



April 30, 2024

Dear Community Members,

As the District's superintendent for four years and the elementary school's principal for over six years, I have seen firsthand how educating a child takes a whole community. This is particularly true when facing a difficult budget year. Over the past several months, our Board of Education and district have worked tirelessly to create a school budget that balances our students' current needs with the economic realities we face.

On Tuesday, May 21, the community will vote on a \$14,707,074 proposed budget for the 2024-2025 school year. This budget is an increase of \$898,960 from the 2023-2024 school year.

This is due to an increase in student needs and rising costs for the school district. During the pandemic the district received COVID grant funding to help support our student's mental health, learning interventions, and specific academic needs. This COVID grant funding is no longer available but our students still need the additional support. In addition, over the last two years, the District has seen an increase in students who require special programming. To meet those needs, we have successfully opened two special classes that are able to provide an individualized learning environment for those students.

The New Lebanon Central School District is receiving no increase in state aid for the 24-25 school year. Without additional New York State school aid, the increase in student needs, rise in health insurance, inflationary costs, and contractual obligations, we were forced to consider reductions that would impact student programming. After hearing from numerous community members and parents it was clear that these reductions needed to be reconsidered. As a result, we are asking our community to go above the tax cap.

The District is proposing to go above the tax cap and raise the tax levy by 8.91%, for a total of \$9,846,484. The remainder of the budget consists of non-tax revenue (\$258,000), state aid (\$3,880,675) and use of the district's fund balance/reserves (\$721,915) resulting in a total of \$14,707,074.

To continue programming for our students despite the proposed 8.91% tax levy – the District is moving forward with several Board of Education-approved reductions in expenses. Some of these changes include reducing a full time laborer, campus school resource deputy, reduction of

our Jr/Sr. High School hall monitor, curriculum teacher coordinators, and a reduction of our communication specialist. Ultimately, the aim of the District is to maintain as high a quality experience for the students as possible while assuming full responsibility for balancing the budget and putting the District on track towards greater prosperity. If this proposed budget is not approved by our tax payers, the district will be faced with having to make significant program and extracurricular reductions to the school budget.

For more information on our budget please refer to our Budget section of our school district webpage ([www.newlebanoncsd.org/district/budget](http://www.newlebanoncsd.org/district/budget)). Above all, be sure to get out and vote on Tuesday, May 21, 12-8 p.m. at the Walter B. Howard Elementary School gymnasium.

Fondly,

Andrew Kourt

Superintendent of Schools