PINE BUSH Central School District

Board proposes $153,150,596 budget for 2026-2027 school year

Two board members will be elected; tax levy increase is 3.42%

Pine Bush Central School District voters will decide on a $153,150,596 budget on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, as well as elect two board of education members.

The budget details

The proposed tax levy will increase by 3.42 percent or $2,200,376 for a total of $66,616,885, within the state budget cap for the district. For homeowners in the district with a home valued at $400,000, which is the average, the annual increase will be $202.67 or just under $17 per month.

Total New York State aid is expected to increase by $488,074 or 0.61% over last year's aid.

Foundation aid is the primary, formula-based funding source for public school districts, accounting for over 70 percent of New York state education aid, according to Superintendent Joseph Lenz. It uses a progressive formula that allocates more money to districts with higher student needs and lower local tax revenue.

"The foundation aid formula was developed with the idea that districts are funded appropriately to educate all students," said Superintendent Lenz. "The formula was updated last year in a couple of areas. The state decided not to make more updates. We are now in a category of 'hold harmless,' which means the state says, with our enrollment declining, we are overfunded for our present enrollment."

Pine Bush is one of nearly 500 districts in the state considered hold harmless and, under the governor's proposal, set to receive just 1 percent in additional foundation aid this school year.

The district is also using $3.385 million in fund balance.

This budget is 2.2 percent more than the current year's budget, an increase of $3,300,653.

The tax levy is the amount of money raised by taxes. Fund balance is money that was previously collected by the district but not appropriated.

Budget revenue includes state aid, property taxes, fund balance and other sources such as tuition, interest, continuing education fees, BOCES reimbursements, and late tax fees, to name a few.

(continues on next page)

2026-27 Budget at a glance

Total Proposed Budget:	Budget Increase:
$153,150,596	$3,300,653

Tax Levy Increase:	Proposed Tax Levy:
3.42%	$66,616,885



The 3.42% tax levy change would cost a district homeowner, with an average home valued at $400,000, approximately $202.67 additional per year, or less than $17 per month.



VOTE

2026-2027 School Budget Vote and Board of Education Election

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Polling Sites in 2026

WHERE TO VOTE

There are two polling sites within the district. Qualified voters may cast their ballots at the following sites:

Election District/Location

- **District 1: Pine Bush High School**
  Residents of Gardiner, Shawangunk, Crawford, and Montgomery
- **District 2: Circleville Elementary School**
  Residents of Mount Hope, Wallkill, and Mamakating

APPRECIATING OUR SENIORS WITH DINNER AND A SHOW



This spring, the stage at Pine Bush High School was transformed into a winter wonderland for a spectacular production of Frozen The Broadway Musical. While the show itself was a tremendous success, the real magic began the night before the curtain officially rose.

In keeping with our long-time Pine Bush tradition, we were honored to host 172 local senior citizens for a special "Dinner and a Show" preview. It was an incredible evening of community connection. This event remains a highlight of our school year, bridging generations through the arts.

Superintendent's Message



Dear Pine Bush CSD Community,

It is a true honor to address you as your superintendent of schools. Having served as your assistant superintendent for Business for the past three years, I have a deep understanding of our district's financial landscape and a steadfast commitment to our mission. My goal will always be to balance the high-quality educational programs our community expects and our students deserve with the fiscal responsibility we owe to our taxpayers.

Our vision is to empower students to dream big, think globally, and achieve personal success. To achieve this, our mission focuses on providing innovative educational opportunities that prepare students for higher education and career pathways, ensuring they become contributing members of an ever-changing world. Both our vision and mission have been at the core of each of our budget decisions this year.

This year's process has been uniquely challenging. As of this writing, the New York State budget remains unapproved, leaving us to navigate the uncertainty of final proposals from Albany. Despite this, we have developed a $153,150,596 budget, a responsible 2.20% increase over the current year. The estimated tax levy change is 3.42%, which remains within our tax levy limit. For a home valued at $400,000, this impact is approximately $202.67 annually, or less than $17 per month. This, coupled with our increase in foundation aid, has resulted in a balanced budget.

To remain fiscally sound, we meticulously reviewed every area of our operations. By analyzing current enrollment and considering retirements and attrition, we successfully reduced a number of positions while fully maintaining the academic, co-curricular, and athletic programs that support our mission. This review included the district office, where we eliminated an administrative assistant position. Notably, through this careful planning, no layoffs were required.

I encourage you to stay informed by signing up for the community portion of our ParentSquare messaging tool. Please remember to cast your vote on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at either Pine Bush High School or Circleville Elementary School, based on the community in which you reside.

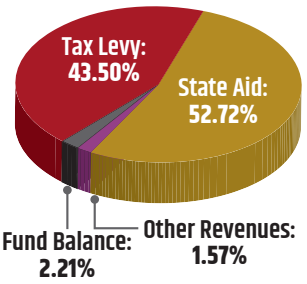
Together, we will continue to build a future where every Pine Bush student is supported, inspired, and prepared to succeed in an ever-changing world.

Sincerely,

Joe Lenz
Superintendent
Pine Bush Central School District

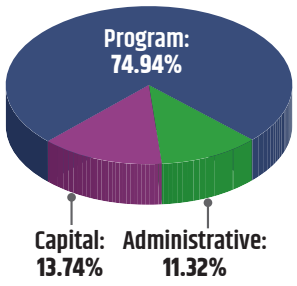
REVENUE SUMMARY

Source	2025-26 Budget	2026-27 Proposed	Dollar Change	% Change
State Aid	$ 80,250,394	$ 80,738,468	$ 488,074	0.61%
Tax Levy	$ 64,416,509	$ 66,616,885	$ 2,200,376	3.42%
Other Revenues	$ 2,097,000	$ 2,410,205	$ 313,205	14.94%
Fund Balance	$ 3,086,040	$ 3,385,038	$ 298,998	9.69%



SPENDING SUMMARY

Components	2025-26 Budget	2026-27 Proposed	Dollar Change	% Change
Program	$ 112,581,175	$ 114,772,184	$ 2,191,009	1.95%
Capital	$ 19,877,385	$ 21,041,704	$ 1,164,319	5.86%
Administrative	$ 17,391,383	$ 17,336,708	-$ 54,675	-0.31%



(continued from previous page)

Two board members will be elected; tax levy increase is 3.42%

Elect two board of education members

Two board of education seats are available. There are four candidates seeking those seats including incumbent Kristi Kheiralla, Starla Ciarelli, Marc Morello and Phillip Salinardi. Learn more about the candidates on page 3.

Providing for our students

The 2026-2027 proposed budget maintains all current academic, co-curricular and athletic opportunities for our students. In addition, Pine Bush High School will be adding a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) program in 2027, welding.

The program would be the fourth CTE program here at the high school, which already has advanced manufacturing, woodworking and business. These are all pathways to graduation available to our students.

"This new program fits perfectly with our Haas programs, our woodworking program and our newly-launched business CTE program, giving students another pathway to graduation," said Superintendent Lenz. "There is a huge interest in welding; we see that by the number of students we have interested in the BOCES program. I am thrilled that this program will become a reality in 2027."

YOUR VOTE MATTERS!

Please Vote Tuesday May 19th.

Absentee and early mail voting

Any residents wishing to vote early may do so. Registered voters must request an early mail ballot or an absentee ballot from the district clerk in writing within 30 days of the election (that is after April 19). The form to request an early mail ballot is posted on our district website, www.PineBushSchools.org.

After verifying the status of the voter, the district will either mail the absentee ballot or early mail ballot or the voter may pick it up at the district office. All completed ballots must be received back to the district clerk by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 19.

For more budget information, scan this code

Escanee el código para leer el boletín de presupuesto en español.

https://www.pinebushschools.org/board-of-education/budget-2/

Meet the board of education candidates

Voters will elect two members to the Pine Bush Board of Education this year. Four candidates, including one incumbent, are running for the seats, which are for three-year terms. The candidates appear below in the order they will appear on the ballot.



PHILLIP SALINARDI

- Program coordinator for Orange County Emergency Services First Responder Peer Support Services
- Lives in Shawangunk
- District resident for 14 years

Phillip Salinardi is a graduate of SUNY Empire State College, earning a bachelor's degree in community and human services. He is a former New York State Police Investigator and served as a sergeant in the US Marine Corp. He and his wife, Tracey, have four children: one is an 11th grader at Pine Bush High School and three have graduated PBHS. Tracey is a PBHS graduate as well. Salinardi is a member of the Catholic War Veterans Post 1937 and the regional Suicide Prevention Coalition. He was a longtime coach with the Town of Wallkill Soccer Club.



KRISTI KHEIRALLA

- Stay-at-Home mom, registered nurse
- Lives in Crawford
- District resident for 12 years

Kristi Kheiralla is a nine-year veteran of the Pine Bush Board of Education and has served as board vice president for the last two years. She is a nine-year voting delegate of the New York State School Boards Association, attending annual conventions and school law conferences. She also served five years as an alternate with the Orange County School Boards Association and as the legislative liaison, advocating for public education at the state level. She has a bachelor of science degree in nursing and worked as a registered nurse at the Hospital for Special Surgery. Kheiralla has four children, one of whom is a student at Crispell Middle School. Kheiralla volunteers in elementary classrooms and enjoys attending school events.



STARLA CIARELLI

- Elementary principal, Florida Union Free School District
- Lives in Mamakating
- District resident for 13 years

Starla Ciarelli is a first-time candidate for school board. She has been in education for 22 years, as both a teacher and administrator. She earned a bachelor of science degree in adolescent education with a concentration in mathematics from SUNY Oswego, a master's degree in instructional technology from New York Institute of Technology and a certificate of advanced study in school building and district leadership from SUNY New Paltz. Ciarelli is married to Mike Ciarelli, a teacher at Pine Bush High School. They have five children, one who graduated from PBHS in 2025, two currently in the high school and two who attend Pine Bush Elementary School. Her husband is a graduate of PBHS. She is a volunteer at her church as a member of the Parish Council.



MARC MORELLO

- Firefighter, New York City Fire Department
- Lives in Crawford
- District resident for 39 years

Marc Morello is making his first venture into school board politics. He grew up in Pine Bush, graduating from Pine Bush High School in 2001, and has lived here with his own family since 2014. He is married with two daughters: an 8th grader at Crispell Middle School and a 3rd grader at Pine Bush Elementary. Morello has a bachelor's degree in aeronautical science from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University and has been a firefighter with the New York City Fire Department for 17 years. He volunteered as a firefighter in Bullville through high school.

PERSONNEL CHANGES FOR 2026-2027

-1.0	District Office Assistant	-7.0	Itinerant Substitute Teachers
-7.0	Instructional Coaches	-1.0	Elementary Special Education Teacher
-1.0	School Psychologist	-1.0	Physical Education Teacher
-1.0	Art Teacher	-2.0	Teaching Assistants
-1.0	Social Studies Teacher	+2.0	Technology Integration Specialists
-1.0	Social Worker	+1.0	Technology Teacher

ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE

Qualified registered voters will be permitted to vote in the school district election on May 19, 2026. To be a qualified registered voter, a person must be:

- A United States citizen
- 18 years of age or older
- A Pine Bush School District resident for at least 30 days before the vote
- Registered

PLEASE NOTE: Anyone who is registered with the county to vote in general elections is also registered to vote in the school district election.

156 State Route 302
Pine Bush, NY 12566

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit # 6605
Newburgh, NY

ECRWSS

******ECRWSSEDDM******

Residential Customer

School Administration

Board of Education

Gretchen Meier, *President*

Kristi Kheiralla, *Vice President*

Board Members

Peter Agro
Shauna Best
Erik Buckley
Dori Johnson
Cara Robertson

District Administration

Joseph Lenz, *Superintendent of Schools*

Rachel Adelstein, *Assistant Superintendent for Instruction*

Brian Weir, *Assistant Superintendent for Business*

Maria Wise, *District Clerk*

Linda Smith, editor

2026-27 Budget Vote and Board of Education Election is Tuesday, May 19, 2026 - 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Pine Bush High School Class of 2026 Top 30


Peter Agro


Lillian Atria


Grant Brown


Shelby Cheng

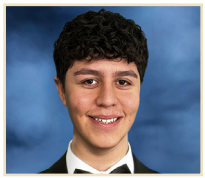

Kathryn Cragan


Emelia Cruz


Ava Elliott


Samantha Fiorentino


Alanah Giannini


Bernardo Gonzalez Perez


Ella Hayward


Sophia Huang


Ella Humphrey


Dominic Licardi


Jocelyn Loennecker


Anthony Maida


Jillian Masci


Nicholas Mazzella


Leah Meberg


Lucas Meisel


Mahek Multani


Avery Ogden


Anuj Patel


Rachael Price


Leeya Santa


Benjamin Somerville


Roscoe Sudol


Julia Tanner


Ethan Vasquez


Nessa Wendell