

# The Carmel Schoolhouse News

## Budget Edition



## 2023-2024 Proposed Budget

At the April 11 meeting, the Carmel Central School District Board of Education adopted a proposed \$140,949,698 spending plan for the 2023-2024 school year. The adopted spending plan represents a 4.58% increase over the 2022-2023 budget and will rely on a proposed 1.86% tax levy increase.

We believe that we have prepared a budget that recognizes and addresses the challenges of the current economy for our schools and the community. We are proposing a 1.86% tax levy increase that is substantially lower than our calculated allowable tax levy limit of 2.64%.

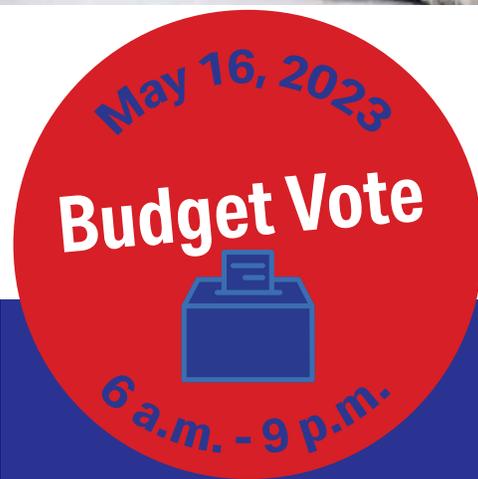
On average, this 1.86% increase represents an annual tax bill increase of approximately \$155-\$185 for property owners in the Carmel Central School District. **See more information on how the proposed tax levy increase may affect your tax bill on page 3.**

Similar to prior years, the work to create the proposed 2023-2024 budget included tough decisions on where and what to reduce in order to continue to meet the needs of our students, as well as understanding the challenges of a tax increase for our community. Every area of our operating budget was examined when creating this spending plan to present to the community.

This newsletter provides an overview of the proposed budget on which taxpayers will vote on May 16, how tax bills may be affected, polling locations, Board of Education candidates up for election and more. Our website, [carmelschools.org](http://carmelschools.org), also includes more information and details about the proposed 2023-2024 school budget as well as an archive of Board of Education meetings where the budget was discussed during the past few months.

**Remember, your vote is important and every vote counts.** Thank you for your support of our District and your continued partnership as we work together to educate the whole student to become lifelong learners in an ever-changing world.

**We hope to see you at the polls on May 16!**



## At-A-Glance

- 1.86% Tax Levy Increase
- **Proposition #1:**  
\$140,949,698 school budget
- **Proposition #2:**  
George Fischer Middle School Water Tank Replacement
- **Proposition #3:** Districtwide Phone System, Intercom and Public Address System
- **Two Board of Education Trustee Seats up for election**

# Proposed Budget 2023-2024

<b>Administrative</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Board of Education	\$55,071.00	\$50,600.00	\$4,471.00
Central Administration	\$362,534.00	\$349,220.00	\$13,314.00
Finance	\$1,431,900.00	\$1,444,822.00	(\$12,922.00)
Legal Services	\$166,160.00	\$166,160.00	\$0.00
Personnel	\$412,048.00	\$384,847.00	\$27,201.00
Records Management	\$3,237.00	\$3,250.00	(\$13.00)
Public Information	\$165,763.00	\$156,495.00	\$9,268.00
Other Central Services	\$1,753,860.00	\$1,642,034.00	\$111,826.00
Other Special Items	\$1,370,387.00	\$1,329,419.00	\$40,968.00
Curriculum, Development & Supervision	\$398,205.00	\$378,372.00	\$19,833.00
Supervision, Regular School	\$2,639,290.00	\$2,576,035.00	\$63,255.00
Research, Evaluation, Staff Development & Planning	\$214,900.00	\$208,760.00	\$6,140.00
Employee Benefits	\$2,658,541.00	\$2,543,901.00	\$114,640.00
<b>Total Administrative Budget</b>	<b>\$11,631,896.00</b>	<b>\$11,233,915.00</b>	<b>\$397,981.00</b>

<b>Program</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Legal Services	\$50,525.00	\$50,525.00	\$0.00
Instruction	\$71,812,953.00	\$68,334,696.00	\$3,478,257.00
Other District Transportation	\$5,837,307.00	\$5,063,536.00	\$773,771.00
Garage Building	\$641,896.00	\$713,124.00	(\$71,228.00)
Community Service	\$365,000.00*	\$365,000.00	\$0.00
Employee Benefits	\$35,368,374.00	\$33,372,321.00	\$1,996,053.00
<b>Total Program Budget</b>	<b>\$114,076,055.00</b>	<b>\$107,899,202.00</b>	<b>\$6,176,853.00</b>

<b>Capital</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Operation of Plant	\$7,370,455.00	\$7,344,903.00	\$25,552.00
Judgements & Claims	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$0.00
Refund of Taxes	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$0.00
Purchase of Buses	\$228,600.00	\$736,000.00	(\$507,400.00)
Debt Service	\$4,974,282.00	\$4,880,232.00	\$94,050.00
Transfer to Capital	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Employee Benefits	\$2,468,410.00	\$2,479,935.00	(\$11,525.00)
<b>Total Capital Budget</b>	<b>\$15,241,747.00</b>	<b>\$15,641,070.00</b>	<b>(\$399,323.00)</b>

\*This is the correct number; the printed version of this newsletter was incorrect at \$134,774,187.00. There was no change from year to year.

<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$140,949,698.00</b>	<b>\$134,774,187.00</b>	<b>\$6,175,511.00</b>
---------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------



# How Would the Proposed Budget Impact my Tax Bill?

With the proposed 1.86% tax levy increase, a Carmel Central School District home with a taxable assessed value of \$350,000 will likely see an annual tax bill increase of approximately \$155-\$185. **However, the figures provided assume School Tax Relief Program (STAR) exemptions, no change in the town assessed value, and no changes in the equalization rates.**

The school district has no control over changes to town assessed values or equalization rates. These are subject to change as determined by each town and generally not set until later this summer. **Any changes to those values could result in different annual tax changes for district homes.**

Town	Proposed 2023-2024 Tax Rate	Proposed 2023-2024 Taxes	2022-2023 Tax Rate	2022-2023 Taxes	Annual Tax Change
Carmel	24.206994	\$8,472	23.765459	\$8,318	\$155
Kent	28.919448	\$10,122	28.391929	\$9,937	\$185
Patterson	24.202749	\$8,471	23.761215	\$8,316	\$155
Putnam Valley	24.217871	\$8,476	23.776338	\$8,322	\$155
Southeast	24.107199	\$8,438	23.665665	\$8,283	\$155
East Fishkill	24.213078	\$8,475	23.771545	\$8,320	\$155

## Transportation Purchase/Lease Program

During the 2021-2022 school year, the Board of Education made the decision to move forward with leasing big buses while continuing to purchase small buses and suburbans for the district.

The district's current 114-bus fleet includes 63 buses in the 10 to 20-year range. The average life span of a bus is 10 years. The move toward leasing buses, rather than purchasing buses, will allow the district access to newer, state-of-the-art buses with fewer repair and maintenance costs that are associated with aging buses.

In April 2023, the District took delivery of Phase 1 of the lease program and hopes to take delivery of Phase 2 over the summer months, should the 2023-2024 proposed budget be approved by voters.

The costs associated with moving to such a program are factored into the proposed 2023-24 budget and the impact on future years' budgets are outlined below:

### 5-Year Big Bus Lease Plan & 10-Year Small Vehicle Purchase Program

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Big Buses Leased	16	12	12	12	12	12	16	12	12	12	16
Small Buses Purchased	4	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5
Suburbans Purchased	2	1	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2
Big Bus Lease Cost	\$384,000	\$312,000	\$315,000	\$320,000	\$320,000	\$425,000	\$312,000	\$312,000	\$324,000	\$324,000	\$432,000
Small Bus Purchase Cost	\$248,000	\$173,600	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$455,000	\$460,000	\$465,000	\$372,000	\$465,000
Suburban Purchase Cost	\$104,000	\$55,000	\$110,000	\$0	\$115,000	\$0	\$120,000	\$0	\$120,000	\$0	\$125,000
Total Yearly Cost	\$736,000	\$540,600	\$875,000	\$770,000	\$885,000	\$875,000	\$887,000	\$772,000	\$909,000	\$696,000	\$1,022,000
Total Budget Appropriation for Lease & Purchase Payments	\$736,000	\$924,600	\$1,571,000	\$1,781,000	\$2,216,000	\$2,526,000	\$2,579,000	\$2,464,000	\$2,598,000	\$2,389,000	\$2,719,000

## Making Sense of Your Tax Bill

Carmel Central School District is proposing an increase to its tax levy by 1.86% for 2023-24. However, your overall tax bill may change by a different percentage if:

- The value of your property has changed;
- Your STAR reimbursement has changed; or
- The proportion of school taxes paid by homeowners in your township changes.

### How is your final school tax bill and tax rate set?

Your school tax bill and tax rate are determined by a combination of three factors, one of which is outside the District's control:

1. **School Tax Levy:** The total amount of money a school district needs to collect from property owners each year (\$140,949,698 in the 2023-24 proposed budget). This is a 1.86% increase proposed for 2023-24, which is less than the district's tax cap of 2.64%.
2. **State School Tax Relief Program (STAR):** Partial school tax exemptions for owner-occupied homes. The Basic STAR and Enhanced STAR savings for each township can be found online: [www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/star/ex\\_index.htm](http://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/star/ex_index.htm).
3. **Property Assessments:** Estimates of the value of how much a property would sell for under normal conditions. This information is determined by your town's assessor.

Once all factors are set, the final tax rate determines how much of the total tax levy each property owner pays.



# School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2022-23 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2023-24 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$134,774,187	\$140,949,698	\$139,101,012
Increase/Decrease for the 2023-24 School Year		\$6,175,511	\$4,326,825
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		4.58%	3.21%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		8.0%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$99,550,752	\$101,399,438	
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)	\$99,550,752	\$101,399,438	\$99,550,752
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$2,604,373	\$2,637,587	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$99,513,104	\$99,545,440	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$96,946,379	\$98,761,851	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$2,566,725	\$783,589	
Administrative Component	\$11,233,915	\$11,631,896	\$11,504,358
Program Component	\$107,899,202	\$114,076,055	\$112,808,211
Capital Component	\$15,641,070	\$15,241,747	\$14,788,443
Under a contingent budget, the district must continue to honor all contracts, all state-mandated items, and all items necessary for the educational program, health and safety of students and staff, and the preservation of district property. In the event Carmel Central School District must adopt a contingent budget, the district may not purchase equipment, buses, or capital items. In addition, staff and athletics would be considered for reduction and/or elimination.			
** 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)			
	Description	Amount	
	GFMS water tank replacement	\$500,000	
	Districtwide VoIP phone, intercom, and PA system	\$1,000,000	

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings <sup>1</sup> Towns of Carmel, Patterson, and Southeast <sup>2</sup>	\$1,183

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2023-24 by the qualified voters of the Carmel Central School District, Putnam County and Dutchess County, New York, will be held at Carmel High School, Kent Elementary School and the Carmel Central School District Office in said district on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 between the hours of 6:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the aforementioned school(s) in said district, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

1. The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.  
 2. Town of Kent: \$1192    Town of East Fishkill: \$988    Town of Putnam Valley: \$1212

## What Happens if the Budget is Not Approved?

If the proposed 2023-24 budget does not receive voter approval from the May 16 vote, by law, the Board of Education has two options:

- The proposed budget may be placed before the voters with or without changes for a second vote.
- The Board of Education may adopt a budget that carries a 0% tax levy increase.

### Contingency Budget

New York State requires school districts to establish a contingency spending plan in the event that the Board of Education's proposed budget does not receive voter approval. The law is very specific regarding the limit of the contingent budget-to-budget increase. Should Carmel be required to adopt a contingency budget for the 2023-24 school year, it would carry a tax levy increase of 0%. For 2023-24 the amount of the contingent budget would be \$139,101,012. To meet the contingent budget, it would require an additional \$1,848,686 in reductions to the proposed budget.

Under a contingent budget, the district must continue to honor all contracts, all state-mandated items and all items necessary for the educational program, health and safety of students and staff, and the preservation of district property. In the event that CCSD must adopt a contingency budget, the district may not purchase equipment or buses. Additionally, the District may make reductions in programming, activities, supplies and staffing.

# Zero-Tax Impact Safety Capital Projects

On May 16, the CCSD community will be asked to vote on two capital projects that impact the safety and wellbeing of our school district. Both proposed projects will have a zero-tax impact as the funds for both projects will be transferred from the District's Capital Reserve Fund, which has a balance of \$2,900,000.

## Summary of Proposition #2 GFMS Water Tank Replacement

The District is proposing the replacement of the original, 50-year-old 10,600-gallon water tank that services all of George Fischer Middle School at an estimated cost of \$500,000. The District would receive approximately 50% back in state aid reimbursement for the cost of the project. The project would be slated to begin during the summer of 2024 with an estimated timeline of 4-6 weeks.

Without taking this action, the District risks a potential failure of the water tank, which would cause a disruption to the educational environment of George Fischer Middle School by displacing students in the building and altering their classroom settings. Failure could also mean physical plant damage to the building resulting in increased costs for the overall project with respect to labor and materials.

## Summary of Proposition #3 Districtwide Phone System, Intercom and Public Address System

The District is proposing the replacement of the districtwide phone system and intercom and public address system which are more than 20 years old at an estimated cost of \$1,000,000. The District would receive approximately 50% back in state aid reimbursement for the cost of the project. The project would be slated to take place during the 2023-2024 school year.

The District has experienced sporadic failures of these systems in all buildings for years because the systems rely on copper lines that are outdated and no longer serviced through service provider companies. During these times of failures, incoming and outgoing calls are not possible and announcements within the building are limited at best. All these circumstances present safety issues for our students, staff and families. Lack of reliable communication both within school district buildings and outside the District puts our school community in a dangerous position.

The District is proposing a Voiceover Internet Protocol (VoIP) service, which will provide more reliability, better communications and incident response. In addition to replacing the traditional phone, intercom and fax systems, VoIP will allow connections to be made to panic buttons for instant visual and auditory alerts and the ability to interact with other District security systems including door controls, cameras and future strobe lights.

## What You Will See on the Ballot

Voters will be asked to consider three propositions and vote for two Board of Education members on this year's ballot. The first proposition asks voters to consider the proposed school budget for 2023-24, while the second and third propositions ask voters to consider two safety capital projects, which will have no impact on taxes. This is how they will appear on the ballot:

### Proposition #1: Basic Budget

*Shall the Board of Education be authorized to expend the sum of \$140,949,698 during the 2023-2024 school year as a basic budget?*

### Proposition #2: George Fischer Middle School Water Tank Replacement

*Shall the Board of Education of the Carmel Central School District be authorized to, without the levy of additional taxes, replace the water tank at George Fischer Middle School, and acquire associated and incidental equipment, machinery, apparatus and perform related work, at an estimated maximum cost of \$500,000, which amount shall be paid for entirely from the Capital Reserve Fund?*

### Proposition #3: Districtwide Phone System, Intercom and Public Address System

*Shall the Board of Education of the Carmel Central School District be authorized to, without the levy of additional taxes, replace the districtwide phone, intercom and public address system in its School Buildings, district office, transportation office and bus garage, and acquire associated and incidental equipment, machinery, apparatus and perform related work, at an estimated maximum cost of \$1,000,000, which amount shall be paid for entirely from the Capital Reserve Fund?*

### School Board Candidate Elections

There are two (2) Board of Education seats up for election this year. All residents may vote on the two available seats and the three propositions. The seats will be filled by the two candidates with the highest number of votes for three (3)-year terms, commencing July 1, 2023, and expiring on June 30, 2026.

Candidates are (as they will appear on the ballot):

- Carmela Atria
- James Wise
- Jordi Douglas





81 South Street, P.O. Box 296  
Patterson, NY 12563

[WWW.CARMELSCHOOLS.ORG](http://WWW.CARMELSCHOOLS.ORG)

Mary-Margaret Zehr,  
Superintendent

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Debra Heitman-Cayea, President

Melissa Orser, Vice President

Valerie Crocco

John C. Curzio II

Dawn Dall

Matthew Morello

Jason Paraskeva

Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
White Plains, NY  
Permit No. 763

Postal Customer

**Budget Vote: May 16, 2023, 6 a.m. - 9 p.m.**

## Voter Information

If you are a resident of Carmel Central School District and are registered for general elections in the county where you reside (Putnam or Dutchess), you are eligible to vote on May 16. You may register with the County Board of Elections by mail or through the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles website until May 11, 2023.

### Voting Locations

Registered voters must vote at their designated polling place based on address. If you are unsure of your polling place, please contact Joanne Stevens, district clerk, at 845-878-2094, ext. 201, or [jstevens@carmelschools.org](mailto:jstevens@carmelschools.org).

 Patterson Residents:  
CCSD Administrative Office, 81 South Street, Patterson

 Kent/East Fishkill Residents:  
Kent Elementary School, Route 52, Carmel

 Carmel/Putnam Valley/Southeast Residents:  
Carmel High School, 30 Fair Street, Carmel

### Absentee Ballots

Application for an absentee ballot is available on our website, [carmelschools.org](http://carmelschools.org), or by contacting Joanne Stevens, district clerk, at 845-878-2094, ext. 201, or [jstevens@carmelschools.org](mailto:jstevens@carmelschools.org). The application must be received by the District Clerk by May 10 (mail) or May 15 (in-person).

**Completed ballots must be received at the CCSD Administrative Office by 5 p.m. on May 16, 2023.**

