



Minerva Central School
P.O. Box 39
Olmstedville, NY 12857

**Non-Profit
Organization
PERMIT #2
Olmstedville, NY 12857**

**BOX HOLDER OR
RURAL ROUTE**



MINERVA CENTRAL SCHOOL 2026-2027 Budget Development Newsletter

Dear District Residents:

The purpose of this budget newsletter is to share information about the progress made towards the development of next year's proposed school budget. The school board has completed four (4) workshops so far and will adopt the proposed 2026-2027 budget at their next regular meeting scheduled on April 16th at 6:30 pm.

Current Revenue Projections

It is still too early for us to have a complete picture of what revenue we can plan on. School funding comes from two main sources – local property tax levy and state aid.

Property Tax Levy

We can accurately predict what our property tax levy will be because the school board is committed to staying within the property tax cap. While commonly referred to as the “two percent tax cap”, the tax cap for each year is not necessarily two percent. It is determined using a formula provided by the state, and is influenced by three main factors:

the tax base growth factor (a result of property development in the school district), the consumer price index (CPI), and allowable exemptions. Using the formula, the maximum allowable tax levy for next year factors out to be an increase of 5.39% (see chart on page 2 for details).

State Aid

State aid is the other main source of revenue and most figures are not finalized until the adoption of the state budget, which we hope to have no later than April 1st. We do have preliminary figures provided by Governor Hochul's executive state aid proposal released in January (see page 2) which shows a very minimal increase in foundation aid. Expense based and other aids are showing a slight increase, but final aid amounts for these categories are determined only after submission of the ST-3 report in the summer and completion of the state's review process.

Please keep in mind, the executive budget is normally the worst case scenario.

Current Draft of Expenses

At this stage in the budget development process, our total expenses are increasing by approximately \$639,315, or 10%

Capital Outlay

We are looking to do our third capital outlay project in the 2026-2027 school year with the use of some reserve funds. Capital outlay projects cannot exceed \$100,000 in total expenditures and 10% of those funds need to be used in the instructional building.

The scope includes a plan to replace our existing bleachers with four new sets of bleachers. The current bleachers have reached the end of their usable life and no longer meet safety standards. Replacing them is necessary to ensure the safety, comfort, and accessibility of students, families, and community members who attend events at our facilities. This investment will help provide a safer environment for everyone while supporting continued use of our athletic and community spaces.

Budget Development Timeline:
Petitions for expired terms of board members - Jessica West - April 20, 2026; contact Lynn Green, District Clerk.
Absentee & early mail in ballots available - April 21, 2026 - contact Lynn Green, District Clerk.
Budget adoption - April 16, 2026 - during board of education monthly meeting.
Budget presentation - May 12, 2026 at 6:00 pm.
Budget mailing - May 13, 2026 - budget detail, including school budget notice.
Budget vote and board member election - May 19, 2026 - polls open 1:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Building and Grounds, Food Service, and Transportation

Building and grounds: we would like to continue to improve our athletic fields which we know will be a multi-year process, but we want to ensure it is done right so we will be doing a little at a time. Updating our athletic fields is crucial for several reasons, and doing so can significantly enhance the experience for athletes, coaches, and the community.

Food service: This year marked our first year participating in the BOCES Shared Food Service Program, and we are pleased to share that it has been a great success. Through this partnership, we were able to expand menu options and offer a greater variety of nutritious meals to our students. The increased variety encouraged many students to try new foods, and we've seen a positive response in both participation and overall satisfaction. It has been wonderful to see students enjoying what is being served while also being introduced to new choices. Based on the success of this first year, we plan to continue participating in the Shared Food Service Program for the

2026–2027 school year. We believe this program supports both the health of our students and the overall dining experience in our school. We will continue to take advantage of the Community Eligibility Program which is a federal program that allows schools that have at least 25% of its students receiving public assistance to provide free meals for all of their students.

Transportation: We are budgeting for the purchase of a new school van as part of our long-term planning efforts. Our current van is aging, and planning ahead allows us to maintain safe, reliable transportation for students and school activities.

Instructional Program

We will continue our search for a new World Language teacher to ensure we find the best possible fit for our students and program. The successful candidate will play an important role in helping evaluate and select a new World Language curriculum. We will also be moving forward with the second-round purchase of our new ELA program, Wonders, and will fully implement the program this fall.

This phase will also include professional development and training for all appropriate teachers to help them become comfortable and confident using the new program. Full implementation of Wonders will support consistent, high-quality literacy instruction and better meet the needs of our students across grade levels while also meeting NYS standards.

Salary and Benefits

The main expenses that influence the budget from one year to the next are contractual obligations such as salaries, retirement system contributions and health insurance costs. We continue to see fluctuation in all areas as we have in years past. Our health insurance plan premiums alone are set to increase by 4.7% for HRA and PPO members.

Capital Project Update

We are pleased to share that our capital project has been successfully completed. This work included several important upgrades to our facilities, such as a newly paved parking lot, renovated bathrooms, and the installation of a new fire alarm system to enhance safety. In addition, repairs and replacements were made to

the monument and atrium entrance, and a new handicap-accessible ramp was added. These improvements were designed to increase safety, accessibility, and functionality for students, staff, and community members, and we appreciate the community's continued support in making these upgrades possible.

What Else is New?

We are excited to share that beginning in the 2026–2027 school year, Minerva Central School District will be launching a full-day Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) program. Expanding UPK to a

full day is an important step in supporting our youngest learners during a critical stage of development. Research shows that full-day early childhood programs help build strong foundations in social skills, early literacy, and readiness for kindergarten. This program will also provide greater consistency for families while ensuring that children enter school better prepared for long-term academic success. We believe this reflects our commitment to early learning and to supporting students and families from the very start of their educational journey.

Summary

The final draft to be reviewed by the board includes a total budget of \$7,005,169. Overall, the Minerva Central School Board of Education believes that this is a fiscally responsible budget that strives to support quality student programs and services.

Please feel free to contact Candice Husson (Superintendent) and Cortney McCauliffe (Business Manager) with any questions you may have relating to the budget.

Executive School Aid Proposal 2026-2027

<u>Aid Category</u>	<u>2025-2026</u>	<u>2026-2027</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>
General Purpose Aids			
Foundation Aid	\$1,026,513	\$1,036,778	\$10,265
High Tax Aid	\$285,697	\$285,697	\$0
Public & Private Excess Cost	\$0	\$0	\$0
Charter School Transitional Aid	\$0	\$0	\$0
Expense Based Aids			
Building Aid	\$20,176	\$64,234	\$44,058
Transportation Aid	\$45,013	\$53,812	\$8,799
BOCES Aid	\$123,013	\$148,719	\$25,706
Other Aids			
Computer Software Aid	\$1,484	\$1,633	\$149
Library Materials Aid	\$618	\$681	\$63
Textbook Aid	\$5,592	\$6,000	\$408
Hardware Technology Aid	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$1,508,106	\$1,597,554	\$89,448

Maximum Allowable Tax Levy Limit Formula		
25/26 Tax Levy Multiplied by Tax Base	\$4,110,780	
Growth Factor	1.0037	Provided by Essex County
	\$4,125,990	New money due to tax base growth factor (\$15,210)
Subtract 24/25 Exemptions	\$55,977	Energy performance bond principal & interest, less state aid
	\$145,730	2024 capital project bond principal & interest, less state aid
	(\$7,960)	Transportation expense, less state aid
	\$5,237.05	BOCES - capital exclusions
Adjusted 25/26 Tax Levy Multiplied by the	\$3,927,006	
Allowable Growth Factor	1.0200	Based on lesser of 2.0% or consumer price index
26/27 Tax Levy Limit	\$4,005,546	\$78,540 new money due to allowable growth factor
Add 26/27 Exemptions	\$63,678	Energy performance bond principal & interest, less state aid
	\$166,565	2024 capital project bond principal & interest, less state aid
	\$41,800	Capital outlay, less state aid
	\$49,237	Transportation expense, less state aid
	\$5,576.19	BOCES - capital exclusions
26/27 Maximum Allowable Levy	\$4,332,402	

Maximum Allowable Levy Limit	25/26 Actual Tax Rate per \$1,000	26/27 Estimated Tax Rate per \$1,000
26/27 Maximum Allowable Levy	\$4,332,402 MINERVA	\$8.35 MINERVA
25/26 Tax Levy	\$4,110,780 CHESTER	\$8.61 CHESTER
New Money & Change in Exemptions	\$221,622	Est. Increase \$0.45
Percent Increase in Levy	5.39%	