

# Fayetteville-Manlius

SCHOOL DISTRICT

## BUDGET NEWSLETTER



### District’s budget proposal maintains all student programming and staffing levels

#### TAX LEVY SET TO INCREASE BY 3.56%

On Tuesday, May 20, Fayetteville-Manlius School District residents will vote on a proposed \$116,419,548 budget for the 2025-26 school year, which would maintain all existing student programming, staffing levels, and mental health support resources across all school district buildings.

“As a district, our goal remains to provide a safe and secure learning environment for all students, while being mindful of rising costs,” explained Superintendent of Schools Craig J. Tice. “We are fortunate to put forth a budget that not only strengthens resources for our students and staff, but continues to support ongoing building upgrades, all while not surpassing the tax cap for our district taxpayers.”

The proposed budget represents a spending increase of 4.64 percent, or \$5,164,669, and carries a 3.56 percent tax levy increase. The tax levy increase is even with the district’s tax cap as established under New York State law. That means a simple majority (50 percent of votes plus one) is needed to approve the budget.

This year’s proposed tax levy increase is primarily due to:

- Salary increases based on contractual agreements
- Higher insurance premium costs, as determined by carriers

- New classroom furniture and equipment related to ongoing capital projects
- Higher electric costs and more projected usage with added building air conditioning as mandated by the new Maximum Temperature in School Buildings law.

Included in the proposed budget is funding to cover debt payments for the current \$52 million high school capital project. Building aid will offset that debt beginning in 2027, continuing through 2041. The district is planning for a busy summer of continued capital project work at the high school, including: replacing the science wing roof, finishing the new broadcast journalism studio, completing the new cafeteria expansion, opening five new classrooms inside the former main office, and adding new rooftop Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) units.

A portion of the proposed budget also accounts for transportation needs, including funding for a new plow truck and a new maintenance van, both necessary purchases for continued upkeep to ensure student safety on school grounds. The district’s fuel storage tank also needs to be replaced, as it has reached the

► Please see “Budget Plan” on Page 2

### 2025-2026 BUDGET at-a-glance

**Proposed Budget**  
\$116,419,548

**Proposed school tax levy**  
\$75,127,561

**School tax levy increase**  
\$2,579,731 or 3.56%

**Proposed budget increase**  
\$5,164,669 or 4.64%

#### Also on the ballot:

- Bus Purchase Proposition
- 3 Open Seats on the BOE
- Fayetteville Free Library Tax Levy
- Manlius Library Tax Levy

## VOTE

**7 a.m. to 9 p.m.**  
**Tuesday, May 20, 2025**

Wellwood Middle School

[www.fmschools.org](http://www.fmschools.org)

#### Stay Connected:

Scan the code for access to the district’s budget webpage, [www.fmschools.org/budget-finance](http://www.fmschools.org/budget-finance)



**Budget Plan** ▶

*continued from page 1*

end of its useful life (30-year warranty). See page 5 for details.

The proposed budget supports the district’s plan to build upon its special education programs, allowing more students to stay and learn in their home district while receiving the support and resources they need. Over the course of the past four years, F-M has increased its special education offerings in-district, resulting in significantly fewer students having to access BOCES programs.

In order to offset rising costs, the district will mainly utilize its two primary revenue sources: state aid and the tax levy. Other smaller revenue sources, such as interest income, make up the district’s total revenue.

State aid accounts for approximately 30 percent of the district’s 2025-26 budget revenue. The state’s proposal shows F-M receiving a total allocation of \$34,843,702 for 2025-26, which is a \$830,871 increase in state aid compared to the current school year. State aid in the form of Foundation Aid totals \$19,888,677, which is a \$483,863 increase for the 2025-26 school year. Foundation Aid is the district’s primary source of funding for daily school operations.

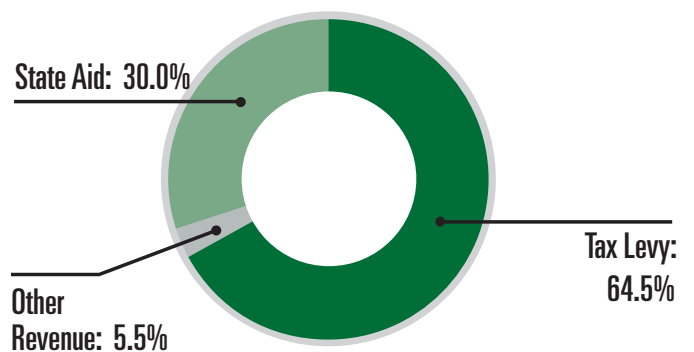
The tax levy, which is the total amount the district raises through school property taxes, accounts for 64.5 percent of the district’s 2025-26 proposed budget revenue. There are several factors that dictate how an individual’s school tax bill is calculated. Tax rates are not solely determined by the tax levy approved by voters; they are also affected by changes in assessed values of properties by the towns within the school district, and the state using equalization rates, designed to equally distribute the tax burden across municipalities within a district—none of which are within the district’s control. Tax bills can also be affected by STAR or other exemptions for which individual taxpayers may qualify.

The budget proposal was adopted by the F-M Board of Education on April 21. The public budget hearing is scheduled for Monday, May 12 at 6 p.m. in the Eagle Hill Middle School Auditorium.

# Proposed 2025-2026 revenue summary

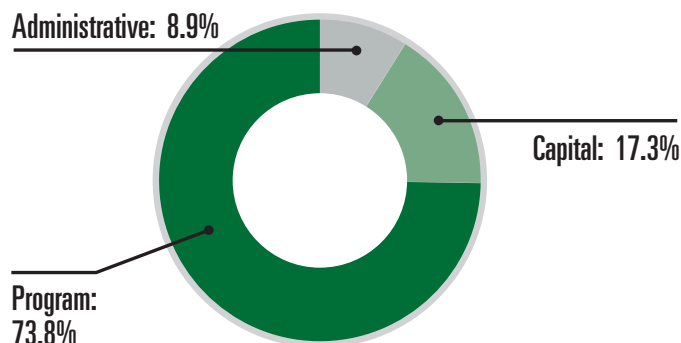
	2024-25 Budget	2025-26 Proposed	Dollar Change
<b>State Aid Revenue</b>			
Foundation aid	\$19,404,814	\$19,888,677	\$483,863
BOCES aid	\$3,429,703	3,636,740	\$207,037
High cost aid	\$844,771	\$560,000	(\$284,771)
Instructional materials aid	\$430,529	\$429,899	(\$630)
Transportation aid	\$5,357,115	\$5,697,548	\$340,433
Building aid	\$4,545,899	\$4,630,838	\$84,939
Cares Act	-	-	-
<b>Total State Aid Revenue</b>	<b>\$34,012,831</b>	<b>\$34,843,702</b>	<b>\$830,871</b>
<b>Tax Levy</b>			
	<b>\$72,547,830</b>	<b>\$75,127,561</b>	<b>\$2,579,731</b>
<b>Other Revenue</b>			
Charges for services	\$60,000	\$108,663	\$48,663
Interest income	\$1,000,000	\$1,300,000	\$300,000
Rental/Sale of surplus materials	\$141,000	\$141,000	-
Insurance claims/misc. revenue	\$90,000	\$120,000	\$30,000
Admissions and fees	\$125,000	\$115,000	(10,000)
County sales tax	\$190,000	\$190,000	-
Medicare/Medicaid	\$465,000	\$465,000	-
Prior year refunds	\$400,000	\$500,000	\$100,000
Pilot payments	\$39,565	\$40,270	\$705
Interest and penalties	\$17,000	\$17,000	-
Donations	\$0	\$0	-
Use of reserves	\$1,099,048	\$1,114,800	\$15,752
Appropriated fund balance	\$1,067,605	\$2,336,552	\$1,268,947
<b>Total Other Revenue</b>	<b>\$4,694,218</b>	<b>\$6,448,285</b>	<b>\$1,754,067</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$111,254,879</b>	<b>\$116,419,548</b>	<b>\$5,164,669</b>

**Revenue Summary**



# Proposed 2025-2026 expenditure summary

## Spending Summary



Hundreds of F-M students once again participated in the annual Dance Marathon fundraiser, held on March 22, raising over \$145,000 for Camp Good Days and Special Times. This money will allow more than 100 children to attend Camp Good Days this summer. The camp strives to improve the quality of life for families affected by cancer or sickle cell anemia.

### Program: 73.8% of proposed budget

	2024-25 Budget	2025-26 Proposed
<b>Instructional Program</b>		
Professional Development	\$309,565	\$321,744
<b>K-12 Instruction</b>		
Instructional salaries	28,078,450	29,214,756
Substitute teaching	921,080	910,773
Non-Instructional salaries	1,252,663	1,315,930
Equipment	501,188	650,109
Contractual	1,305,390	1,373,694
Materials and supplies	524,995	892,854
Tuition	60,000	80,000
Textbooks	359,794	332,920
BOCES services	1,211,754	1,229,937
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$34,524,879</b>	<b>\$36,322,717</b>
<b>Student Support Services</b>		
BOCES career and technical education	\$407,506	\$367,702
Special education	8,191,185	7,836,119
Summer school	185,082	95,118
Instructional media	4,173,960	4,200,659
Guidance/Health Services/ Social Worker/Psychologist	3,232,932	3,322,067
Co-curricular activities	416,679	360,855
Athletics	1,791,341	1,880,368
Transportation	5,804,086	5,963,176
Transfer to special aid	70,000	100,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$24,272,771</b>	<b>\$24,126,064</b>
Benefits Allocation	24,382,121	25,433,781
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM</b>	<b>\$83,179,771</b>	<b>\$85,882,562</b>

### Administrative: 8.9% of proposed budget

	2024-25 Budget	2025-26 Proposed
<b>Administrative</b>		
Board of Education/Superintendent	\$454,864	\$469,763
Business office	\$1,209,856	\$1,286,425
Legal fees	\$125,000	\$125,000
Personnel	\$150,767	\$155,389
Public information & central services	\$676,970	\$685,053
Insurance	\$254,037	\$261,658
BOCES administration	\$456,160	\$462,024
Curriculum development & supervision	\$3,533,971	\$3,630,701
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$6,861,625</b>	<b>\$7,076,013</b>
Benefits Allocation	3,148,848	3,319,634
<b>TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE</b>	<b>\$10,010,473</b>	<b>\$10,395,647</b>

### Capital: 17.3% of proposed budget

	2024-25 Budget	2025-26 Proposed
<b>Capital</b>		
Operations & maintenance	\$7,627,254	\$8,088,749
Long-term debt	4,656,757	4,589,456
Bus bond debt	924,628	1,040,284
Bus bond anticipation notes	-	-
Capital bond anticipation notes	715,258	2,629,458
EPC debt	-	-
Transfer to capital	1,510,000	1,000,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$15,433,897</b>	<b>\$17,347,947</b>
Benefits Allocation	2,630,738	2,793,392
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL</b>	<b>\$18,064,635</b>	<b>\$20,141,339</b>
<b>TOTAL PROPOSED BUDGET</b>	<b>\$111,254,879</b>	<b>\$116,419,548</b>

### Three-part budget summary

All public schools in New York state are required by law to report their spending in three categories: program, administrative and capital.



## Special Education Transition Program helps students gain independence and plan for their futures

Each day as the Fayetteville-Manlius school bus pulls up to the Jewish Community Center of Syracuse, Christina, Halli, and Stella are welcomed with open arms. The three students are part of F-M's inaugural Special Education Transition Program, created as a partnership with the JCC.

"They have really made us a part of their community here, which is great," said Christine Aiello, former FMHS speech therapist who now leads the transition program.

The program, which kicked off in October, is designed to help participating students learn what they want, what they're good at, and what type of industry they might thrive in. Students in the special education program are generally at the high school from freshman year through their 22nd birthday. This program aims to set students up for success in their final two years with F-M, helping them form connections with local organizations, test out job skills, and go on field trips to nearby colleges and universities.

"I liked the Syracuse University trip, it was really fun and I learned a lot too," said Christina. "I got to learn how to work the cash register."

Along with visiting Syracuse University and learning more about their InclusiveU Higher Education Program, which Christina said has been her dream to attend since 11th grade, the group has also visited businesses like Barnes & Noble and Wegmans to hear about job opportunities.

While at the JCC, the students help with a variety of tasks throughout the day. Regular jobs include setting tables for daily senior lunches, delivering lunch to the daycare, and helping out when daycare students head to the gym for gymnastics. When they have down time, the students will help with things like rolling silverware for the kitchen staff, wiping down equipment in the gym, and stuffing envelopes.

Aiello said because the program is new, they've been working closely with the girls and their families to figure out what the future could look like for each student. When they return for the second year of the program, students will be assigned to a more long-term job, such as starting their morning in the daycare and helping students get situated as they come in for the day. Aiello said there are already a few students interested in joining the program next school year.



## Ballot includes school bus purchase proposition

A proposition on this year's school budget ballot will ask voters to authorize the purchase of 6 school buses and 2 student-transport minivans. The total purchase would not exceed \$1,513,315.

The buses included in the proposition are diesel and would complete a useful lifespan before the district is required by New York State law to fully transition to a zero-emission fleet by the year 2035. The law also requires all school bus purchases be electric starting July 1, 2027.

If the bus purchasing proposition is defeated, no new buses, diesel or electric, will be purchased by the district. The district would need to continue utilizing its oldest and least efficient buses for another year, which could require more costly repairs to maintain.

## F-M conducts trial runs with electric buses; Performance falls short of expectations

In February, F-M put an electric school bus to the test to see how it would perform on F-M's bus routes in response to the electric school bus mandate.

The district has been researching electric buses since 2022, but does not own any, citing reasons

such as costs, facility constraints and the uncertainty of the relatively new technology.

"The F-M community is passionate about green initiatives and sustainable energy, but there are a lot of hypotheticals when it comes to the performance of electric school buses," said Assistant Superintendent for Business Services Brad Corbin. "The only way to know how electric buses will handle our roads, topography and weather is to try it for ourselves."

The district borrowed an electric bus from New York Bus Sales Inc., at no cost, to conduct trial runs. The trials were completed without student passengers because the bus was new and had not yet completed a Department of Transportation inspection required for student transport. During the trials, the bus followed a typical bus route, which included stops at an elementary school, middle school and the high school.

### Trial run results

Two trials were conducted on two different days. Weather conditions were calm on both days with clear roads. During trial run 1, the temperature ranged from 10 to 15 degrees. During trial run 2, the temperature ranged from 20 to 25 degrees.

For both trials, the electric bus left the transportation center fully charged and with enough battery to travel an estimated 94 miles, according to the bus's dashboard battery gauge. The estimated 94 miles is below the expected 100 to 200 mile range stated on the New York

State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) website.

After traveling 45 miles during trial 1, the battery was depleted with 5% charge remaining. Trial run 2 yielded better results, with 50% of the battery charge remaining after traveling 42 miles. This was due to the driver periodically turning down the heat inside the passenger cabin, a practice that is recommended to conserve battery energy.

After completing both bus routes, the bus returned to the transportation center to be charged. At the end of trial 1, the bus was charged inside the bus maintenance garage, an option that would not be viable long-term. The estimated time to fully recharge the battery, as indicated by the bus's dashboard battery gauge, was 26 hours. At the end of trial 2, the bus was charged outdoors and the estimated time to fully recharge the battery was 84 hours. NYSERDA estimates that charging takes between 6 and 11 hours.

Charging the electric bus outdoors proved to be problematic. When the electric bus was parked outside in the cold with a low battery, the bus blew a fuse multiple times. This is due to an increased need for energy to charge the battery and simultaneously run the heater to keep the battery warm. To help minimize cold weather impacts, it is recommended that electric buses be charged in a heated, indoor facility – an accommodation the district does not currently have.

Electric Bus Trial Run ► [continued on page 6](#)

## Capital transfer funds to be used towards transportation department project

Capital transfer funds are to be used for building and/or reconstruction projects of immediate need in many of the district's buildings or grounds.

For example, in May 2024, voters authorized the district to spend up to \$1,510,000 in capital transfer funds to

complete restroom renovations and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system improvements at Mott Road Elementary School. That work was completed in September 2024.

If voters approve the proposed 2025-26 budget, the district would be authorized to spend up to \$1,000,000 to fund the replacement of a fuel storage tank at the district transportation center. The current fuel tank is approaching its 30-year warranty, meaning it's reached the end of its useful life. Keeping the current tank in the ground beyond the warranty life carries environmental risk concerns.

The proposed \$1,000,000 capital transfer is a decrease from last year's \$1,510,000 amount.

This is mostly due to the fact that the district has been addressing many of the related needs as part of the two current capital projects.

New York State building aid will cover approximately 80% of the cost. The project, pending voter and New York State Education Department approval, would begin July 2026 and would be expected to be completed by the end of August 2026.



# Frequently Asked Budget Questions



## Q: What is a tax levy limit, or tax cap?

**A:** The tax levy limit is the highest allowable tax levy that a school district can propose as part of its annual budget for which a simple majority of voters (50% + 1) would be required for authorization. Any proposed tax levy amount above this limit would require budget approval by a supermajority (60% or more) of voters.

The tax levy limit sets a threshold requiring districts to obtain a higher level of community support for a proposed tax levy above a certain amount. F-M's tax levy limit for 2025-26 is 3.56%, and the district is proposing a tax levy increase of 3.56%, which sits at the district's tax levy limit. That means a simple majority of voters is required.

## Q: What is the difference between the tax levy and tax rate?

**A:** The tax levy is the total amount of money a school district raises in taxes each year from all property owners in the district. The tax rate is used to calculate what each property owner actually pays in school taxes.

Tax rates are calculated by dividing the total amount of the levy by the total taxable assessed value in a community.

Tax rates are affected by changes in municipal assessments and state equalization rates, which are finalized in the summer.

## Q: What happens if the budget is voted down?

**A:** The Board of Education may put the same or a modified budget up for another vote on June 17, 2025; or, the Board may adopt a contingent budget, which would mean no school tax levy increase and therefore, cuts to programming and/or staff. If the proposed budget is defeated during a second vote, the board must adopt a contingent budget.

## Q: How would the proposed budget affect my taxes?

**A:** The proposed tax levy increase of 3.56% is within the district's tax levy limit. While final tax rates cannot be determined until the summer, when assessment and equalization rates become available, the district estimates the tax rate will increase by approximately \$54 per \$100,000 of assessed value for most properties, using prior year assessment equalization rates.

## Electric Bus Trial Runs *continued from page 5*

The varying and lengthy charging times also pose a challenge for the district – on a typical school day, there are only about five hours between morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up, limiting the available time for recharging.

Faster chargers have the capability to charge an electric bus in 2 to 4.5 hours, according to NYSERDA, but those chargers come at a higher cost (approximately \$30,000 more per charger) and can reduce the life of the battery at a faster rate. The estimated cost to replace the battery is

approximately \$90,000. Due to the larger size of the faster chargers (approximately the size of a refrigerator), the district would need to expand its current bus parking facility to accommodate them.

Additionally, electric buses prioritize warming the battery first and the interior cabin second. As a result, interior cabin heat was not generated by the electric bus until it was halfway through trial run 1. According to F-M's Transportation Supervisor Susan Stearns, it was unreasonably cold and uncomfortable.

“As a district, we must balance environmental responsibility with the needs of our students, including reliable transportation,” said Corbin. “Based on the current capabilities of electric buses, the need for improved infrastructure to support them, among other factors, the district will not be purchasing electric buses at this time. However, we are hopeful that advancements in technology will make electric school buses a viable and cost-effective option for us in the future.”

## Voters to decide on library propositions

New York state education law allows libraries to place a funding proposition on school district ballots and requires school districts, at the libraries' requests, to levy and collect taxes for libraries.

The libraries are separate legal entities from the school district, with their own funding and budgets. The amount of the tax levy collected by a school district for a library remains the same each year until the library requests a proposition to change that amount.

The school district does not endorse, control or recommend any aspect of how the libraries spend money.

On May 20, when Fayetteville-Manlius School District residents vote on the proposed 2025-26 school budget, they will also have the opportunity to vote on two library propositions: one to levy and collect a tax in the amount of \$2,089,500 for the Fayetteville Free Library and the other to levy and collect a tax in the amount of \$1,514,703 for the Manlius Library.

If voters approve the propositions, the school district would annually levy and collect taxes in the new amount for the libraries beginning in the 2025-26 fiscal year. The amount authorized for library services is listed as a separate line on residents' tax bills.

Library Budget Information  
More information about each library and its budget is available at their respective websites.

Fayetteville Free Library  
315-637-6374; extension 307  
[www.fflib.org](http://www.fflib.org)

Manlius Library  
315-682-6400  
[www.manliuslibrary.org/about/board-of-trustees/](http://www.manliuslibrary.org/about/board-of-trustees/)

## Five running for board of education; three seats available

On May 20, district residents will elect three members to the Fayetteville-Manlius School District Board of Education.

The board is the official policy-making body of the school district. It is responsible for carrying out the laws and regulations pertaining to the education of the community's children.

It adopts school district policy, curriculum and programs of study, approves the hiring of all personnel and establishes the conditions of employment.

In addition, the board has the responsibility of maintaining facilities, establishing an annual budget and setting a tax levy. The school board adopts a proposed operating budget each year at a public meeting. Eligible residents then have the opportunity to vote upon the proposal.

The F-M Board of Education is made up of nine school district residents who are elected by voters to three-year terms in an annual

election. Terms are staggered so that three members are elected each year. Board members are not compensated for their work.

Five candidates filed nominating petitions for the three available seats:

**Jon D. Van Valkenburg**

**Angelique Massey**

**Gavin Goodwin**

**Sarah Rose Pinsky**

**Sarah Fitzgerald**

(Candidates' names are listed in the order they will appear on the ballot.)

The available seats are for three-year terms. Photos and candidate profiles that were submitted to the district are available on the district website: [fmschools.org](http://fmschools.org).







Community Newsletter  
 Fayetteville-Manlius Schools  
 8199 East Seneca Turnpike  
 Manlius, NY 13104

[www.fmschools.org](http://www.fmschools.org)

BUDGET NEWSLETTER 2025

# Please Vote

Tuesday, May 20

**7 a.m. to 9 p.m.**  
**Wellwood Middle School**

## Need a ballot?

Absentee and early mail ballot applications are available online at [www.fmschools.org](http://www.fmschools.org) or by calling 315-692-1200.

Applications must be received at the F-M District Office by 4 p.m., May 8 if the ballot is to be mailed, or 4 p.m., May 14 if the ballot is personally delivered.

## Budget public hearing Monday, May 12, 6 p.m.

The budget public hearing will happen during the Board of Education meeting. If you cannot attend, the meeting will be livestreamed on the district's YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/FayettevilleManliusSchoolDistrict](http://www.youtube.com/FayettevilleManliusSchoolDistrict)

## More budget information

The district's proposed budget is available in the district office.

Contact Assistant Superintendent Bradley Corbin ([bcorbin@fmschools.org](mailto:bcorbin@fmschools.org)) or District Clerk Sarah Gridley ([sgridley@fmschools.org](mailto:sgridley@fmschools.org)) to request a copy.



F-M is offering varsity girls flag football for the first time this spring! The inaugural team had lots of interest; 43 girls signed up to participate. Last year marked the first year our section offered flag football as a varsity sport. It is one of the fastest-growing sports in the state and county, so interest is expected to grow and more teams are expected to form in area-schools in the coming years. F-M hopes to form JV and modified teams in the future.

## Questions? Let's Talk!

The district encourages residents to use Fayetteville-Manlius School District's Let's Talk! online platform to submit questions and comments about the May 20 vote.

In addition to sharing questions and comments about the proposed budget, individuals can also use the online platform to submit general feedback, ask questions, share concerns and to report anonymous tips.

Submissions will be reviewed and responded to within two business days (if the sender requests a response).

Let's Talk! is accessible via the district website, or by entering the following URL into a web browser: [www.fmschools.org/lets-talk](http://www.fmschools.org/lets-talk)