evaluation & Planning	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$0
Employee Benefits	\$4,079,910	\$4,508,630	\$428,720
<b>Total Administrative Budget</b>	<b>\$16,482,263</b>	<b>\$17,120,708</b>	<b>\$638,445</b>

**Program** - This component contains fiscal resources intended to provide every student with educational experiences and opportunities to foster the full development of their potential. This budget category includes all instructional personnel and programs: regular school, special education, library, media, instructional technology, guidance, student health services, school psychologists, music, co-curricular activities, athletics, in-district and out-of-district pupil transportation, and staff development. The growth to the Program component of the 2026-2027 budget proposal largely comes from increases to contracts and benefits. The district has diligently reduced costs to personnel upon careful examination of enrollment numbers, resulting in 45.6 fewer positions next year. Other programs supported by the proposed budget include student access to instrumental music beginning in third grade, alternative instructional models for middle and high school students to improve success through hands on learning, community service, and counseling, enrichment opportunities for all K-12 students including challenge enrichment, and offering 18 pathways programs for BHS students including Business, Engineering, Culinary Arts, and Fine Arts.



<b>Program Component</b>			
<b>Name of Account</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>	<b>2026-2027</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Instruction	\$80,742,918	\$81,447,071	\$704,153
Other District Transportation	\$154,130	\$169,768	\$15,638
Contract Transportation	\$4,235,135	\$5,547,155	\$1,312,020
Employee Benefits	\$30,660,654	\$33,263,979	\$2,603,325
<b>Total Program Budget</b>	<b>\$115,792,837</b>	<b>\$120,427,973</b>	<b>\$4,635,136</b>

**Capital** - This component contains the fiscal resources intended to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for students, staff, and the community. This budget category includes all personnel, equipment, supplies, and materials for the operation and maintenance of district facilities. Any refunds of real property taxes, and all payments of principal and interest on short- and long-term obligations are included in this category. There have been some shifts of staff between Maintenance and Operations and this caused a decrease in Maintenance. The increase in Operations is also due to a 30% increase in the budget for electric. This section also includes a \$100,000 small capital project for abatement and construction of a Health Care Clinic at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School. Included in the budget is \$60,000 to fund one School Resource Officer to support all seven elementary schools.

<b>Capital Component</b>			
<b>Name of Account</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>	<b>2026-2027</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Operation of Plant	\$6,090,566	\$6,861,895	\$771,329
Maintenance of Plant	\$2,525,121	\$2,298,707	(\$226,414)
Security	\$1,460,341	\$1,533,287	\$72,946
Employee Benefits	\$2,734,956	\$3,163,469	\$428,513
Interfund Transfer to Capital Fund	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0
Debt Service	\$9,373,903	\$9,385,815	\$11,912
<b>Total Capital Budget</b>	<b>\$22,284,887</b>	<b>\$23,343,173</b>	<b>\$1,058,286</b>

## Amanda Jesenof



As a proud West Sider since 2020, I'm excited to run for the Binghamton City School District Board of Education. I'm running because I believe our school board must be responsive, transparent, and deeply connected to the community it serves. Strong schools depend on strong relationships between

families, educators, administrators, and the community - and those relationships require clear communication, accessibility, and trust.

My husband - a BHS alum - and I intentionally chose to live within the district because of the opportunities, resources, and diversity it offers. Today, our daughter is enrolled in UPK and loves being a student here, proudly pointing out the "Binghamton B" wherever she sees it.

Originally from the Boston suburbs, I earned my BA in Political Science from the University of Massachusetts Boston. I currently serve as Director of Human Resources at a local manufacturing and engineering plant, where I work with executives and frontline employees to bridge communication gaps and ensure everyone has what they need to be successful. Every day, I work through complex challenges, bring diverse perspectives together, work to find common ground, and drive thoughtful, informed decisions. I believe these skills are essential to effective school board leadership.

In addition to my professional work, I have spent many years volunteering and fundraising for a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing fitness programs to underserved youth. This experience has strengthened my belief that every child deserves access to opportunities that support their growth, confidence, and long-term success.

As both a parent of a young BCSD student and a professional in today's dynamic workplace, I bring a current, forward-looking perspective to this role. I understand the challenges families are navigating right now, as well as the skills and adaptability students will need for the future. At a time when education and workforce expectations are changing by the day, our board benefits from new energy, fresh ideas, and a strong connection to the realities of today's students and families.

Our district faces real challenges. Many families are working hard to make ends meet, and demanding schedules can make staying engaged difficult. At the same time, our students are preparing for a future that continues to evolve. These realities call for leadership that is engaged, accessible, and focused on preparing every student for what comes next.

I'm committed to supporting policies that meet students where

they are, support and value our educators, and engage families as true partners in education. I bring a professional background rooted in collaboration and problem-solving, a personal investment as a parent, and a fresh perspective grounded in the needs of our community. I would be honored to earn your support.

## Shaunté Middleton



As a proud alumna of the Binghamton City School District, I eagerly seek reelection to the School Board. Serving our community in this role for the past two years has been both a privilege and a deeply rewarding experience. My time on the Board thus far has strengthened my commitment to ensuring

that students in our district have access to equitable education. Having attended Woodrow Wilson, MacArthur, West Middle, and graduating from Binghamton High School, I understand firsthand the profound impact our schools have on shaping students' futures, and I remain dedicated to giving back to the district and community that helped shape mine.

My commitment to education and student success has been evident throughout my service in our community. During the 2017-2018 school year, I served BCSD as a mentor in the Mentor Now program, where I witnessed the meaningful difference that guidance and support can make in a student's academic and personal development. This experience, combined with my professional background, continues to inform my work on the Board and reinforces my belief in the importance of providing students with the resources they need to thrive.

In the 2019-2020 school year, I served as Secretary of the Thomas Jefferson PTA, collaborating with families and educators. This role highlighted the critical importance of strong partnerships between schools and families—an understanding I have carried into my work as a Board member.

Beyond the district, I previously served as Vice President of the YWCA Board of Directors, where I contributed to advancing initiatives that empower women and promote equity. Since 2023 I've volunteered with the Family Enrichment Network Policy Council, where I serve as the Corresponding Secretary. These leadership roles have strengthened my skills in governance, communication, and strategic planning.

Professionally, I have spent over a decade supporting students as an Academic Counselor and Financial Aid Advisor through programs such as TRIO Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search. My academic journey—through SUNY Broome,

SUNY Brockport, and Binghamton University—reflects my dedication to lifelong learning.

As both a Board member and a parent of a child in the district, I am personally invested in our schools' success. If reelected, I will continue to advocate for equity, student achievement, family engagement, and safe, supportive inclusive learning environments while working collaboratively with all stakeholders to address the challenges facing our district and community. I deeply desire to continue to be a liaison for the district and build positive connections and relationships with families, community members, and the community at large. Thank you for your continued support and consideration.

## Dr. Albert Penna Ed.D.



Dear Binghamton Resident:

I believe that the children of the Binghamton District are the future of America. Every one of our students is special and possesses great talents, hopes, and dreams. I am again running for the School Board to support them and to ensure that their aspirations

and goals are fulfilled. Our students and staff deserve the best education possible in an environment that is safe for learning, caring, and supportive.

Born and raised in Binghamton's 7th Ward, I am a lifelong resident of Binghamton, a place that I love. A 1965 student-athlete graduate of Binghamton Central High School, I was honored in 2001 as a Distinguished Graduate. I possess a B.A. and M.S. in Biology from Binghamton University and a Doctorate in Education Administration from Syracuse University. My three older children graduated from Binghamton High School. I have seven grandchildren, two of whom currently attend Binghamton High School. I have proudly served in the U.S. Army Medical Corps Reserves for 27 years as an Army Medic and Medical Service Corps Officer.

My entire professional life as a teacher and administrator has been devoted to education and to meeting the academic and personal needs of students. In my 50+ years in public education, I have taught Biology and Chemistry, coached Varsity Football for 20 years, served as Principal of Binghamton High School from 1992-2012, led Vestal High School as Interim Principal for 3 years, and have taught at Binghamton University's School of Education for 6 years. Additionally, I voluntarily served for 12 years as a Head of School on the International Baccalaureate (I.B.) World Board of Governors, representing all I.B. Heads of Schools in North America.

If re-elected, I look forward to rolling up my sleeves and working with BCSD and our families and staff to put all of our students on a positive pathway to success. I believe that School Boards play a pivotal role in America's public education system.

With your endorsement on May 19th, I pledge to support the following initiatives to improve the lives of our students:

- Place high priority to ensure safe, healthy, and caring learning environments.
- Establish high-quality academic programs, extracurriculars, and athletics for all students.
- Invest in the best available staff development training for our teachers and staff.
- Engage and communicate with our families to partner with BCSD.
- Support responsible fiscal and performance accountability.
- Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) is reshaping our world, and our students must be trained in its proper use.

Be confident that a vote for me is a vote for someone who knows, understands, and supports the rich legacy, history, and traditions of our District's past. I am experienced and prepared to deal with issues that face our District, and I have a clear vision of what BCSD needs in the future.

The best days of the Binghamton City School District lie ahead. Our students and staff deserve our best. It will be a high honor for me to serve you and your children on the School Board again.

Please remember to vote on May 19th.



## School Board Vote: Voters are voting for TWO candidates.

*Candidates are placed in newsletter in alphabetical order by last name. Bios are written by the candidates and are solely theirs, edited for format only.*

# BCSD Budget



**What am I voting on?**



Registered voters living within the Binghamton City School District are voting on a proposed \$160,891,854 budget for the 2026-27 school year. This represents a 4.1% overall increase to the budget over the current school year budget; the increase is due primarily to increasing healthcare and employee contractual costs. The proposed tax levy increase is 1.98% which is lower than the 3.26% increase approved by voters last year.



**Where does the funding come from to support the budget?**



State Aid: \$101,608,042  
Tax Levy: \$49,115,480  
Other Revenue: \$5,017,053  
Appropriated Fund Balance: \$3,400,000  
Appropriated Reserves: \$1,751,279



**What happens if the budget does not pass?**



If voters do not approve the budget, the District will operate on a contingency budget. The contingency budget for the 2026-2027 school year is \$159,936,526 - a \$955,058 reduction from the proposed budget. The tax levy under the contingency budget is \$48,160,152, the equivalent to the 2025-2026 tax levy.



**What does a 1.98% tax increase mean to me?**



The 1.98% increase represents how much more tax money BCSD is proposing to collect from ALL property owners within the district. The amount taxpayers pay is calculated using three factors: the tax levy, property assessments, and equalization rates; property assessments are determined by the City of Binghamton while equalization rates are determined by the State. Because of those two factors not controlled by the school district, the percentage that an individual's taxes change could be less than, greater than, or equal to 1.98%.

# The BCSD Budget: Your Support in Action!

## Capital Improvements

Each year, the BCSD Budget makes important investments in our facilities. Recently, your support of our capital projects has allowed us to modernize the historic Benjamin Franklin Elementary School, create brand-new learning and career-readiness spaces at Binghamton High School, install state-of-the-art athletic facilities at East & West Middle Schools, and rebuild Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School - a community hub for the north side of Binghamton.

## Academics

Our school budget allows BCSD to offer a wide range of academic opportunities designed to support students from early childhood through high school. Students benefit from early learning programs, enrichment and advanced coursework such as Challenge Enrichment and the International Baccalaureate program, and robust STEM experiences including Project Lead The Way, engineering-focused instruction, and hands-on innovation opportunities. Along with our extensive extracurricular offerings, these experiences represent a commitment to developing the whole child through engaging, rigorous, and supportive learning environments.

## Career Pathways

Our staff goes beyond just teaching; they're setting students up for success after graduation. With 18 career pathways in business, culinary arts, engineering, and fine arts, Binghamton students are immersed in the fields they want to pursue when they graduate. Our staff brings real-world experience, ensuring that our Patriots are learning from those who have worked in the careers they're working towards. And our pathways are expanding! Upon completion of the new media suite at BHS this fall, students can begin working on a communications pathway as well.

## Fine Arts

Whether your student is in elementary, middle, or high school, they have an opportunity to thrive in fine arts. Visual arts classes start in Pre-K, helping students of all ages discover their talent and passion for art. Musical instrument lessons begin in third grade for any student who wishes to perform. Musical theater is growing throughout the district with opportunities to take the stage at three of our elementary schools, along with large musical productions at the middle and high school levels. By the time they reach BHS, students with a passion for the arts can learn and earn a degree from the Rod Serling School of Fine Arts.

## Athletics

At Binghamton, every student has the chance to compete as a Patriot. Binghamton has more than 60 interscholastic teams from the modified to varsity levels where students can develop their athletic talents. Investments in coaching, training, and facilities have helped produce perennial Section IV champions, state tournament participants, and even NYSPHSAA title winners like the 2025 Boys Class AA Basketball champions.

## Supportive Programming

Each student has their unique talents and their own pace at which they learn. The BCSD works hard to meet students where they are and provide the supports they need to be successful. Whether it is through our office of Special Services, Mentoring Program, various mental health resources, our dedicated team of school psychologists and social workers, or after school offerings, there are many people and programs that are available to make students feel welcome and supported.

## BCSD Mission

Our mission is to provide a supportive, safe and engaging school environment that embraces each and everyone to believe in themselves, to belong, and to become successful.

## Vision

Our vision is to be the district of choice for children and families seeking an equitable educational experience where students are the focus, individual needs are supported, and a wide variety of opportunities are provided by an engaged and passionate school community committed to the success of each child.

## Values

**We believe that we can achieve our vision and accomplish our mission if, in all our work, we focus on clearly defined and consistently demonstrated core values. To that end, in all our actions and interactions, we will:**

- Focus on students in every decision we make.
- Ensure that all children and families are included and engaged.
- Act with integrity and work collaboratively with all members of the school community.
- Commit to providing multiple pathways to success.
- See in children what they have yet to see in themselves.
- Provide students with opportunities for their voices to be heard.
- Take collective responsibility for the success of each child.



## Binghamton City School District

164 Hawley Street, P.O. Box 2126  
Binghamton, NY 13902-2126

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### Board of Education

Steve Seepersaud, president  
Carrie Button, vice president  
Mary Ann Callahan  
Shaunté Middleton  
Dr. Albert Penna  
Jesula Saintus  
Liza Turner

### Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Tonia Thompson

### Writing-Editing-Layout-Design

Broome-Tioga BOCES  
Office of Communications & Public Relations



District website: [www.binghamtonschools.org](http://www.binghamtonschools.org)

Email: [info@binghamtonschools.org](mailto:info@binghamtonschools.org)

## SCHOOL ELECTION POLLING LOCATIONS

### First Ward Senior Center (#1)

226 Clinton Street  
*(entrance off Jarvis Street parking lot)*  
General Election Districts 1, 2, 3, 9

### St. Patrick's School (#2)

58 Oak Street *(Main lobby)*  
General Election Districts 8, 12, 19, 20

### St. Thomas Aquinas (#3)

1 Aquinas Street *(main entrance)*  
General Election Districts 4, 5, 6, 7, 17, 18

### St. Gregory Illuminator Church (#4) *(former polling location MacArthur Elementary)*

12 Corbett Avenue  
General Election Districts 22, 25, 26

### Centenary United Methodist (#5)

438 Chenango Street  
*(ramp entrance in parking lot)*  
General Election Districts 10, 13, 14, 21

### American Legion (#6)

177 Robinson Street *(Event hall)*  
General Election Districts 11, 15, 16, 30

### First Baptist Church (#7)

91 Baldwin Street *(gym - behind church)*  
General Election Districts 23, 24, 27, 28, 29

### Cornell Cooperative Extension (#8)

840 Upper Front Street  
*(Conference Room, Taste NY Building)*  
Comprised of GED - Sunrise Terrace

### Eligibility to vote

You must be a resident of the Binghamton City School District for at least 30 days preceding the vote, at least 18 years of age, and a citizen of the United States. You are eligible to vote if you were registered in the last general election or under permanent personal registration. To obtain permanent personal registration, contact the Broome County Board of Elections, County Office Bldg, Government Plaza, Binghamton, NY 13901, (607) 778-2172.

### To confirm your polling location

Call 607-762-8100 ext. 25319 or email [browns@binghamtonschools.org](mailto:browns@binghamtonschools.org)  
On vote day call 607-762-8100 ext. 25104

### Absentee ballot application

Any qualified voter who will be unable to vote in person on the day of the vote due to illness, physical disability, hospitalization, incarceration, or travel outside of the county/city of residence may apply for an Absentee Ballot. To apply by mail, print the Application for Absentee Ballot available at <https://bit.ly/48Vqx88>.

The district will automatically mail an absentee ballot to each voter registered as permanently disabled with the Broome County Board of Elections.

### Early mail ballot application

Any qualified voter may apply for an Early Mail Ballot. To apply by mail, print the Application for Early Mail Ballot available at <https://bit.ly/3vhCgA4>.

If you are unable to print the application for Absentee/Early Mail ballots, please call 607-762-8100 x25319 and request one be mailed to you. You may also apply in person at 164 Hawley St., 3rd Floor, Binghamton between 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. on weekdays.

**\*Applications for Absentee/Early Mail ballots must be received by the District Clerk at least seven (7) days before the vote if the ballot is to be mailed, or the day before the vote if it is to be issued in person.**

**\*\*Absentee/Early Mail Ballots must be received by the District Clerk no later than 5 p.m. on May 19, 2026 (vote day).**