

UTICA

CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

PLEASE VOTE

TUESDAY,
MAY 21
2024

HOME OF THE RAIDERS | WWW.UTICASCHOOLS.ORG | MAY 2024



BUDGET
• EDITION •

YOU'LL BE VOTING ON:

2024-25 Proposed Budget

\$266,454,264

0% levy increase & adheres to the Property Tax Cap

Capital Improvement Project

\$65 million

Project costs eligible for building aid will receive 98% aid

2024 Capital Reserve Fund

Up to \$15 million

One (1) Board of Education Seat

Five (5)-year term

Funding the Utica Public Library

\$886,809



HEARING DATE

5 P.M. ON

MAY 7

BOARD OF
EDUCATION ROOM



To Our Utica City School District Community,

As President of the Board of Education, we are honored to present the annual budget for the 2024-25 school year, a testament to our collective dedication to educational excellence and fiscal stewardship within the Utica City School District. This year's budget is the result of a comprehensive and collaborative effort involving Dr. Kathleen Davis, the UCSD Administration and the Board of Education. This collaborative approach underscores our commitment to crafting a budget that not only meets the educational needs of our students, but also respects the financial realities of our taxpayers.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

Our journey to this final budget proposal began in October, marked by a series of open sessions that welcomed community input and dialogue. This transparent process reflects our belief in the importance of community engagement in shaping a budget that truly reflects our collective aspirations and priorities for our District.

A VISION FOR FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

This year's budget represents a blueprint for the District's future, carefully balancing the need to provide top-quality educational programs with the imperative of financial sustainability. Despite a 9.5% increase over last year's budget, we are proud to present a budget that maintains a 0% tax levy increase, demonstrating our ability to strategically allocate resources to preserve and enhance the quality of our educational offerings without imposing additional financial burdens on our community.

SUSTAINING EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

The collaborative effort behind this budget has ensured the continuation and expansion of critical educational programs and services. Despite the phasing out of federal relief funds, we have meticulously planned for the sustained support of vital initiatives like the Targeted Assistance Reading Program and the "Systems of Care" services. These programs are integral to our mission of delivering a holistic educational experience that meets both the academic and social-emotional needs of our students.

INVESTING IN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

A significant focus of this year's budget is on capital improvements and infrastructure upgrades, which are crucial for providing safe, modern and stimulating learning environments. The planned \$65 million Capital Improvement Project is a prime example of our commitment to enhancing our facilities and ensuring they support the highest standards of learning and safety.

EMPOWERING OUR EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

The addition of 51 new instructional positions across K-12 is a clear indicator of our commitment to reducing class sizes and enriching educational experiences. Furthermore, the introduction of new Career and Technical Education pathways and expanded professional development opportunities for staff are strategic investments in our students' futures, preparing them for success beyond our classrooms.

In closing, I wish to extend my heartfelt appreciation to every member of our community for your unwavering support and trust in our efforts. This budget is a milestone in our continued pursuit of excellence in education, made possible through our shared commitment and collaborative spirit. I invite you to join us at the Budget Hearing on Tuesday, May 7, 2024 and urge you to exercise your civic duty by voting on Tuesday, May 21, 2024. Together, we are forging a bright and promising future for the Utica City School District.

With deepest gratitude,

Joseph H. Hobika, Jr.

Joseph H. Hobika, Jr.
President, Board of Education
Utica City School District



POLLING LOCATIONS	
Utica Fire Academy	1320 Bleecker St.
Utica Fire Station - Shepherd Place	29 Shepherd Pl.
Parkway Recreation Center	220 Memorial Pkwy.
Mid-York Library	1600 Lincoln Ave.
Twin Towers	509 Second St.
Reimagine Church/Foursquare Church	1415 Sunset Ave.
Jewish Community Center	2310 Oneida St.
Conkling Elementary	1115 Mohawk St.
Donovan Middle School	1701 Noyes St.
Thomas Jefferson Elementary	190 Booth St.
J.F. Kennedy Middle School	500 Deerfield Dr. E
Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary	211 Square St.
Proctor High School	1203 Hilton Ave.
General Herkimer Elementary	420 Keyes Rd.

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

You must be a citizen of the United State of America.

You are at least 18 years of age.

You are a registered voter OR a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the election and execute a residency acknowledgment prior to voting.

You are not otherwise prohibited from voting under the provisions of section 5-106 of the Election law.

No eligible voters shall be denied the right to vote based upon their inability to read and write English.

Dear UCSD Families:

The Utica City School District 2024-25 budget is \$266,454,264 which is a 9.5% increase over last year's budget with no increase on the prior year's levy of \$30,005,865. This budget represents months of work and analysis to determine the best possible programs for students while balancing that with the needs of our taxpayers.

We have had many great programs supported under the American Rescue Plan (ARP)/ Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) grants these past two years. Unfortunately, these grants will no longer be in existence for the 2024-25 school year. We will be appropriating \$12,886,000 of fund balance from 2023-24 to next year to support one-time purchases inclusive of the following:

- Vehicle replacement plan to address plowing, field maintenance, deliveries and snow removal district-wide - \$740,000.
- Career and Technical Education addition - \$5,200,000
- Continued support of our "Systems of Care" services for students - \$800,000
- Targeted Assistance Reading Program for the elementary schools - \$1,000,000
- Transfer of \$146,000 in funds to capital to cover costs from the construction of the Proctor stadium project
- Anticipated transportation costs for the 2024-25 school year due to adding additional bus runs - \$5,000,000

The District is also reserving funds for outstanding liabilities for current and future exposures. This long-range financial planning will assist us in ensuring that we maintain programming for students while keeping the levy stable.

The District has set forth the following priorities for this upcoming year based on student performance and social/emotional data:

1. Continuation of our Targeted Assistance Program, which supports early intervention for our first and second grade students. This program was supported by the ESSER funds. The plan is to move these expenses to the general fund and maintain this reading intervention program which assists in building a solid foundation for emergent readers.
2. Continuation of our "System of Care" program, which was developed under ESSER and creates a social/emotional layer to address the whole child. Under ESSER this year, \$10 million was set aside to support students using a variety of community agencies such as ICAN, Safe Schools Mohawk Valley, Hillside, On Point and HMJ consulting. Post-COVID, we have seen student needs which require a comprehensive approach for turnaround. These services will be under the BOCES line item so that we can realize aid on these services.
3. We have data that supports providing students with mathematics academic intervention services (AIS). We will be adding AIS math teachers to each elementary and middle school to build the skills needed to move students from concrete to abstract understandings in math.
4. Professional development for staff on research-based reading strategies is a goal of the State Education Department. The District will be supporting these efforts at the local level to help our learners that are behind in reading skills.
5. English as New Language (ENL) teachers are needed to address the influx of immigrants and refugees into our schools. This year, we had 300 new students join our district and enrollment continues to increase.

6. We have added the Raider Academy at JFK this year to support students, in grades 7-12, academically who are suspended. Wraparound services are provided to further assist students to getting back on track.
7. Additional Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways have been developed. The District has voter approval to build an addition onto Proctor High School. This spring, we break ground on this project. This upcoming year, the curriculum plan is in development, as well as the hiring of eight CTE teachers for the 2025-26 school year. It is imperative that this plan continues to move forward and is supported in order to help our students engage in career pathways of their choice.
8. This budget also adds 51 needed K-12 instructional positions. Our hope is to fill all of the openings so that we start our school year with high-quality instructors for our students.

In summary, the Board of Education has put safeguards in place to ensure that our district is well managed. The budget planning focused on:

- Administrative restructuring to give additional support to our principals and students, and overall increased oversight regarding financial operations
- Increase in auditing services to ensure compliance by adding a full-time claims auditor and accountant in our grants department
- Cyber insurance purchased to ensure the protection of our student data and financial operations
- Increased management of benefit services, state aid planning and capital accounting
- Building Condition Survey to be completed every five years as required by the State Education Department

The Board of Education is excited to be providing a solid financial budget plan that provides a quality education for our students. The Budget Hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, May 7, 2024. During this meeting, we will review the three-part budget with the community.

I want to personally thank the Board of Education for their leadership and vision to support a budget that speaks to the needs of students and our tax payers. We appreciate all of our residents and families for your continued care of the students of our district and your faith in me as your Interim Superintendent.

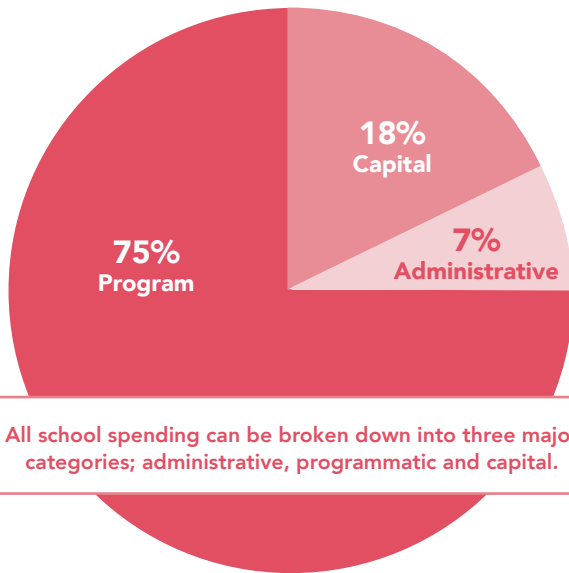
Sincerely,

Dr. Kathleen M. Davis

Dr. Kathleen M. Davis
Interim Superintendent
Utica City School District



Three-Part Budget



All school spending can be broken down into three major categories; administrative, programmatic and capital.

Administrative Component

Includes, but is not limited to, salaries and benefits for all district and building administrators, clerical staff and office expenditures: the superintendent's salary and expenses, Board of Education expenses, legal services, personnel, labor relations, curriculum development supervision, employee benefits and unallocated insurance.

Programmatic Component

Includes all expenditures associated with student-related programs, including, but not limited to, salaries and benefits for teachers, support staff, paraprofessionals and related services, transportation, sports, textbooks, classroom supplies and equipment.

Capital Component

Includes facility costs and debt service for the buildings. In addition, the Capital Component, includes and is not limited to, costs associated with operations and maintenance, expenditures related to the repair of facilities, transfer to capital, and judgment and claims.

No Levy Increase

The proposed levy for 2024-2025 is \$30,005,865, the same as the 2023-2024 levy. This levy is below the maximum allowable tax levy as determined by NYS Law, and will only require a simple majority vote. The Utica City School District proposed budget has no levy increase in the 2024-25 school year.

However, because of assessments and STAR reductions, the school district has no control over a resident's final property tax bill. Again, there is no increase in the levy.





Three-Part Budget	Budget 2023-24	Proposed 2024-25	Difference
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ADMINISTRATIVE

Board of Education	\$282,321	\$353,050	\$70,729
Central Administration	\$434,112	\$434,112	-
Finance	\$1,572,028	\$1,920,991	\$348,963
Legal Services	\$194,427	\$194,427	-
Personnel	\$969,053	\$924,067	(\$44,986)
Labor Relations	\$159,994	\$163,468	\$3,474
Public Information	\$135,609	\$340,301	\$204,692
Unallocated Insurance	\$493,000	\$545,000	\$52,000
Other Special Items	\$2,665,956	\$2,635,575	(\$30,381)
Curriculum Dev. & Sup.	\$1,260,643	\$2,042,148	\$781,505
Supervision, Regular School	\$4,716,039	\$4,736,556	\$20,517
Research, Eval. & Planning	\$455,607	\$451,379	(\$4,228)
Employee Benefits	\$5,167,375	\$5,400,266	\$232,891
TOTAL	\$18,506,164	\$20,141,340	\$1,635,176

PROGRAMMATIC

Legal Services	\$194,427	\$194,427	-
Unallocated Insurance	\$2,000	\$2,000	-
Staff Development	\$771,028	\$806,456	\$35,428
Instruction-Regular Day	\$80,760,277	\$93,384,722	\$12,624,445
Handicapped Programs	\$26,773,752	\$27,209,243	\$435,491
Occupational Education	\$4,411,482	\$3,742,027	(\$669,455)
Special Schools	\$499,527	\$1,055,278	\$555,751
Library/Audio Visual/Educational TV	\$2,366,807	\$2,169,911	(\$196,896)
Computer Assisted Instruction	\$6,965,264	\$5,426,280	(\$1,538,984)
Attendance Services	\$272,944	\$819,959	\$547,015
Guidance Services	\$2,211,094	\$3,110,364	\$899,270
Health Services	\$1,405,652	\$1,338,323	(\$67,329)
Psychological Services	\$1,604,572	\$989,855	(\$614,717)
Social Worker Services	\$1,610,526	\$1,423,305	(\$187,221)
Co-curricular Activities	\$403,862	\$346,729	(\$57,133)
Athletics	\$1,233,760	\$1,397,234	\$163,474
District Transportation	\$14,664,511	\$18,629,307	\$3,964,796
Garage Building	\$55,277	\$57,000	\$1,723
Transfers to Special Aid Fund	\$200,000	\$200,000	-
Employee Benefits	\$37,119,140	\$39,786,669	\$2,667,529
TOTAL	\$183,525,902	\$202,089,089	\$18,563,187

CAPITAL

Operation of Plant (Building Condition Survey included)	\$7,243,874	\$7,320,892	\$77,018
Maintenance of Plant	\$5,936,248	\$7,707,585	\$1,771,337
Judgments and Claims	\$51,500	\$50,000	(\$1,500)
Refund of Taxes	\$1,500	\$50,000	\$48,500
Employee Benefits	\$4,427,841	\$4,822,476	\$394,635
Transfer to Capital	\$3,800,000	\$5,346,000	\$1,546,000
Debt Service	\$19,847,021	\$18,926,882	(\$920,139)
TOTAL	\$41,307,984	\$44,223,835	\$2,915,851

TOTAL BUDGET	\$243,340,050	\$266,454,264	\$23,114,214
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PROPOSITIONS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the election of (1) member of the Board of Education shall be conducted on May 21, 2024, between the hours of 12:00 noon and 9:00 p.m.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that voting on the following propositions shall be conducted on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 between the hours of 12:00 noon and 9:00 p.m.

PROPOSITION NO. 1

Budget Proposition

To adopt the annual budget of the Utica City School District in the amount of \$266,454,264 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year and to authorize the requisite portion thereof to be raised by taxation on the taxable property of the Utica City School District.

PROPOSITION NO. 2

Capital Project

Shall the bond resolution adopted by the Board of Education of the City School District of the City of Utica (the "School District") on March 26, 2024, which authorizes

- a. the renovation, improvement, rehabilitation, repair, furnishing and equipping of Albany Elementary School, Columbus Elementary School, Conkling Elementary School, General Herkimer Elementary School, Hughes Elementary School, Jefferson Elementary School, Jones Elementary School, Kernan Elementary School, Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Watson Williams Elementary School, Donovan Middle School, John F. Kennedy Middle School, Proctor High School, the School District Maintenance Shop and the Central Kitchen, including improvement or embellishment of athletic fields and athletic facilities, playground improvements, grading or improvement of the sites, and the acquisition of original furnishings, equipment, machinery and apparatus required for the purposes of which such buildings and improvements are to be used, at a total estimated maximum cost not to exceed \$65,000,000;
 - b. the issuance of up to \$65,000,000 serial bonds and bond anticipation notes of the School District to pay the cost thereof;
 - c. the pledge of School District's faith and credit for payment of such bonds and notes; and
 - d. the levy of taxes on the taxable real property in the School District to be collected in annual installments to pay debt service on such obligations, be approved?
-

PROPOSITION NO. 3

2024 Capital Reserve Fund

RESOLVED, the Board of Education of the Utica City School District is hereby authorized to establish a capital reserve fund pursuant to Section 3651 of the Education Law to be designated, "2024 Facilities Improvement Capital Reserve Fund" created to defray the cost of the construction and reconstruction of School District buildings and facilities, including original equipment, machinery, apparatus, appurtenances, furnishings and other incidental improvements and expenses in connection therewith, and in order to accomplish the same, the Board is hereby authorized to establish the ultimate amount of such Reserve Fund to be up to fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000.00), plus accrued interest and other investment earnings with a probable term of fifteen (15) years and, to appropriate from the available fund balance and/or other legally available funds of the School District to such Reserve Fund.

PROPOSITION NO. 4

Funding the Utica Public Library

Shall the annual appropriation for the Utica Public Library within the Utica City School District be increased from the sum of eight hundred sixty-eight thousand four hundred thirty-three dollars (\$868,433) annually to the sum of eight hundred eighty-six thousand eight hundred and nine dollars (\$886,809), an increase of eighteen thousand three hundred seventy six dollars (\$18,376) to be appropriated annually for the Utica Public Library, such sum to be raised by levy of a tax upon the taxable property of the District in accordance with Section 259 of the Education Law?

BALLOT PROPOSITION NO. 2

2024 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

\$65 million - Project costs eligible for building aid will receive 98% aid.

District-Wide Improvements

- Safety and Security Upgrades – Secure Entry Vestibules
- Toilet Room Renovations and ADA Compliance
- Wayfinding Improvements
- Infrastructure Upgrades
 - » *Fire Alarm System Upgrades*
 - » *Perimeter Site Lighting*
 - » *Data Network Upgrades*
 - » *Water Service Upgrades*
 - » *HVAC Upgrades*
 - » *Technology Upgrades*

Maintenance Building and Central Kitchen

BUILDING CONDITION IMPROVEMENTS

- Exterior Window and Door Replacements
- HVAC Upgrades and Improvements
- ADA Compliance Improvements
- Exterior Masonry Repairs

Elementary Schools

BUILDING CONDITION IMPROVEMENTS

- Main Office Relocation – Conkling Elementary School
- Boiler Replacement and HVAC Upgrades
- Safety Improvements
- Secure Vestibule Upgrades, Weapons Detection System Integration, Exterior Window and Door Replacements and Hardening
- Interior Finishes Replacements
- LED Lighting Upgrades
- Asbestos and PCB Removal

OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTER AND PLAYGROUND UPGRADES

- Albany Elementary School
- Conkling Elementary School
- Herkimer Elementary School
- Jones Elementary School
- Kernan Elementary School
- MLK Elementary School

JFK and Donovan Middle Schools

BUILDING CONDITION IMPROVEMENTS

- Exterior Window and Door Replacements
- HVAC Upgrades and Improvements
- Safety Improvements
- Interior Finishes Replacements
- LED Lighting Upgrades

SITE SCOPE

- Parking Lot and Sidewalk Improvements
- Signage Improvements

Proctor High School

BUILDING CONDITION IMPROVEMENTS

- Exterior Window and Door Replacements
- HVAC Upgrades and Improvements
- Safety Improvements
- Interior Finishes Replacements
- LED Lighting Upgrades
- Gymnasium Equipment Replacements
- Backstops, Wall Pads, Bleachers
- Pool Upgrades
- New Pool Shell, Filtration System, Mechanical System
- Full Building Air Conditioning

SITE SCOPE

- Parking Lot and Sidewalk Improvements
- Signage Improvements



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

2024 Capital Improvements Project

DISTRICT-WIDE IMPROVEMENTS

- Safety and Security Upgrades – Secure Entry Vestibules
- Toilet Room Renovations & ADA Compliance
- Wayfinding Improvements
- Infrastructure Upgrades
 - » Fire Alarm System Upgrades
 - » Perimeter Site Lighting
 - » Data Network Upgrades
 - » Water Service Upgrades
 - » HVAC Upgrades
 - » Technology Upgrades

Maintenance Building & Central Kitchen

BUILDING CONDITION IMPROVEMENTS

- Exterior Window & Door Replacements
- HVAC Upgrades & Improvements
- ADA Compliance Improvements
- Exterior Masonry Repairs

District-Wide Elementary Schools

BUILDING CONDITION IMPROVEMENTS

- Main Office Relocation – Conkling Elementary School
- Boiler Replacement & HVAC Upgrades
- Safety Improvements
- Secure Vestibule Upgrades | Weapons Detection System Integration | Exterior Window & Door Replacements & Hardening
- Interior Finishes Replacements
- LED Lighting Upgrades
- Asbestos and PCB Removal

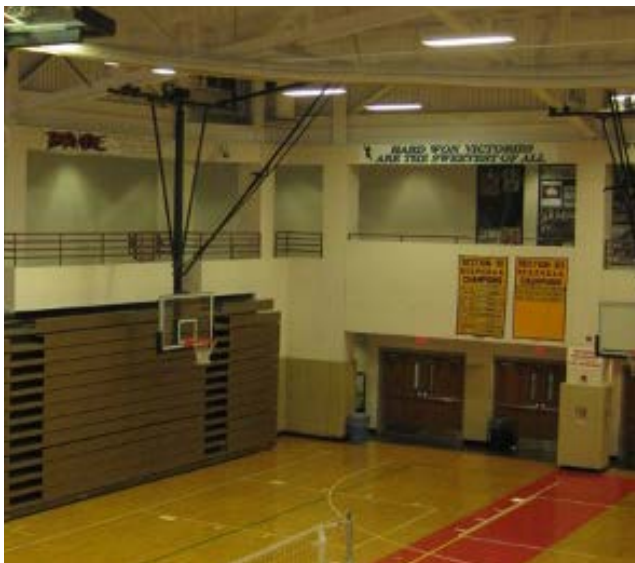




Columbus, Conkling, Jefferson and Watson Williams Elementary Schools

OUTDOOR LEARNING & ACTIVITY CENTER UPGRADES

- Add some musical equipment and sensory play
- Expand playground and create an area for all grade level



JFK & Donovan Middle Schools

BUILDING CONDITION IMPROVEMENTS

- Exterior Window & Door Replacements
- HVAC Upgrades & Improvements
- Safety Improvements
- Interior Finishes Replacements
- LED Lighting Upgrades
- Parking Lot & Sidewalk Improvements
- Signage Improvements

Proctor High School

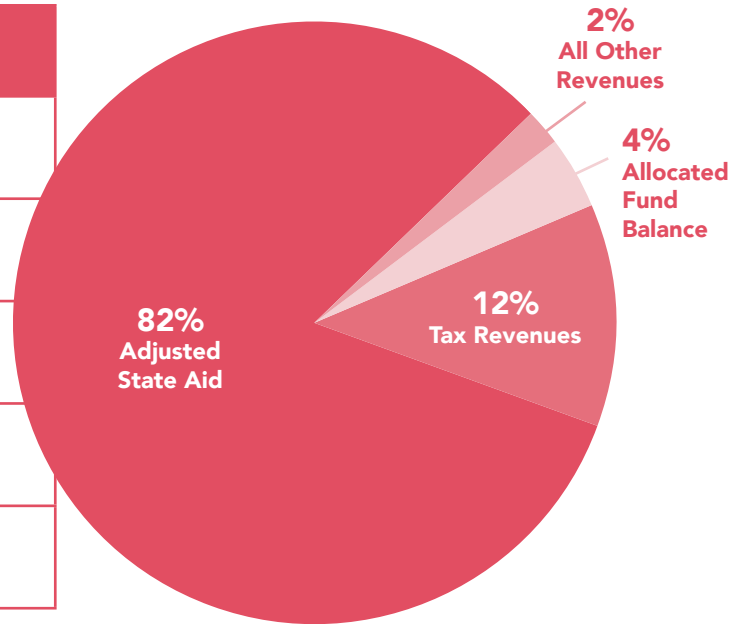
BUILDING CONDITION IMPROVEMENTS

- Exterior Window & Door Replacements
- HVAC Upgrades & Improvements
- Safety Improvements
- Interior Finishes Replacements
- LED Lighting Upgrades
- Gymnasium Equipment Replacements
- Backstops | Wall Pads | Bleachers
- Pool Upgrades
- New Pool Shell | Filtration System | Mechanical System
- Full Building Air Conditioning
- Parking Lot & Sidewalk Improvements
- Signage Improvements



REVENUES

Property Taxes	\$30,005,865
Adjusted State Aid	\$216,483,397
All Other Revenues	\$4,279,002
Interfund Transfer	\$600,000
Allocated Fund Balance	\$12,886,000



Vehicle Replacement Plan

This year's budget includes a vehicle replacement plan to address plowing, field maintenance, deliveries and snow removal district-wide. The chart below identifies vehicles to be replaced.

2006	Ford	F250
2009	Ford	F250
2010	Ford	F250
2010	Ford	F250
2011	Chevy	Silverado 2500
2011	Chevy	Silverado 2500
2012	Ford	F250
2014	Ford	F150
2015	Ford	F250
2015	Ford	F250







Utica City School District

929 York Street
Utica, NY 13502

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Board Members

- Joseph Hobika, Jr., *President*
- Danielle Padula, *Vice President*
- Robert Cardillo
- Jason Cooper
- Donald Dawes
- Tennille Knoop
- James Paul

Interim Superintendent

Dr. Kathleen Davis

Utica City School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted 2023-2024	Budget Proposed 2024-2025	Contingency Budget 2024-2025*
Total budgeted amount, not including separate propositions	\$243,340,050	\$266,454,264	\$264,442,169
Increase / decrease for the 2024-2025 school year		\$23,114,214	\$21,102,119
Percentage increase (decrease) in each proposed budget		9.50%	8.67%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.10%	
A. Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$30,005,865	\$30,005,865	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable			
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **			
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy			
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$30,005,865	\$30,005,865	\$27,993,770
F. Permissible Exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit	\$0	\$0	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$31,019,318	\$32,583,681	
H. Total Proposed Tax Levy for School Purposes, <u>Excluding</u> Permissible Exclusions and Levy for Library Debt, Plus Prior Year Tax Cap Reserve (E - B - F + D)	\$30,005,865	\$30,005,865	
I. Difference: (G - H): (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval See Note Below Regarding Propositions) **	\$1,013,453	\$2,577,816	
Administrative component	\$18,560,164	\$20,141,340	\$20,141,340
Program component	\$183,525,902	\$202,089,089	\$201,366,994
Capital component	\$41,307,984	\$44,223,835	\$42,933,835

* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2024-25 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to section 2023 of the Education Law.

** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements).

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

Basic STAR Exemption Savings	Under the Budget Proposal for the 2024-25 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$471

Description	Amount
Classroom Instructional Equipment	(\$330,000)
Maintenance Equipment	(\$1,290,000)
Security Equipment	(\$100,000)
Non Aidable Computer Equipment	(\$7,095)
Other Equipment	(\$285,000)

The contingent budget reflects the removal of non state aided equipment purchases in the amount of \$2,012,095.

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2024-2025 by the qualified voters of the Utica City school district, Oneida County, New York, will be held at 14 voting locations in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.