Spencerport 2024-25 budget at a glance

The Spencerport Board of Education approved the 2024-25 budget proposal, which will be voted upon by the community on Tuesday, May 21.

- totals $97,206,320.
- projects a 2% increase in the tax levy ($2.46 million below the maximum allowable levy limit of 7.8%), which requires a simple majority approval.
- Prioritize the instructional, social emotional, and safety needs of our students and staff.
- Continues the focus on short and long-term financial planning.

Proposition 1: the budget
- totals $97,206,320
- Includes transfer to Capital Fund for $100,000 outlay project

Proposition 2: Reestablish Capital Reserve for building projects
- The existing reserve was established in 2014 and is set to expire.
- Transferring those funds into the new 2024 reserve will provide the necessary resources for future capital projects.
- This reserve will span 15 years and is not to exceed $25 million.

Proposition 3: NEW! Authorization to request 10% building aid for Energy Performance Contract
- Residents vote on whether to receive additional 10% aid on the cost of the project. We anticipate that approximately 76% of the funding will come from the state, and we are asking for voter approval to request the additional 10% aid from the state, which would bring our total aid to about 86%. The remaining funds will be covered by anticipated rebates and savings from energy efficiencies. The project will have no impact on local taxes.

Board of Education election
- 2 open seats currently held by: Leah Brown and Michael Miceli
- The terms will run from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2027.

Candidate profiles may be found on pages 6.

What’s inside
Inside this year’s Budget edition of Cornerstone you will find more in-depth details on the budget, propositions, estimated tax levy and tax rate, examples of tax bills, board of education candidate highlights and more.
New York State law requires that all school districts present the proposed budget in three parts: Program, Capital and Administrative.

**Program (76%)** includes expenses associated with instructional programs, teacher salaries and benefits, health services, transportation operating costs, special education, instructional supplies and equipment, and athletics.

**Capital (14%)** consists of maintenance costs for buildings and grounds, custodial services, utilities, capital expenses, bus purchases, and debt service.

**Administrative (10%)** expenses include costs associated with office and administrative areas, financial/legal services, human resources, business office, communications, board of education expenses, BOCES administration, district clerk, and school supervision.

**Budget factors & priorities**

- First and foremost, we understand the importance of maintaining appropriate staffing levels to address class sizes. Therefore, we have kept last year’s staffing and have even added one pre-K section to accommodate the needs of our youngest learners.
- Additionally, we recognize the crucial role of school counselors and social workers in supporting our students’ well-being. That is why we have included the additions of a school counselor and social worker in this budget.
- Special education and behavioral specialist services are vital for our students’ success. This budget often fluctuates with our student population and needs, yet it is necessary funding to mention here given the BOCES program costs and services.
- To ensure the most effective use of resources, we have made the difficult decision to discontinue the Teacher on Special Assignment positions connected to federal stimulus funding. Yet, as we mentioned earlier, these positions will return to the classroom with no change to staffing in order to accommodate class sizes and support instruction.
- We understand the importance of retaining and attracting qualified faculty and staff. Contracts have been prioritized to be competitive, alleviate shortages and ensure that we have the best educators in our classrooms.
- Related to operational costs, addresses the general maintenance and repairs that need to occur annually. It also includes the addition of a maintenance mechanic to focus on the beautification and upkeep of our schools, since these tasks are often postponed for more urgent projects.
- School bus replacement is reflected in the proposal; however, this budget includes our ongoing bus replacement and is not connected to the zero-emission buses. There are no such buses in this budget.
- Lastly, safety and security remain at the top of our list, and this budget supports an enhanced visitor system, camera replacements, and our newly hired internal security team.

**Summary of revenues**

This chart offers a summary of anticipated revenues for 2024-25. The primary sources of revenues are from state and federal aid, along with the tax levy and local revenues (sales tax). Tax levy refers to the amount of money collected from property owners within our district boundaries.

Finally, the use of reserve funds will help to offset budget expenses. This portion is shown below under transfers/other, and funding specific expenditures with the reserves they are meant for has been instrumental toward balancing the budget and minimizing the tax impact.
Reassessments and Equalization Rate Explained

Property reassessments
A property reassessment is a process where the value of a property is reviewed to determine its current worth. This is typically done by local government authorities to ensure that property taxes are current and fairly distributed among property owners. Some property owners may see an increase in their taxes, while others may experience a decrease.

Equalization rates
If a town’s equalization rate is less than 100%, it means that overall, the property in the town is assessed at less than market value. This is a result of the current housing market, in which homeowners are able to sell their property for amounts greater than its assessed value.

To calculate an equalization rate for a given town, which is done by the state (not the school district), the state takes the total assessed value of the municipality and divides it by the total market value of the municipality. The end result is the equalization rate. This is done in an effort to equitably distribute the tax burden between towns when reassessments have not occurred.

Example tax bills, and equalization rates impacting Spencerport
The impact of the estimated tax rate for 2024-25 will vary based on each homeowner’s property assessment, and the equalization rate for the town in which you live. The towns of Greece and Gates have not conducted reassessments this year. The towns of Ogden and Parma have.

### Tax rates (estimated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>2023-24</th>
<th>2024-25*</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ogden</td>
<td>$25.66</td>
<td>$16.22</td>
<td>-36.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gates</td>
<td>$21.34</td>
<td>$21.06</td>
<td>-1.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>$23.64</td>
<td>$23.85</td>
<td>.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parma</td>
<td>$24.88</td>
<td>$16.22</td>
<td>-34.83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Gates and Greece: tax bill based on $250,000 home (estimates)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023-24</th>
<th>2024-25*</th>
<th>$ Annually</th>
<th>$ Monthly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gates</td>
<td>$5,335</td>
<td>$5,265</td>
<td>-$70</td>
<td>-$5.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>$5,910</td>
<td>$5,963</td>
<td>$53</td>
<td>$4.42</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Ogden and Parma estimated tax bills
The chart below shows four examples of reassessment changes provided to us from homeowners in Ogden and Parma.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ogden House 1</td>
<td>$230,000</td>
<td>57.61%</td>
<td>$362,500</td>
<td>$5,901.80</td>
<td>$5,879.75</td>
<td>-$22.05</td>
<td>-$1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogden House 2</td>
<td>$185,000</td>
<td>78.86%</td>
<td>$330,900</td>
<td>$4,747.10</td>
<td>$5,367.20</td>
<td>$620.10</td>
<td>$51.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parma House 1</td>
<td>$140,000</td>
<td>69.64%</td>
<td>$237,500</td>
<td>$3,483.20</td>
<td>$3,852.25</td>
<td>$369.05</td>
<td>$30.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parma House 2</td>
<td>$281,300</td>
<td>42.37%</td>
<td>$400,500</td>
<td>$6,998.74</td>
<td>$6,496.11</td>
<td>-$502.63</td>
<td>-$41.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School districts do not control assessments or equalization rates. School districts only control the tax levy, or the amount that taxpayers within its boundaries must contribute to the district’s budget.

Videos detailing what equalization rates are and how they impact taxes may be found on our website.
Propositions on the May 21 ballot

1 Proposition 1 is the budget expenditure plan, which totals $97,206,320 and represents a budget-to-budget increase of 4.8%.
• projects a 2% increase in the tax levy, which is $2.46 million below the maximum allowable levy limit with exclusions
• Includes transfer to Capital Fund for $100,000 outlay project

Capital Outlay Project explained
› NYS allows districts to receive building aid for one capital outlay project per year on expenses up to $100,000. This aid would be reimbursed in the following year. Spencerport CSD is currently working with our architectural firm to develop a project that may include renovation or replacement of lighting, flooring, doors and door hardware, plumbing, masonry, or fire control systems.

2 Proposition 2 proposes the re-establishment of a Building Capital Reserve Fund. The previous reserve, designated in 2014, is set to expire. By transferring those funds into the new 2024 reserve, we have the necessary resources for future capital projects. This reserve will span 15 years and is not to exceed $25 million.

3 Proposition 3 is a new referendum that we have not requested before. We seek voter authorization to ask the state of New York for an additional 10% building aid for an Energy Performance Contract. This contract aims to improve our facilities for student use while reducing future energy costs.

Residents are not voting on the estimated $4 million project itself. We anticipate that approximately 76% of the funding will come from the state, and we are asking for voter approval to request the additional 10% aid from the state, which would bring our total aid to about 86%. The remaining funds will be covered by anticipated rebates and savings from energy efficiencies. The project will have no impact on local taxes.

Energy Performance Contract explained
› EPC is an energy-related project that offers guaranteed savings on school energy costs.
› The upgrades will include lighting, building HVAC systems and system controls, environmental management, and improvements to the building envelope, including insulation and weatherization, at the elementary school, middle school, and high school buildings.
› The work under the Energy Performance Contract will be completed outside of the district’s capital improvement project, which was approved by voters in 2022. Doing so will allow the district to reallocate a portion of the capital project budget to address priority capital needs, such as the secured vestibules, etc.
› While a referendum vote is not required for the district to perform the energy upgrades, the district must ask district residents if they would like to have New York State provide an additional 10 percent aid toward the cost of the self-funded energy upgrades.
› This project has no impact on local taxes and does not have to be approved by taxpayers.

Return on Investment

Through our diverse academic programs and dedicated educators, we ensure that the investment made by our taxpayers is well worth the return. This commitment to districtwide excellence begins with the youngest learners and continues through graduation. Below please find a few highlights from the 2023-24 school year.

• 3,495 enrolled students (excludes pre-K)
• 436 faculty members (median 18 years of teaching experience)
• 352 support staff
• Average academic class size:
  • K-2=19
  • 3-5= 20
  • 6-8= 23
  • 9-12=24
• 18 Advanced Placement courses

Advanced study
• Programs for high school students: Syracuse University Project Advance (SUPA), SUNY Brockport 3-1-3 Program, Monroe Community College Dual Credit, Rochester Institute of Technology Project Lead The Way, and New Visions, one-year exploration program that provides seniors with the opportunity to gain real-world insight into the health or stem fields.

U.S News has released its Best High School rankings, and Spencerport High School has been ranked #12 in the Rochester, NY area and 236 within New York State. The rankings are based on college readiness, state assessment proficiency and performance, and in our area, Regents Examinations.
Two graduation designations

- Seal of Civic Readiness – new designation implemented last year for students to attain a high level of proficiency in terms of civic knowledge, civic skills, civic mindset, and civic experiences.
- Seal of Biliteracy – 47 students earned this designation in 2022 by studying and attaining proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation.

Pre-kindergarten reaches youngest learners

Spencerport currently provides full-day pre-kindergarten to 108 students across all four elementary schools. In 2024-25, these numbers may increase as we propose an additional pre-k section.

The full-day sessions offer a foundation for our youngest students to:
- develop learning skills through curiosity and play,
- engage in early numeracy, reading and writing experiences,
- foster gross and fine motor skills, and
- participate a variety of activities to develop social and emotional skills.

In addition to classroom experiences, students participate in the four specials areas of art, library, music and physical education.

Academic competitions

- Academic Challenge Bowl, Math League, Stock Market game, FIRST Lego League, FIRST Robotics, Model UN, DECA, Odyssey of the Mind

Athletics

67% of students, grades 7-12, compete on a Ranger sports team, with varsity teams achieving a team GPA above 90

Music program

In 2023, our music program won top honors at the National Heritage Music Festival in Philadelphia. Our ensembles won 5 gold awards, 1 silver, an adjudicator award to vocal jazz, instrumental sweepstakes award, and overall Festival Sweepstakes award for the school with an average of all scores closest to 300.

Clubs and activities

There are more than 130 clubs and activities at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

National Honor and Junior Honor Societies

This year, Spencerport High School inducted 60 students into the National Honor Society, and Cosgrove Middle School inducted 58 students into the National Junior Honor Society. The selection is based on scholarship, service, good citizenship, leadership, and character.

Return on Investment

In 2024-25, the budget proposes an additional pre-k section.

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Performing arts programs, K-12, inspire students to showcase talents in concert performances, stage productions and districtwide art shows.

FIRST Robotics Team 3015 qualified for the world championship for the 11th consecutive year.
There are five candidates running for two openings on the school board. To view their full profiles, please visit our website.

**Jonathan D. Schallmo**
**Occupation:** Pastor and Minister of Music
**Family:** Lindsay, wife; children Connor, Annalee, Logan, Rosemary

What are the top issues facing our schools?
In an ever-changing economy it is important to focus on responsible budgeting and how it will impact the school programs and community taxes.

The most important function of the school board is to focus on “the why.” “The why” is our students; leveling the playing field for all, providing a safe learning environment, eliminating bullying, and reducing the negative impact of social media.

**Thomas J Weaver**
**Occupation:** U of R PhD Student in Statistics
**Family:** Randal Weaver, Teresa Weaver, parents; siblings, Joey Weaver, Hannah Weaver

What are the top issues facing our schools?
Our schools face several issues, but we can and will overcome them. They include the recent surge in AI and availability of Chat-GPT, which can have either a positive or a negative effect on education depending on how it’s used, the proliferation of vapes among HS and even Middle School students, and the need to refocus on academics to make up for lingering gaps in knowledge from the pandemic.

Ensuring the safety of our students and staff is also paramount. If elected, I hope to work with administrators to tackle these challenges and find cost efficiencies in the school budget.

**Michael Miceli, incumbent**
**Occupation:** Network Engineer at Frontier Communications
**Family:** Shelby, wife; children, Anthony and Zachary

What are the top issues facing our schools?
Ensuring a safe learning environment that provides a variety of academic opportunities for all students is critical. Perhaps most importantly, school districts face significant fiscal challenges that can be crippling if not managed effectively. Executing fiscally responsible plans in times of rising costs and unstable revenue from state and federal sources is crucial. Despite the fiscal challenges, we need to continue to attract and retain top educators and administrators, and make investments in infrastructure and technology, while providing a superior education for our students.

**Brandon Dries**
**Occupation:** Chief Financial Officer, Indus Hospitality Group
**Family:** Julie, wife; children, McKenzie (Kindergarten/Bernabi), Patrick (Future Ranger)

What are the top issues facing our schools?
1) Identifying and supporting students with the right resources to ensure everyone has an opportunity to succeed. 2) Retaining/developing teachers and faculty who deliver excellence in the classroom and through extracurricular activities. 3) Proposing financially responsible school budgets.

Because of the nature of our district’s operations, we are subject to changing costs and inflationary pressures. Like many schools, we face constant challenges in allocating resources effectively. As we discuss and evaluate instructional resources, facilities, technology, extracurricular activities, or other responsibilities, we must do so with public confidence that our decisions reflect the priorities noted above. Our decisions must ultimately align with the best interests of our students, in partnership with our faculty, while maintaining the trust and confidence of our community.

**Trisha Buscemi**
**Occupation:** Currently free-lance as a Career Coach, specializing in assisting early career job seekers.
**Family:** Eric Buscemi (SHS Class of ’00), husband; children, Mya (8th grade) and Lucas (6th grade).

What are the top issues facing our schools?
There are several challenging issues facing our schools today. One of the most pressing challenges is maintaining a balanced school budget amidst increasing costs. It’s essential to prioritize fiscal responsibility while safeguarding essential programs and services.

Ensuring school safety is also paramount, and addressing behavioral issues requires a collaborative approach from the entire community to create a supportive and secure learning environment for all students.

I also believe it’s crucial to prioritize the social, emotional, and mental well-being of our students and provide sufficient staffing to effectively meet their diverse needs.

Finally, I think focusing on continuously improving communication between parents, teachers, staff, administrators, and the community is key to our school district’s success.
The chart below reports the total number of voters in the last 10 years, along with the approval rate. According to the Board of Elections, there are approximately 10,000 eligible voters in the Spencerport School district.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Voters</th>
<th>Approval Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>1,089</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>1,270</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>1,214</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>1,494</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>1,223</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>1,052</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-21</td>
<td>3,859</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(absentee ballot only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021-22</td>
<td>1,572</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022-23</td>
<td>1,342</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023-24</td>
<td>1,371</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Spencerport Central School District budget vote will be held from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, May 21.
**Voter qualifications**

In order to vote you must be:
- a United States citizen
- at least 18 years of age
- a resident of the Spencerport Central School District for at least 30 days before the vote
- Proof of residence required
- Absentee ballots available

**Absentee ballots available**

District residents unable to vote in person on May 21 because of disabilities, illness, travel, college, or other reasons listed as valid under election law, may request applications for absentee ballots by contacting the District Clerk’s Office at 349-5101, or in person at 71 Lyell Ave., in Spencerport. The district must receive applications at least 7 days before the vote if the resident would like to receive the ballot by mail.

In all cases, the deadline for the return of all ballots to the district office is 5 p.m. on May 21. Under education law, ballots are invalid if received later than this time.

**Early mail ballots**

Any qualified district voter is eligible to vote by early mail ballot. A district voter must request in advance an application for this ballot by contacting district clerk, Marcy Clapper, at 585-349-5101 for an application, deadline dates, or more information.