

BERNE - KNOX - WESTERLO



CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

At a glance:

2023-24 PROPOSED BUDGET \$25,641,075

BUDGET INCREASE FROM 2022-23 \$953,048/3.86%

2023-24 TAX LEVY INCREASE \$343,221/3.2%

BKW community to cast budget vote on May 16

On May 16, 2023, Berne-Knox-Westerlo residents will head to the polls to vote on a proposed \$25,641,075 spending plan for the 2023-24 school year. Under the proposal, spending would increase by 3.86% from the current year. The proposed budget carries a 3.2% tax levy increase, which is below the district's assigned tax levy "cap" of 4.1%. Budget approval requires a simple majority of votes (50% plus one).

The proposed budget maintains all programs, staff, and services.

"This year's budget proposal continues to reflect our district values, our commitment to deliver personalized instruction for students, and our growth mindset for tomorrow," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Timothy Mundell. "The 2023-24 school year budget also serves as a partnership with our community in reviewing and assessing areas of significance related to program and service areas for our students and the entire school community."

For the 2023-24 school budget, the Berne-Knox-Westerlo CSD continues to move forward to alleviate additional costs to our district taxpayers. Over the years (2013 to present), the district has worked diligently to manage the tax levy

to ensure a comfortable adjustment for our district community. That includes managing state aid resources and utilizing our reserves more efficiently, from fuel costs for our transportation services to day-to-day classroom activities.

The 2023-24 proposed budget continues to ensure our district is moving forward in a positive financial direction while continuing to provide our students with opportunities and skills that allow them to be college and career ready, while developing their ability to be responsible, contributing members of our global community.

"By engaging with our community, we continue to receive feedback and data to understand the environment in which our school community feels are necessary for our students to be successful," said Mundell. "That information continues to provide insight into where we can improve for our students while continuing the strong culture in providing social and emotional well-being for our school community."

Vote

Tuesday, May 16 6 a.m. - 8 p.m.

ELEMENTARY CAFETERIA

Also on the ballot: See pg. 8 for a list of propositions.

"This year's budget continues to reflect our district values, our commitment to deliver personalized instruction for students, and our growth mindset for tomorrow."

DR. TIMOTHY MUNDELL, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS



BKW Elementary School students work together while building skill sets in the classroom.



CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Budget Summary

2023-2024

## REVENUES:

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM

CATEGORY	2022-23 BUDGETED	2023-24 PROJECTED	2023-24 CONTINGENCY
Tax Levy	\$10,725,665	<b>\$11,068,886</b>	\$10,725,423
Total State Aid	\$11,814,848	<b>\$12,081,675</b>	\$12,081,675
Fund Balance	\$876,500	<b>\$876,500</b>	\$876,500
Reserves	\$749,014	<b>\$1,027,000</b>	\$877,000
Other Revenue	\$522,000	<b>\$587,014</b>	\$587,014
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$24,688,027</b>	<b>\$25,641,075</b> 3.86% INCREASE	<b>\$25,147,612</b>

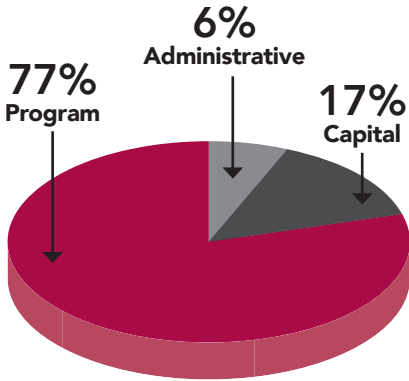
## EXPENDITURES:

WHERE THE MONEY GOES

CATEGORY	2022-23 BUDGETED	2023-24 PROJECTED	2023-24 CONTINGENCY
General Operations	\$2,434,865	<b>\$2,345,494</b>	\$2,298,671
Instruction	\$10,969,357	<b>\$10,887,478</b>	\$10,611,947
Transportation	\$1,741,728	<b>\$1,485,410</b>	\$1,464,301
Employee Benefits	\$6,512,000	<b>\$7,691,004</b>	\$7,691,004
Debt Service	\$2,755,077	<b>\$2,956,689</b>	\$2,956,689
Interfund Transfers	\$275,000	<b>\$275,000</b>	\$125,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$24,688,027</b>	<b>\$25,641,075</b> 3.86% INCREASE	<b>\$25,147,612</b>

## THREE-PART BUDGET:

New York law requires school districts to present their budgets divided into three expenditure categories— program, administrative and capital—and compare them to the previous year’s costs. BKW’s three-part budget is as follows:



CATEGORY	2022-23 BUDGETED	2023-24 PROJECTED	2023-24 CONTINGENCY
<b>Program</b> Includes salaries and benefits of all teachers and staff who deliver pupil services (guidance, health, library/media, etc.), textbooks, equipment, extra-curricular activities, athletics, and transportation costs (excludes bus purchases).	\$18,912,784	<b>\$19,779,821</b> 77.14% OF BUDGET	\$19,483,786 77.48% OF BUDGET
<b>Administrative</b> Includes salaries and benefits of administrators, supervisors, and administrative clerical staff, public information, printing, curriculum and staff development, school board costs, general insurance and professional fees.	\$1,510,491 6.12% OF BUDGET	<b>\$1,484,537</b> 5.79% OF BUDGET	\$1,440,200 5.73% OF BUDGET
<b>Capital</b> Includes salaries and benefits of maintenance and custodial staff, debt service on buildings and school bus purchases, utilities, tax certiorari and court-ordered costs.	\$4,264,752 17.27% OF BUDGET	<b>\$4,376,717</b> 17.07% OF BUDGET	\$4,223,626 16.8% OF BUDGET
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$24,688,027</b>	<b>\$25,641,075</b>	<b>\$25,147,612</b>



CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Required School District Budget Notice

2023 - 2024

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	\$24,688,027	\$25,641,075	\$25,147,612
Increase/Decrease for the 2023-24 School Year		\$953,048	\$459,585
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		3.86%	1.86%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		8.0%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$10,725,665	\$11,068,886	
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>\$10,725,665</b>	<b>\$11,068,886</b>	<b>\$10,725,425</b>
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$542,857	\$576,677	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$11,552,304	\$11,165,480	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D)	\$10,182,808	\$10,492,209	
I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval –See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions)**	\$1,369,496	\$673,271	
Administrative Component	\$1,510,491	\$1,484,537	\$1,440,200
Program Component	\$18,912,784	\$19,779,821	\$19,483,786
Capital Component	\$4,264,752	\$4,376,717	\$4,223,626

\* In a contingent budget, new programs and services would be reduced or eliminated, as would equipment purchases.

\*\* 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
** Proposition to purchase buses at a cost not to exceed \$643,793 including the expenditure of \$150,000 from the Transportation Reserve Fund	\$493,793

**Under the Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 School Year**

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings <sup>1</sup>	\$468
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The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2023-24 by the qualified voters of the Berne-Knox-Westerlo Central School District, Albany County, New York, will be held in the elementary cafeteria in said district on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 between the hours of 6 a.m. and 8 p.m., prevailing time in the elementary, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

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



CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## BKW recognized as first NYS district to achieve trauma-skilled certification

On Wednesday, April 26, the Berne-Knox-Westerlo CSD was recognized as the first public school district in New York state to achieve trauma-skilled certification by the National Dropout Prevention Center (NDPC). Over the past year, the BKW district administration, faculty, and staff participated in a series of multi-day workshops to learn how to recognize, engage, and build student resilience in light of observing traumatic activity.



**NATIONAL  
DROPOUT  
PREVENTION  
CENTER**

Out of twenty-seven school districts across the nation to be certified, BKW stands as the only district in New York state to achieve this critical certification. The district was officially presented with its certification by the Founder of the International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE) Dr. Bill Daggett. Dr. Daggett is a former teacher and administrator, as well as director with the New York State Education Department. Dr. Daggett places a strong commitment to individuals with disabilities and has written numerous books, reports, and articles about learning and education.

"This recognition could not occur without the help and support of our faculty and school community," said BKW Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mundell. "The work that we have implemented over the years continues to create opportunities to lift roadblocks in engaging our students. The ability to recognize and assist students affected by trauma creates opportunities to increase social and emotional connections while supporting our school community. We will continue to foster an environment where our students feel safe during a time of need. As a district, that's always our main priority."

According to the National Dropout Prevention Center website, the Trauma-Skilled Schools Institute provides in-depth training in the National Dropout Prevention Center's (NDPC) Trauma-Skilled Schools Model. The Trauma-Skilled Schools Model focuses

on the implications of adverse childhood experiences on school behavior and learning, the development of essential resiliency skills in the classroom and in other school experiences, and the acquisition of educator skills that enable trauma-impacted students to succeed in school.

On October 11, 2022, Dr. Mundell presented the district's trauma-informed student engagement program at the 32nd Annual Conference of the National Dropout Prevention Center, in Atlanta, GA. During the presentation, he reviewed and shared the details of the district's continued commitment to its engagement program involving students, faculty, and staff.

The following criteria are prioritized when reviewing qualifications to become trauma-skilled certified:

- ★ Provide a framework that allows schools to address stress and trauma and review its impact on learning behaviors.
- ★ Improve social-emotional components of learning and engage today's students.

- ★ Building resiliency through positive connections, understanding strengths and perceptions outside of school then transferring those skill sets in today's classroom.

"This recognition is the result of the hard work and dedication of our school community to prioritize the health and safety of our students," said BKW Director of Pupil Services Susan Sloma. "We have placed equity into this important outreach and strongly believe in its influence to prioritize the social-emotional connection between our staff members and students. We are thrilled to be recognized, but our work isn't finished. We are excited to keep this process moving forward to create a healthier and stronger BKW community."





CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## ART OF LEARNING: BKW delivers results through an in-depth phonics program

During the 2016-17 school year, elementary administrators, and teachers in special education classes, ranging from K-2, introduced a new phonics-based program to students. The program, called Reading Horizons – Discovery, put in place a personalized process to allow special education students to understand the phonetic sounds of words that would enable them to spell, increase their reading skills, and build their vocabulary skill sets.

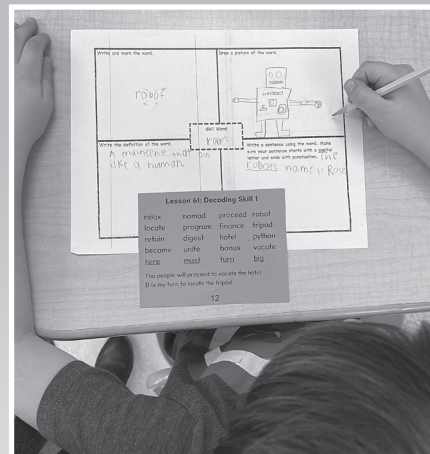
“This program provides our students the basic foundational skills to understand the code of the English language for reading and writing,” said ELA Curriculum Coordinator and Special Education Teacher Melissa Crouse.

“This has given our students the necessary skills to improve their reading in the primary and intermediate grades while increasing vocabulary development and understanding of the written ‘code.’ In today’s classroom, this allows our students to understand the basic rules for reading and writing.”

“This program provides our students the basic foundational skills to understand the code of the English language for reading and writing.”

After six successful years of seeing the program shift student success in the special education classroom, the program was introduced to every K-2 classroom. The results are positive, and the curriculum is creating a fun and engaging way for students to interact and understand how the rules of words can impact their learning abilities.

The multi-sensory approach teaches the phonics behind reading and provides an introduction to becoming a stronger student. By providing students with ac-



After six successful years of seeing the Reading Horizons – Discovery program shift student success in the special education classroom, the program is now available to every K-2 classroom. The results are positive, and the curriculum is creating a fun and engaging way for students to interact and understand how the rules of words can impact their learning abilities.

cess to this program, at an earlier age, it will allow them to create positive learning techniques to build their confidence. This successful outreach is being completed

at the earliest stages of their educational pathway at Berne-Knox-Westerlo Central School District.



CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

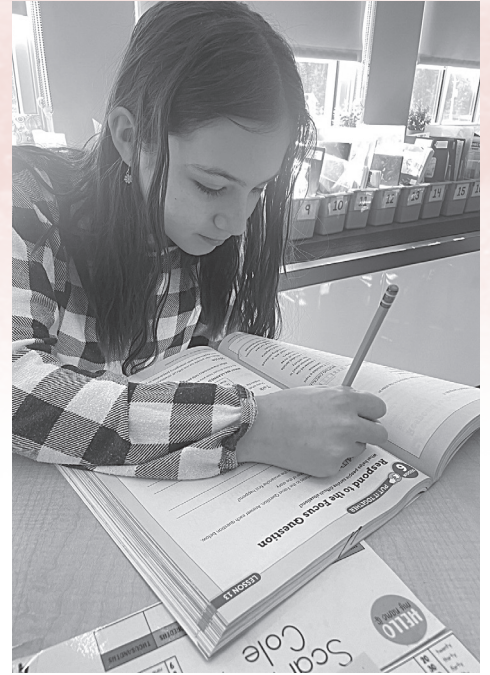
## Building a reading pathway to enrich the learning experience

The opportunity to engage in the classroom is key to keeping students focused on a particular subject – whether it's specialized content, images, or passages from a book. With effective reading, combined with comprehension, the whole world opens for students to learn from a multitude of areas — from science and historical events to sports and popular culture. It all comes back to Berne-Knox-Westerlo's implementation of the Welcome to Magnetic Reading curriculum for elementary students. Introduced in 2022, this program focuses on rich and engaging content that draws elementary students into their subject matter.

In fact, through this curriculum program, students are learning and becoming interested in pursuing additional resources in the process. For example, a student might be introduced to a particular passage of a book and is now interested in reading the entire book. The program creates a special connection between the students and the curriculum while building their interest in becoming vested in their reading success.

"This unique reading program enables our students to learn by becoming stronger at comprehending subject matter and expanding their pathway to becoming better students," said BKW Elementary Fifth Grade Teacher Ms. Smith. "To see how they get excited about historical storylines or ask if they can read a complete book on a particular topic is fantastic. We are introducing a fresh way to keep them interested while allowing them to become better readers and students."

The program also creates opportunities to understand the different backgrounds, traditions, and pathways of communities, and groups of people, from throughout historical and contemporary time frames. So, not only are students understanding comprehension and spelling to become stronger readers and writers, but they are introduced to how the world is unique while learning their communities' role within it. The program is an all-in-one opportunity for students to become stronger readers at the elementary level and allows them to experience awareness of history and society.



### Noteworthy 2022-23 Achievements:

- ★ Ranked third for ELA performance in Albany County NYS Assessments for grades 3-8
- ★ Ranked seventh in the Capital Region BOCES component districts for combined Math/ELA NYS Assessments performance for grades 3-8
- ★ Ranked first in Capital Region BOCES component districts for total student growth NYS Assessment performance for grades 3-8
- ★ Numerous BKW students recognized for outstanding CTE performance
- ★ Strong finishes for FFA participants in statewide competitions
- ★ Various students awarded 1-2 semesters of college credit for courses completed while in high school, saving 12%-25% of college cost
- ★ CASDA Principal of the Year recipient
- ★ CASDA Excellence in Board Service recipient
- ★ WNYT Teacher of the Week recipient
- ★ Capital Region YMCA Outstanding Educator of the Year Award recipient
- ★ First district in NYS to be certified as a Trauma-Skilled School by the National Dropout Prevention Center
- ★ BKW named one of four districts that have organized the first NYS eSports gaming league
- ★ Development of the BKW clay target club - one of the largest in NYS



CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## PBIS IN OUR SCHOOLS: Bringing positive outreach to build a better school community

At BKW, the district strives to build better students and community members. Over the years, from the earliest stages of school all the way through to the secondary school campus, the district has adopted a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) approach.

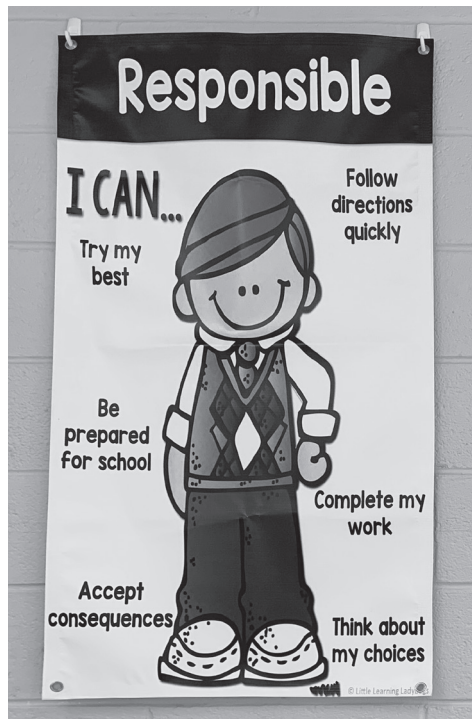
It's a simple process that engages students to establish a positive school culture while becoming better individuals. Overall, its main impact is creating a safer learning environment and it continues to be a success.


"As a school community, we feel it's important to engage our students with opportunities to learn more about doing what's right and understanding what's acceptable behavior," said Berne-Knox-Westerlo Elementary Principal Mrs. Landry. "Especially at the elementary level, where our students are at an important stage of their life and continue to learn and observe their surroundings. By highlighting various topics, and providing opportunities for growth, we create a win-win situation and develop a conversation to create a better learning environment."

As part of the PBIS approach, district administrators and teachers introduce conversations surrounding areas that students can begin to understand in their daily experiences in school, such as Good Citizens, Respectful, Responsible, Ready to Learn, and being Super Safe. The component areas play a role in how students are introduced to and incorporate these main topics into their daily activities inside and outside of today's classroom. This forward-thinking approach allows

staff to introduce topics to increase awareness of ways to improve, manage and encourage various opportunities to support positive mental health and behaviors.

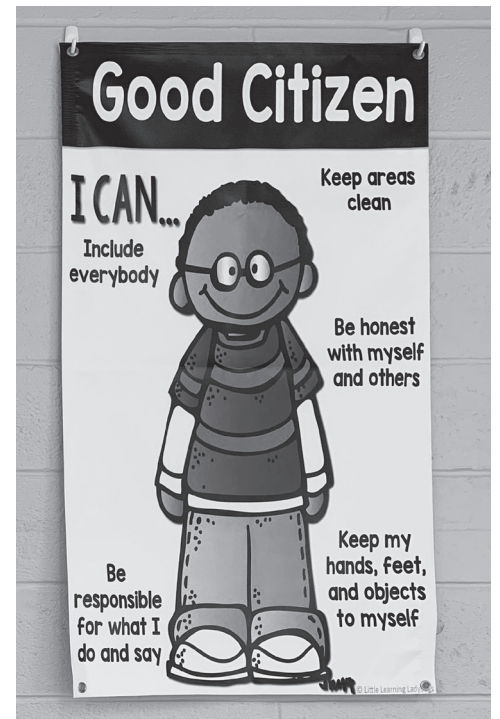
"Introducing PBIS has been a culture-building process for our school campus while engaging our students with why it's important to practice those key areas to improve our classroom experiences," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mundell. "As educators, we are fortunate to build these social skills with our youngest students throughout the remainder of the time in our district. The parallels between PBIS and everyday instruction are incredibly important. We are engaging our students with opportunities to become better citizens and students while giving them the opportunity to learn and grow."





### BKW launches 'BULLDOG FILES' video series

Earlier this year, the district, in cooperation with Capital Region BOCES, introduced its 'Bulldog Files' video series. The videos can be found on the district's YouTube page highlighting the programs and services, and more importantly, our students as they continue their pathway to learning. The newly introduced series covers areas that concentrate on the district's innovative Esports program, the district-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program, and much more. To learn more, visit the district's website ([www.bkwschools.org](http://www.bkwschools.org)) and click on our YouTube icon on the main page.



**2022-23  
Board of Education**

Matthew Tedeschi, *Board President*  
Kimberly Lovell, *Vice President*  
Nathan Elble  
Lisa Joslin  
Rebecca Miller

**Superintendent**  
Dr. Timothy Mundell

**Editor**  
Richard Meddaugh

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**BERNE-KNOX-WESTERLO**

**CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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**BUDGET 2023**

**BERNE – KNOX – WESTERLO**

[www.bkwschools.org](http://www.bkwschools.org)



**CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**VOTE:** Tuesday, May 16, 6 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
ELEMENTARY CAFETERIA

**ON THE BALLOT:**

**PROPOSITION 1**

Vote on a \$25,641,075 proposed budget for the 2023-24 school year.

**PROPOSITION 2**

Shall the Board of Education of the Berne-Knox Westerlo Central School District be authorized to (A) purchase school buses at a cost not to exceed \$643,793, (B) expend such sum for such purpose, including the expenditure of \$150,000 from the Transportation Reserve Fund, (C) levy the necessary tax therefore, to be levied and collected in annual installments in such years and in such amounts as may be determined by the Board of Education in accordance with Section 416 of the Education Law, taking into account state aid received and the amount expended from the Transportation Reserve Fund, and (D) in anticipation of the collection of such tax, issue bonds and notes of the District at one time or from time to time in the principal amount not to exceed \$493,793 and levy a tax to pay the interest on said obligations when due.



Today's BKW students are making gains in learning about career pathways. From our Esports classroom to enrolling in Capital Region BOCES Career and Technical curriculums, they are making strides to become successful in their selected fields of study.

**VOTER ELIGIBILITY**

All voters must be U.S. citizens, age 18 or older, and residents of the district for at least 30 days prior to the vote. Advanced registration is NOT required. You may be asked to show proof of residency (such as a valid ID that lists your address) when voting.

**BOARD ELECTION**

Elect two (2) members of the Board of Education to a three (3) year term commencing on July 1, 2023, and expiring June 30, 2026, to succeed Kimberly Lovell and Nathan Elble whose terms expire on June 30, 2023.

**ABSENTEE BALLOTS**

Absentee ballots are available for residents who are unable to come to the polls if they are out of town or because of health concerns, including but not limited to illness, disability, or hospitalization. Absentee voters must first complete an application. If you want the ballot mailed, the application must be received no later than May 10. To receive an application, contact the district clerk Anne Farnam at (518) 872-1293 ext. 5133. Completed ballots must be received by the district by mail or drop-off no later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 16.