



# 2025-26 Budget Development Plan & Calendar

## BUDGET OBJECTIVES

In developing the budget, the Board of Education aims for:

- 1. Student-Centered Programming:** Advance innovative programs and professional development that equip students with the skills and knowledge essential to thrive in a complex global environment and become engaged citizens.
- 2. Fiscal Responsibility:** Achieve short- and long-term fiscal balance between community desires for excellent education and reasonable taxes. This requires critical evaluation of current and proposed spending, alongside consideration of additional funding streams beyond taxes.
- 3. Advocacy:** Closely track state-level decisions on aid, policy and regulation to effectively advocate for the interests of students in the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central School District.

## CONTEXT FOR DEVELOPING THE 2025-26 BUDGET

As we approach the budget development process for the 2025-26 budget year, we are looking to build upon the processes we have used in the past as well as account for the different revenue environment we find ourselves in moving forward. One particular area of uncertainty at the time of this writing is the amount of State Aid we will be receiving in the 2025-26 school year. As many of you are aware, the Rockefeller Institute is conducting a study to review the current Foundation Aid formula with the intention of making recommendations to the Governor and State Legislature on revisions for the future. It appears that we will not know what these recommendations are until December of 2024, and, even then, it is unknown what aspects of these recommendations will ultimately be accepted by the Governor and State Legislature for enactment in the 2025-26 State budget. As always, our goal for the 2025-26 budget process is to work through this uncertainty to develop a student-centered, forward thinking educational plan that carefully evaluates the educational and financial impact of that plan over the short and long term:

1. We received initial guidance that the increase for both of the district's commercial insurance plans (Blueshield and CDPHP) could range from 10-15% for 2025-26. This will present a significant challenge to the budgeting process as every 1% increase in the budget for health insurance is approximately \$103,000. A 10% increase would be approximately \$1,030,000 while a 15% increase would be \$1,545,000. Note that a 3% increase in the district's tax levy yields approximately \$1,387,000. As such, it is possible the entirety of the district's tax levy increase for 2025-26 will be needed to fund the health insurance increase.
2. In addition, we received renewal rates for retirees enrolled in the Medicare Advantage Program that runs from Jan. 1, 2025 through Dec. 31, 2025, and those rates are significantly concerning. Rates for the Blueshield Medicare Advantage plans are slated to increase by nearly 7% while rates for CDPHP Medicare Advantage could increase nearly 33%. The combination of these increases will yield an estimated \$169,000 increase in the 2025-26 budget. As a point of reference, every 1% increase in overall health insurance expenditures equates to approximately \$103,000 for the district. A 15% increase in health insurance would result in a roughly \$1.5 million increase which in and of itself would require more than a 3% increase in the district's tax levy to cover.
3. BH-BL is fortunate its residents by and large support high-quality programs when balanced by reasonable taxes. The May 2024 budget proposition, which was within the district's tax levy cap, was approved by nearly 75% of district voters.
4. Since the 2014-15 school year, weighted average tax rate increases have averaged 1.27% due to controlled expenditure growth and increased assessed value from new construction in the district. It should be noted that the weighted average increase in the district's tax rates over this time period is significantly less than the rate of inflation over the same time period.

## CALENDAR OF BUDGET & ELECTION ACTIVITIES

- Mid-Jan.** Announcement of Governor's budget proposals
- Feb. 5 • W** Budget update during regular BOE Mtg, 6 p.m., Boardroom
- Feb. 14 • F** Compiled budget requests & reference materials shared with BOE
- Feb. 26 • W** Finance Committee Mtg, 5 p.m., (Regular BOE Mtg to follow at 6 p.m.) Submit tax levy limit information to state comptroller (March 1)
- Mar. 12 • W** Finance Committee Mtg, 5 p.m., HS Boardroom (Regular BOE Mtg to follow at 6 p.m.) Approve referenda & notice of annual mtg
- Mar. 26 • W** Finance Committee Mtg, 5 p.m., HS Boardroom (Regular BOE Mtg to follow at 6 p.m.)

**April 9 • W 2025-26 Budget Forum, 6 p.m., Boardroom (regular board meeting to follow)**

- April 10 • Th** Finance Committee Mtg (if needed)
- April 14-18:** Spring Recess NO SCHOOL
- April 21 • M** BOE candidates' filing deadline, 5 p.m.
- April 23 • W** Adopt Proposed 2025-26 Budget as part of regular BOE Mtg; Property Tax Report Card submitted to SED
- April 25 • F** Draft budget newsletter to BOE (tentative)
- April 30 • W** Budget materials available in all schools & on district website
- May 7 • W** Budget Hearing as part of regular BOE Mtg, 6 p.m., Boardroom
- May 8-19** Outreach to inform school groups & community about 2025-26 budget
- May 8 • Th** Budget notice & newsletter mailed to residents
- May 14 • W** Meet-the-Candidates Night, 7 p.m., location TBD

**May 20 • Tu School Budget Vote, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., BH-BL High School Gymnasium**