

# SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

Together, We are the Champions for Children in Poughkeepsie City School District

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## Budget, buses, capital improvements

# District vote May 20: What to know

Tuesday could be a historic day for the Poughkeepsie City School District.

While the district budget and Board of Education election vote is an important day every year, propositions on this year's ballot would, if approved, enable the district to provide school bus service to every elementary student who lives more than a half-mile from their school. It's service that has not been offered since the establishment of the school district in 1843. Another proposition would allow the district to utilize an existing capital reserve fund to make building improvements and repairs.

Polling sites will be open on May 20 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. This is what's on the ballot:

### 2025-26 budget proposal

A \$147.7 million budget is proposed to voters, which would allow for the expansion of extended learning time and extracurricular programs, support the growth of college and career training programs, and allow for the implementation of school buses at the elementary level, should Propositions 2 and 3 be approved.



## Voting information

The Poughkeepsie City School District's annual budget vote and school board election will be held May 20. Polls will be open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. at:

**Wards 1, 3:** Morse Elementary, 101 Mansion St.

**Ward 5:** Warring Elementary School, 283 Mansion St.

**Wards 2, 4:** Clinton Elementary, 100 Montgomery St.

**Wards 6, 7:** Poughkeepsie Middle School, 55 College Ave.

**Ward 8:** Krieger Elementary, 265 Hooker Ave. (Whittier Boulevard entrance)

Visit [the district's voting page](#) to learn more.

## Budget newsletter now available

This year's budget newsletter has arrived in mailboxes across the district and is available online at [poughkeepsieschools.org](http://poughkeepsieschools.org). A Spanish translation version will also be available on the district site. This year's edition includes information on the proposed budget and propositions, as well as a look at key district programs and initiatives, like the Elementary Reconfiguration, College and Career Readiness, and Community Schools. There's also an update on capital improvement project progress. Be sure to take a look through before heading to the polls!





The budget would remain under the tax cap while still increasing the amount spent on general instruction by more than \$2.8 million. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Eric Jay Rosser's proposed \$147,634,460 spending plan would increase the tax levy by just 1.247%, the lowest in six years in the district. Roughly \$5.3 million in fund balance would be utilized; nearly \$36.9 million in restricted and unrestricted fund balances would remain unused. [Read the full budget here.](#)

Some of the areas the spending plan would make investments in include:

- Providing buses to all students grades pre-K through 5 who live at least a half-mile from their school.
- Instructional programming, including the addition of high school credit-bearing courses at the middle school, giving students a head start on graduating on time.
- Extracurricular program expansion at the secondary level, including the addition of a marching band and robotics club.
- Expanding extended learning time, or ELT, from three days to five at the elementary level.
- Financing early college and career training programs, such as dual-enrollment courses and [participation in the Dutchess BOCES CTI program](#), and the general pre-K through 12 college and career readiness programming happening in each district school.
- Multi-language learning supports, including the implementation of a system in which multi-language learners have access to a dedicated transition counselor throughout high school to help address the "high population" of such students who drop out prior to graduation, and the natural extension of the dual-language program into the third grade.
- Supports for students with exceptionalities.
- Arts and music education supplies and repair funding.
- Increased availability of field trips.
- Social and emotional learning, including adding an additional social worker for the middle school.
- Teacher and leader professional learning, in addition to resources allocated through the district's Title II budget.
- Rightsizing compensation for staff, a process that has been ongoing for six years.



**Students take part in a dual-enrollment business class.**

The elementary ELT expansion would cost roughly \$1.86 million. It's the largest addition to next year's budget, followed by the \$1.8 million needed to begin the elementary school bus program, should voters opt to approve. Ninety percent of the transportation expenses would be offset by state aid beginning in 2026-27. The district is also planning to expand ELT at the middle school to five days, though that would be financed through grant funding rather than the budget itself.

As part of the budget process, the district eliminated four administrative positions, resulting in a savings of more than \$400,000.

### **One school board seat open**

Two candidates – Eleanor Evans-Chiarenza and Gregory "Tron" Melton – are vying to fill the school board seat vacated by Dr. Andrew Rieser, whose term ends June 30. The favored candidate would serve a three-year term beginning July 1 and ending June 30, 2028. Both candidates submitted [biographical information available here.](#)

### **Propositions 2 and 3 regard buses**

Two propositions on the ballot would allow the district to provide bus service to students on a level never before offered in the district's history.





Proposition 2 would authorize the district to provide transportation to all eligible pupils. Proposition 3, which may only be passed if Proposition 2 passes, would establish Child Safety Zones, which would enable the district to be reimbursed on providing bus service to any elementary student who lives beyond a half-mile from their school. By rough estimation, this would result in the district providing buses to nearly 1,900 students. The district has been working with consulting company BusRight to draft routes and determine exactly how many additional buses would be needed to serve all students. BusRight will also supply route information to any company chosen to supply the buses, which will enable families to use BusRight's app for real-time updates on timing and any delays the bus may be experiencing.

The district believes the availability of buses will lead to increased attendance, test scores and graduation rates, all elements for which the Child Safety Zone program was established. Under the program, districts are eligible to receive financial aid for 90% of the cost of providing transportation to students who live more than a half-mile from their school and would have to walk through a hazardous area as defined by factors like traffic, lane crossings, availability of sidewalks, traffic control devices or crossing guards, crime rates and others. [Read more here.](#)

#### **Proposition 4 authorizes building improvement work**

Proposition 4 would authorize the district to utilize the "2021 Capital Reserve Fund," \$5 million plus accrued interest, for repairs and improvements to the Jane Bolin administration building at 18 S. Perry St., including installing new unit ventilators in classrooms, installing an elevator, roofing repairs and the installation of a digital sign. The money has already been set aside by the district and would not result in increased taxes, but resident approval is required before those funds can be used.



**Families enjoyed free food and games at last year's Community Schools Spring Festival.**

## **Free food, fun Saturday at Spring Festival**

Get ready for fun, whether or not there's sun. Community Schools is holding its fifth annual Spring Festival Saturday at Poughkeepsie High School's track and field, an extravaganza of food, games, music, bouncy houses and even petting zoo animals. "We're excited," Community Schools Interim Administrator Jessica Ortiz said. "We're going to have a lot of fun and it's a great opportunity for families to learn more about the resources available to them." The free event will run, rain or shine, from noon to 3 p.m. Food will be free, as well, served on a first-come, first-served basis, and families are encouraged to bring their own water. In addition to ice cream, popcorn and

cotton candy, Amani's Kitchen food truck will provide hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken nuggets and fries. More than 1,000 regularly attend the Spring Festival, which shares similar offerings as its sister event, the Back to School Bash in September. While the fall event welcomes students and families back into the district community after the summer, Saturday's festival is meant as a party to kick off the end of the school year. There will again be a petting zoo for families to enjoy, as well as hayrides around the field. Several community-based organizations will be on hand to share information and "we'll have a nice set of bouncy houses if the rain permits us to have them, Ortiz said." The forecast calls for a chance of morning thunderstorms.

Everyone who attends will be given a raffle ticket for one of several baskets filled with goods from local businesses, or one of seven bikes and helmets donated to Community Schools.

Though the event is free and walk-ins are welcome, Community Schools asks attendees to [preregister at this link.](#)



**Keiley Lopez-Perez shakes hands with Dutchess BOCES CTI Principal Nick Millas.**

## High School students inducted to National Technical Honor Society

Poughkeepsie High School junior Keiley Lopez-Perez was among 20 students inducted into the National Technical Honor Society at Dutchess BOCES' Career and Technical Institute (CTI) May 1. Lopez-Perez is studying Cosmetology.

Students completed an application with a writing prompt, provided community service hours and recommendation letters from instructors and job supervisors and had to have an overall career technical education average of 93 or above in order to be considered.

Each student was presented with a certificate, purple cord and positive attributes read aloud by CTI teachers before reciting the

organization's pledge. NTHS President and second year Cosmetology student Victoria Kirsch shared how being a part of the organization helped her grow as a leader and future professional and how she feels prepared not just for her field, but for life.

"This organization represents so much more than just good grades and accomplishments, it's about dedication, hard work, leadership and the willingness to push ourselves further," Kirsch said. "We are shaping a better future, not only for ourselves, but for the community and industries we'll one day serve."

## Summer Reading focus of 'The Rotunda'

The May/June issue of the Poughkeepsie Public Library District publication "The Rotunda" features a look at the library system's 2025 summer reading promotion titled "Color Our World."

The program runs from June 28 to mid-August and includes components for children, teens and adults. Children and teens who sign up and log their reading exploits will be eligible for drawings for prizes and games in which they can win prizes. Adults who pick up, fill out and return a "Reading Bingo" sheet will likewise be eligible to win a gift bundle. The whole thing begins with a kickoff party from 10 a.m.-noon June 28 in the Adriance Memorial Library parking lot. The issue also includes information on a May 17 Mah Jongg Tournament, a Jewish Cooking and Culture series of informational events, a rundown of where the Rover mobile library will be, and the usual calendar of events and programs. Visit the [library's website](#) to read the issue and learn more about the programs offered.



## Other newsletters to keep you informed:

Poughkeepsie City School District publishes a variety of newsletters throughout the year. Here are the available newsletters: [Curriculum & Instruction Weekly](#), May 16, 2025; Multilingual Learner Weekly, [May 9, 2025](#) and [May 16, 2025](#); [Poughkeepsie Pioneer Athletic and Wellness](#), May 2025.

## Upcoming events

- **May 17:** Spring Festival: Noon-3 p.m. at Poughkeepsie High School, 70 Forbus St.
- **May 20:** Annual district budget and board election vote (see above for details)
- **May 21:** Board of Education meeting: 6:30 p.m. at the Bolin administration building, 18 S. Perry St.
- **May 21-22:** Districtwide elementary play "Moana Jr.": at Krieger Elementary, 265 Hooker Ave.; Doors open 5:30 p.m. each night; play begins 6 p.m.
- **May 22:** [Hip Hop Theater featuring Poughkeepsie Middle School students:](#) 7 p.m. at the Bardavon, 35 Market St. Free admission though there is a \$6 suggested donation
- **May 23-28:** Schools and district offices closed due to Memorial Day observance and giveback days