

Merrick MESSENGER

Proposed 2024-25 Budget Vote Set for Tuesday, May 21

MAINTAINS ALL PROGRAMS AND FUNDS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Dear Community Members,

The district invites all residents to participate in the annual budget vote and trustee election on Tuesday, May 21. The district is proud to present a budget that maintains all academic, co-curricular and extracurricular programs for students, even in the face of continued inflation.

The proposed spending plan carries a tax levy increase of 2.15%, which is within the district's allowable tax levy cap for the 2024-25 school year. The district remains mindful of the cost impact on residents and is proud to present a plan that balances fiscal responsibility with student needs.

The district continues to work to maintain and improve our school facilities. Significant future projects will involve replacement/recoating of the Chatterton School roof and repair of the masonry wall, as well as replacement of steam pipes at Lakeside School. Additional projects include

door and window repair/replacement, ceilings, flooring, fieldwork, painting and sidewalks. To this end, Proposition No. 3 seeks voter approval to expend \$6.1 million from the Capital Reserve, money that has been saved over the years for such purposes. The remaining cost will be funded through the district's operating budget by utilizing the existing fund balance.

In addition, Proposition No. 2 seeks voter approval to transfer funds from the Repair Reserve to the Capital Reserve. This will prepare for the next generation of facilities projects (e.g., roofs at Birch and Lakeside Schools). Approval of Propositions No. 2 and No. 3 will not impact taxes and will continue the tradition of planned savings to maintain our high-quality school facilities.

For additional information, visit the district's website at www.merrick.k12.ny.us. Thank you for your participation on Tuesday, May 21.

About the 2024-25 Budget

- Preserves all academic, fine arts and enrichment programs.
- Funds various capital improvements for school buildings.
- Carries a tax levy increase of 2.15%, which is within the district's allowable tax levy cap.

Budget Hearing
Tuesday, May 7 at 7:15 p.m.
Levy Lakeside School

Budget VOTE:

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

7 a.m.-9 p.m.

Administration Center
Levy Lakeside School

For the latest budget news,
visit us on the web at
www.merrick.k12.ny.us.



POINTS OF PRIDE



Second graders explained their chosen research topic to peers during the expert museum set up at Birch. After searching for a topic of interest in the school's library, students spent a few weeks reading and working on both graphic and oral presentations.



On the 100th day of school during the building's year-long 100th birthday celebration, Chatterton students and staff paraded around in creatively crafted costumes.



Students dressed up in traditional clothing at Lakeside as part of a supplemental curriculum program, Journeys into American Indian Territory, that gives fourth graders an interactive look into local Native American history.

- A full-day, comprehensive kindergarten program.
- Continuously upgrade and acquire new online learning platforms.
- Among Nassau County's lowest class sizes at all grade levels.
- Highly qualified and dedicated educators.
- Comprehensive technology program, including a 1:1 computing initiative in grades K-6 that teaches students robotics, keyboarding and digital citizenship, as well as empowers innovation through interdisciplinary projects.
- A multitude of innovative student clubs including TED Ed, writing, reading, science, math, and STEAM enrichment clubs.
- Dynamic foreign language program that provides students in grades 3-6 with a valuable opportunity to develop communication skills in Spanish. The program incorporates cultural experiences and connections to daily life.
- Social-emotional learning program in each school to build a positive learning community and teach students skills that can be applied to daily life.
- Commitment to the community, with students participating in numerous fundraisers and charitable projects throughout the year, including grade-level service learning projects.
- Activities, lessons and assemblies that celebrate inclusivity and belonging districtwide.
- Building-based cultural arts programs.
- A comprehensive fine arts program.
 - Awarded the Best Community for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation.
- Innovative programs for students with special needs.
- Comprehensive academic support for students through our Academic Intervention Services program.
- Supportive psychologists and social workers at each school.
- Full-time, highly experienced school counselor works with students K-6.
- Full-time literacy coaches and STEAM coach to support the development and innovation of our teachers.
- Updated libraries at each school to include children's books celebrating diversity, acceptance and inclusion.
- Strong partnership with the PTA.
- Exciting and supportive UPK program for Merrick's 4-year-old children.

PROPOSED 2024-25 BUDGET

EXPENDITURES

	2023-24 Current Budget	2024-25 Proposed Budget	Dollar Difference	Percent Difference
Board of Education	\$69,630	\$77,270	\$7,640	10.97%
Chief School Administrator	386,791	396,842	10,051	2.60%
Finance	817,926	862,254	44,328	5.42%
Legal, Personnel and Public Relations	314,628	309,951	(4,677)	-1.49%
Central Services	4,742,569	5,053,325	310,756	6.55%
Insurance and Special Items	553,000	623,000	70,000	12.66%
Instruction, Admin, Improvement	1,914,607	2,009,844	95,237	4.97%
Teaching and Instructional Programs and Support	31,641,339	32,467,100	825,761	2.61%
Transportation Services*	2,162,683	2,577,036	414,353	19.16%
Community Services	180,000	178,000	(2,000)	-1.11%
Employee Benefits	13,933,887	14,781,044	847,157	6.08%
Debt Service – School	1,419,831	1,416,832	(2,999)	-0.21%
Debt Service – Library	685,000	685,000	0	0.00%
Interfund Transfers	101,000	1,571,000	1,470,000	1455.45%

* The line item for transportation in the 2024-25 budget includes the first year of a three-year agreement with the school district's transportation contractor. Approval of the budget by the voters will constitute approval of this three-year agreement.

TOTAL BUDGET	\$58,922,891	\$63,008,498	\$4,085,607	6.93%
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REVENUES

	2023-24 Current Budget	2024-25 Proposed Budget	Dollar Difference	Percent Difference
State Aid	\$10,234,014	\$11,775,450	\$1,541,436	15.06%
Tuition – Day School	350,000	350,000	0	0.00%
Summer Registration Fee	115,000	150,000	35,000	30.43%
Interest Earnings	350,000	700,000	350,000	100.00%
Other Income (including LIPA PILOT)	1,027,230	1,034,429	7,199	0.70%
Debt Service Fund Transfer	126,000	0	(126,000)	-100.00%
Public Library – Debt Service	685,000	685,000	0	0.00%
Appropriated Fund Balance	1,500,000	2,818,730	1,318,730	87.92%
Real Property Taxes	44,535,647	45,494,889	959,242	2.15%

TOTAL REVENUE	\$58,922,891	\$63,008,498	\$4,085,607	6.93%
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What Are Propositions No. 2 and No. 3?

In addition to voting on the proposed budget for 2024-25, the community will be asked to vote on two additional propositions. Proposition No. 2 would allow the district to transfer \$2 million from its existing repair reserve into its capital reserve fund. By doing so, this would allow the district to make needed repairs to its buildings as outlined through Proposition No. 3.

Proposition No. 3 would allow the district to use \$6.1 million in capital reserve funds to replace/recoat the roof and repair the masonry wall at Chatterton School and replace the steam pipes at Lakeside School.

It is important to note that there will be **no additional tax impact** for residents if Propositions No. 2 and No. 3 are approved. Voter approval is required for the district to transfer money from its repair reserve fund to its capital reserve fund, as well as to expend monies from the capital reserve fund.



BUDGET Q&A

Q: What is the tax levy limit?

A: For school districts, the tax levy limit is the highest allowable property tax levy that can be approved by a simple majority vote of the public (50% plus one). The proposed budget carries a tax levy increase of 2.15%, which is within the district's calculated cap for this year.

Q: Does the tax cap mean that the amount of taxes that individual homeowners pay will only go up by 2.15%?

A: No. The tax cap limits how much money the district can levy from the community. The tax rate is set by Nassau County and is determined by additional factors, including the value of real estate.

Q: If I have questions about the proposed budget, where can I go to find more information?

A: Please visit the district's website, www.merrick.k12.ny.us, for all budget presentations. In addition, you may contact the district at 516-992-7260.



Voting Information

VOTING REQUIREMENTS

To register to vote, you must be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old, a district resident for 30 days before the vote, and have not claimed the right to vote elsewhere.

WHO NEEDS TO REGISTER

If you are a new resident and last registered or voted in a county other than Nassau, you must reregister. Registration will be held on Tuesday, May 7, from 12-4 p.m. at the Katherine A. Reif Administration Center, 21 Babylon Road, Merrick. You may also register between 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on days that school is in session. The last day to register is Thursday, May 16. You do not need to register if you have voted in a general election in the Merrick Union Free School District or if you have recently registered with Merrick UFSD.

ABSENTEE AND EARLY MAIL VOTING BALLOTS

Absentee and early mail voting ballots are available from the Merrick district clerk in the Katherine A. Reif Administration Center, 21 Babylon Road, Merrick, or on the district's website. The deadline for returning absentee and early mail voting ballots by mail or in person is Tuesday, May 21, at 5 p.m.

ON THE BALLOT

Proposition No. 1: Merrick School District (Elementary Schools) Budget

Proposition No. 2: Merrick School District (Elementary Schools) Transfer from Repair Reserve Fund to Capital Reserve Fund

Proposition No. 3: Merrick School District (Elementary Schools) Expenditure from Capital Reserve Fund

Proposition No. 4: Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Budget

Proposition No. 5: Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Expenditure from Capital Reserve Fund

Proposition No. 6: Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Establishment of Capital Reserve Fund

Proposition No. 7: Merrick Public Library Budget

In addition to voting on the above propositions, voters will have the opportunity to cast their votes for the election of three Merrick School District Board of Education trustees to three-year terms beginning July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027. The election is at-large. Candidates are Erik Bashian, Nancy Kaplan, Annie Rodriguez, Linda Wilk, Scott Woller and Butch Yamali. Voters will also cast their votes for the election of one library trustee for a five-year term. The candidate is Femy Aziz.

**Merrick Board
of Education**

Jill Levine, *President*

Dr. Nancy Kaplan

Nicole Venditti

Dr. Dominick Palma, *Superintendent of Schools*

Linda Wilk, *Vice President*

Jennifer Schatzman

Butch Yamali