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**CURRENT RESIDENT**  
**GARRISON, NY 10524**

**Garrison Union Free School District**  
P.O. Box 193  
1100 Route 9D  
Garrison, NY 10524

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Sarah Tormey, *President*  
Courtney McCarthy, *Vice President*  
Jocelyn Apicello, *Trustee*  
David Gelber, *Trustee*  
Jennifer Harriton-Wilson, *Trustee*  
Dan Jasnow, *Trustee*  
Kent Schacht, *Trustee*

**INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT**

Carl L. Albano

**SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR**

Joseph Jimick

**DISTRICT CLERK**

Dusti Callo  
[www.gufs.org](http://www.gufs.org)  
(845) 424-3689, ext. 550

*(Disponible en Español: [www.gufs.org](http://www.gufs.org))*



**Garrison**  
Union Free School District

**2024 BUDGET  
NEWSLETTER**

**Annual School Budget Vote and School Board Election**  
Tuesday, May 21, 2024 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM  
Garrison School Gymnasium  
1100 Route 9D Garrison, NY 10524

Dear Garrison Community,

We are excited to share the Garrison Union Free School District's proposed budget for the 2024-2025 academic year. After thorough analysis and collaboration between the Board of Education and the administrative team, we developed a budget that reflects our commitment to fiscal responsibility while maintaining essential programs and staffing levels. We are recommending a \$13,369,573 spending plan, which represents a 4.44% tax levy increase that falls within the allowable tax cap limit. This budget supports academic excellence, environmental and sustainability education, the performing arts, athletics, extracurricular activities, and high school choice.

In recent years, we have made significant progress in improving our school's infrastructure. Capital projects such as the installation of an all-electric HVAC system, motion sensor LED lights, water saving plumbing valves, and low maintenance vinyl floors have not only reduced our environmental footprint, but also enhanced the health and wellness of our students and staff. However, there are still remaining facilities issues, such as roofing, masonry, paving, and building envelope projects that need to be addressed.

To ensure the preservation of one of Garrison's most valuable assets, we have developed a multi-year strategy to tackle one school building improvement project annually, avoiding the need for borrowing in the current high-interest rate environment. For example, the 2024-2025 budget allocates \$250,000 for the replacement of the Gymnasium roof. Upon approval by the taxpayers, this project will commence in the upcoming school year. Through persistent advocacy, the District has secured a \$125,000 NYS CREST grant, which will be released upon the project's completion. This grant money will then be applied to offset the cost of future projects.

To close the budget gap, we intend to use \$902,878 from our fund balance reserves. Due to successful lobbying efforts and FEMA COVID-19 reimbursement funding, our unassigned fund balance now exceeds the allowable 4%. Therefore, we are confident in allocating monies from the fund balance to cover the budget shortfall for this fiscal cycle. While we recognize that relying on fund balance is not a sustainable long-term strategy, we believe it is a prudent measure for this year to alleviate the financial burden on our community.




We encourage all community members to participate in the Annual School Budget Vote and Board of Education election scheduled for Tuesday, May 21, 2024, from 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM in the Garrison School Gymnasium. Detailed information regarding the proposed budget and propositions are available on the homepage of our website: [www.gufs.org](http://www.gufs.org).

Thank you for your ongoing support of our school district.

Sincerely,  
Carl L. Albano, Interim Superintendent  
Garrison UFSD Board of Education



**GARRISON UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET NOTICE**

<b>OVERALL BUDGET PROPOSAL</b>	<b>Budget Proposed for the 2023-2024 School Year</b>	<b>Budget Proposed for the 2024-2025 School Year</b>	<b>Contingency Budget for the 2024-2025 School Year</b>
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$12,564,788	\$13,369,573	\$12,720,430
Increase/Decrease for the 2024-2025 School Year		\$804,785	\$155,642
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		6.4%	1.2%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.12%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budget Amount	\$10,721,026	\$11,196,981	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$0	\$0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable	\$0	\$0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$0	\$0	
<b>E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A+B+C-D)</b>	<b>\$10,721,026</b>	<b>\$11,196,981</b>	<b>\$10,721,026</b>
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$706,747	\$894,933	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$10,014,279	\$10,302,048	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E-B-F+D)	\$10,014,279	\$10,302,048	
I. Difference: G-H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval)	\$0	\$0	
<b>Administrative Component = 12%</b>	<b>\$1,491,108</b>	\$1,604,721	\$1,449,921
<b>Program Component = 74.9%</b>	<b>\$9,687,390</b>	\$10,012,557	\$9,753,215
<b>Capital Component = 13.1%</b>	<b>\$1,386,290</b>	\$1,752,294	\$1,517,294
Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2024-2025 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated, pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law: Equipment not used to ensure health, safety, or the continuation of special education services would be eliminated in the event of a contingency budget. Reduction of staff would be required in the event of a contingency budget. The use of facilities by outside groups would be eliminated in the event of a contingency budget. The gymnasium roof will not be replaced and class sizes will increase.			
<b>Proposition #2:</b> Authorization for Term of Instruction Contract with Haldane Central School District			
<b>Proposition #3:</b> Authorization for Term of Instruction Contract with Highland Falls/Fort Montgomery Central School District			
<b>Proposition #4:</b> Authorization for Continuous Voter Registration			
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings <sup>1</sup>			<b>\$444</b>
The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2024-2025 by the qualified voters of the Garrison Union Free School District, Putnam County, New York, will be held at the Garrison School Gymnasium in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 between the hours of 7:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the Garrison School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by paper voting ballot.			

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

**ESTIMATED IMPACT ON HOME VALUES IN THE GARRISON UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**2024-2025 vs. Last Year**

<b>FULL VALUE</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>	<b>\$700,000</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>
<b>ANNUAL INCREASE IN TAXES</b>	<b>\$143</b>	<b>\$251</b>	<b>\$358</b>	<b>\$537</b>

**2024-2025 SCHOOL BUDGET VOTE**

**Proposed 4.44% Tax Levy Increase  
Frequently Asked Questions**

**IS THE DISTRICT SEEKING AN OVERRIDE THIS YEAR?** No.

**IS A 4.44% TAX LEVY INCREASE WITHIN NYS's TAX CAP FORMULA?** Yes. The Garrison Union Free School District's proposed tax levy increase is 4.44%, which is the maximum amount allowable under the NYS tax cap formula.

**WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST BUDGET DRIVERS FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL BUDGET?** The significant drivers include a proposed gymnasium roof replacement project, gymnasium floor refinishing, high school tuition expenses due to enrollment, transportation costs, hiring a new elementary teacher for an additional kindergarten section, and various other expenditures. For a full list of cost drivers, please refer to the budget presentations on the district website at [www.gufs.org](http://www.gufs.org).

**WHAT IS THE YEAR-OVER-YEAR BUDGET INCREASE?** The proposed budget represents a 6.4% (or \$804,785) increase in spending from the 2023-24 school year.

**HOW DOES OUR TAX RATE COMPARE WITH OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS?** Per \$1,000 of assessed value, Garrison taxpayers have the second lowest tax rate out of 88 school districts in the Lower Hudson Valley region, which includes Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Westchester counties. Garrison's school tax rates are lower than 90% of the districts in New York State.

**WAS GARRISON'S NEW YORK STATE FOUNDATION AID REDUCED?** Initially, under Governor Hochul's Executive Budget proposal, Garrison faced a 39.5% decrease in Foundation Aid, amounting to a \$234,036 reduction. However, thanks to strong lobbying efforts and opposition from the Senate and Assembly, Foundation Aid was reinstated in the final NYS budget.

**WHY USE FUND BALANCE TO CLOSE THE BUDGET GAP VERSUS AN OVERRIDE?** After the approval of the 2023-2024 budget, the District secured special NYS aid through successful lobbying efforts, and received FEMA COVID-19 reimbursement funding. Furthermore, during the 2023-24 school year, the District experienced an unexpected decrease in tuition expenses. These developments have increased our unassigned fund balance beyond the allowable 4%. Therefore, we are confident in allocating \$900,000 from the fund balance to cover the budget shortfall.

**ARE THERE ANY PLANS FOR AN OVERRIDE NEXT YEAR?** At this time, it seems unlikely that the District will require a Tax Cap override for the 2025-26 school year. Nonetheless, factors such as potential cuts in Foundation Aid, unexpected student placement needs, and ongoing inflationary pressures could potentially negatively impact our budget.

**WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF THE TRANSFER TO CAPITAL FOR FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS?** By including facilities improvement projects into our annual budget, we avoid the need to borrow money in today's high interest rate environment. For instance, if we were to obtain a 15-year bond at 4% for the planned \$250,000 gymnasium roofing project, the District would incur approximately \$40,000 in interest payments over the life of the loan.

**IN 2022, VOTERS APPROVED TWO PROPOSITIONS AUTHORIZING THE DISTRICT TO ENTER INTO MULTI-YEAR CONTRACTS WITH HALDANE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AND HIGHLAND FALLS/FT. MONTGOMERY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT. WHY DO THESE SAME PROPOSITIONS APPEAR ON THE BALLOT AGAIN TWO YEARS LATER?** Our aim in proposing extensions of the existing five-year contracts through June 2029 is to secure tuition rate increases tied to CPI or 2%, whichever is less for each cohort of Garrison students from grade 9 until their high school graduation.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF VOTERS DO NOT APPROVE THE BUDGET ON MAY 21ST?** The Board of Education may propose the same or a revised version of the budget for a re-vote on June 18, 2024. They also have the option to prepare and adopt a contingency budget without going back to the voters.

**WHAT DOES A CONTINGENCY BUDGET MEAN?** Under education law, if a school district adopts a contingency budget, the tax levy increase may not exceed the previous year's levy. To comply with this requirement, the Garrison Board of Education would need to reduce \$649,143 from its proposed budget with cuts to programs. Additionally, the District would need to eliminate the gymnasium roof replacement project from the budget, which would cause the District to lose \$125,000 in NYS CREST funding. A contingency budget requires the Board to list all potential cuts to staff and programs as well.

**HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ON THE BUDGET?** For more information on the budget, as well as the many exciting initiatives taking place in our district, please visit our website at [www.gufs.org](http://www.gufs.org). To ask a specific budget question, please email our School Business Administrator, Joseph Jimick at [jjimick@gufs.org](mailto:jjimick@gufs.org).

# MUCH NEEDED FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS

The 2024-2025 budget provides funding for building maintenance projects that include refinishing the gymnasium floor and replacing the gym roof without incurring high interest fees through borrowing.



Gym Floor



Damage from leaking gym roof

# GARRISON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Garrison students can choose to attend high school at Haldane, James I. O'Neill, or Putnam Valley. The budget proposal for the 2024-2025 school year includes funding for the high school tuition of 91 students.



Haldane



Putnam Valley



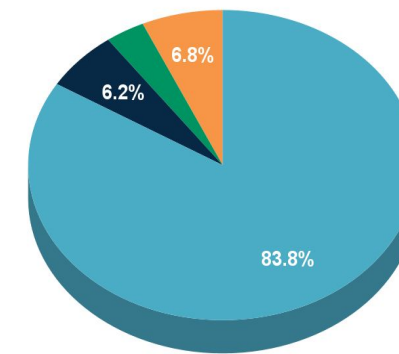
James I. O'Neill

# 2024-2025 PROPOSED BUDGET COMPONENTS

General Support - Administration			Instructional Budget		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board of Education</li> <li>Central Administration</li> <li>Finance</li> <li>Legal/Public Information</li> <li>Operation &amp; Maintenance of Central Services</li> <li>Insurance</li> <li>BOCES Admin</li> <li>Capital Expenses</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administration &amp; Improvement</li> <li>Instruction-Teaching</li> <li>Instructional Media</li> <li>Pupil Services &amp; Activities</li> </ul>		
			<b>Total Instructional Budget</b>	<b>2023-24 Adopted Budget \$6,677,161</b>	<b>2024-25 Proposed Budget \$6,955,534</b>
Pupil Transportation			Undistributed		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee Benefits</li> <li>Debt Service</li> <li>Interfund Transfers</li> </ul>		
<b>Total General Support</b>	<b>2023-24 Adopted Budget \$1,773,277</b>	<b>2024-25 Proposed Budget \$1,977,598</b>	<b>Total Undistributed</b>	<b>2023-24 Adopted Budget \$12,564,788</b>	<b>2024-25 Proposed Budget \$13,369,573</b>
<b>District Transportation</b>	<b>2023-24 Adopted Budget \$1,021,970</b>	<b>2024-25 Proposed Budget \$1,100,042</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$12,564,788</b>	<b>\$13,369,573</b>
			<b>Budget to Budget Increase</b>	<b>3.79%</b>	<b>4.44%</b>

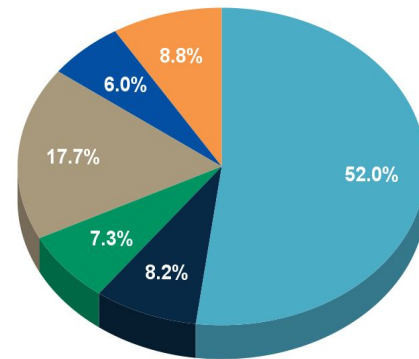
## REVENUES

- Garrison Taxpayers and STAR 83.75%
- State Aid 6.23%
- Investment Interest and Other Revenue 3.27%
- Appropriated Fund Balance 6.75%



## EXPENDITURES

- Instruction 52.03%
- Pupil Transportation 8.23%
- Debt Service 7.28%
- Employee Benefits 17.67%
- O&M 6.03%
- Central Administration 8.76%



## REVENUE SOURCES SUMMARY

- Garrison Tax Payers and STAR: \$11,196,981
- State Aid: \$832,633
- Investment Interest/Other Revenue: \$437,081
- Appropriated Fund Balance & Reserves: \$902,878

## EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

- Instruction: \$6,955,534
- Pupil Transportation: \$1,100,042
- Debt Service: \$973,425
- Employee Benefits: \$2,362,974
- O & M (Facilities): \$805,869
- Central Administration: \$1,171,729

## STAY CONNECTED WITH GARRISON

If you are a resident of Garrison who does not have children currently enrolled in our schools, but would like to receive relevant communications from the District, please click on the QR code to the right to Join Community Groups.



# WHAT YOU'LL SEE ON THE BALLOT

## Vote on Four (4) Propositions

### **PROPOSITION #1: THE BUDGET**

Shall the sum of \$13,369,573 be appropriated to meet the estimated expenditures of the Garrison Union Free School District, for school purposes, for the fiscal year July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025, and the necessary tax to be levied for same, upon the taxable property of the school district, after first deducting the monies available from the State Aid and other sources?

YES  NO

### **PROPOSITION #2: AUTHORIZATION FOR TERM OF INSTRUCTION CONTRACT-HALDANE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Shall the Board of Education of the Garrison Union Free School District be authorized to contract for a period of not less than two and not more than five years with the Haldane Central School District, for the purpose of educating Garrison students in grades 9 through 12, and to provide the necessary transportation for such students?

YES  NO

### **PROPOSITION #3: AUTHORIZATION FOR TERM OF INSTRUCTION CONTRACT-HIGHLAND FALLS/FT. MONTGOMERY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Shall the Board of Education of the Garrison Union Free School District be authorized to contract for a period of not less than two and not more than five years with the Highland Falls Ft. Montgomery Central School District, for the purpose of educating Garrison students in grades 9 through 12, and to provide the necessary transportation for such students?

YES  NO

### **PROPOSITION #4: AUTHORIZATION FOR CONTINUOUS VOTER REGISTRATION**

Shall the Garrison Union Free School District adopt a system of continuous personal registration whereby voters for School District elections and votes may register on any school business day between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. at the District Clerk's Office, commencing July 1, 2024, except that no person shall be permitted to register to vote for a School District election or vote less than five days preceding each such election or vote?

YES  NO

## Vote on Board Candidates: (Three (3) Vacancies)

### **ELECTION TO BOARD OF EDUCATION (Vote for Three)**

**Candidates:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Write In:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Peter Lesser \_\_\_\_\_
- Jennifer Harriton-Wilson \_\_\_\_\_
- Eric Arnold \_\_\_\_\_

### **VOTER QUALIFICATIONS**

- Must be a United States Citizen
- Must be a resident of the Garrison Union Free School District for at least 30 days preceding the vote
- Must be 18 years of age by May 21, 2024
- Must be registered with the Putnam County Board of Elections, or with the School District's Board of Registration, or have voted in a school election within the past four (4) years

## Understanding The Propositions

➤ Voter approval of **Proposition #1 - The Budget**, authorizes the District to meet the estimated expenditures for the 2024-2025 school year by maintaining all current programming as well as estimated year to year cost increases noted in the budget presentations. If approved by a simple majority of the voters, this proposed budget includes an allowable tax cap limit increase of 4.44% based on the formula for Garrison.

Our aim in proposing extensions of the existing five-year contracts through June 2029 is to secure tuition rate increases tied to CPI or 2%, whichever is less for each cohort of Garrison students from grade 9 until their high school graduation.

➤ Voter approval of **Proposition #2 - Term of Instruction Contract with Haldane Central School District**, authorizes Garrison to legally enter into a multi-year contract with the Haldane Central School District for the education of Garrison students in grades 9-12.

➤ Voter approval of **Proposition #3 - Term of Instruction Contract with Highland Falls/Ft. Montgomery Central School District**, authorizes Garrison to legally enter into a multi-year contract with the Highland Falls/Ft. Montgomery Central School District for the education of Garrison students in grades 9-12.

➤ Voter approval of **Proposition #4 - Voter Registration**, allows the district to register voters continuously throughout the school year rather than only on two specific dates.

Voters who may not be able to vote in person may request an absentee ballot. Voters who wish to vote early may request an early voter ballot. Absentee ballot applications and early voter ballot applications can be found on the homepage of the GUFFS website: [www.guffs.org](http://www.guffs.org)

**Voting will be conducted in-person through the use of paper ballots.**

# IT'S OFFICIAL! GARRISON IS NAMED A U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GREEN RIBBON SCHOOL!



On April 26th, Miguel Cardona, the U.S. Secretary of Education, announced the honorees for the Green Ribbon Schools Award. Candidates from 24 states were nominated for their innovative efforts to reduce environmental impact, improve health and wellness, and ensure effective sustainability education. The Garrison School was the only school in New York State to be nationally recognized as one of the recipients of this prestigious award. We are profoundly grateful for the dedication and commitment of our students, staff, administrative team, and Board of Education to make Garrison a true leader in environmental education!

