



GATES CHILI

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Budget Newsletter 2023

Gates Chili budget not exceeding tax cap, despite rising costs

Dear Gates Chili Community,

As we begin to wrap up the spring semester, we are just months away from the start of the 2023-24 school year! As we reflect back on this school year, it gives us great pride to know all that our students and staff have accomplished thus far. Our Spartans have expanded their learning through new and existing opportunities unique to Gates Chili. We are also enjoying having more families and community members back on campus in person as they engage in the many activities and programs our district has to offer.

As we forge ahead into 2023-24, we will continue to advance learning through rigorous instruction, supporting students with what they need when they need it. This includes academic intervention and mental health services. Our proposed budget also supports a list of programs and services that are vital to our students' educational experience but are not deemed mandatory by the New York State Education Department (NYSED), including kindergarten, teacher aides, elementary school librarians, elementary art and music instruction, school plays/musicals, instrumental lessons, extracurricular clubs, grades 7-12 interscholastic athletics, intramurals, and dual-credit and advanced placement (AP) courses, to name a few.

We are in the midst of a difficult economic landscape this year, with costs rising in a number of areas including mandated wage increases, supplies and materials, and services.

While federal pandemic-relief funding has helped the district to enhance special education services and maintain staffing to provide reasonable class sizes, these relief funds are restricted and separate from revenues that support the general expenditure plan.

Therefore, to support the continued health, safety and education of all students, the Gates Chili Board of Education adopted a proposed spending plan for the 2023-24 school year of \$128,552,415 at its April 18 meeting. Under the proposed plan, the overall spending would increase by \$6,215,006, a 5.08% increase over the 2022-23 budget. However, it is important to note that the proposed tax levy increase is \$59,954,918, an approximate 2.99% increase, which does not exceed the tax cap.

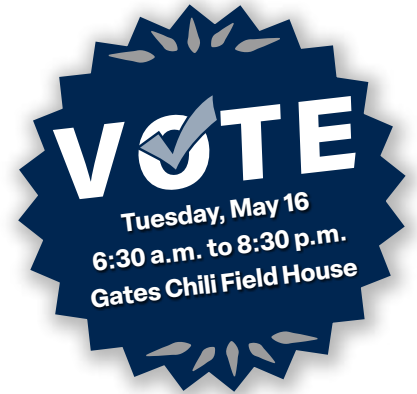
This newsletter contains information about the 2023-24 budget on pages 2-5, information about candidates running for the Board of Education on pages 6-7, as well as many stories of the outstanding successes and opportunities available to our students and staff. Please review it ahead of the May 16 vote. On behalf of the Gates Chili Board of Education, faculty and staff, we thank you for your continued support.

Go Spartans!

Christopher J. Dailey
Superintendent of Schools



@GatesChiliSuper



INSIDE THIS ISSUE: RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Gates Chili CSD is grateful for the community's continued investment in the district. While the return on investment isn't measured in dollars, it can be measured in success and achievement. Throughout this issue, you will find how your investment is reaping great returns for students.

Together we teach and inspire excellence for all learners.

Three-Part Budget Summary

New York State requires school districts to present their budgets divided into three expenditure categories – administrative, program and capital.

Total Budget: \$128,552,415

Administrative	2022-23	2023-24
Amount	\$12,032,572	\$13,667,845
Percent of Budget	10%	10%

Provides overall general support and management services including employee benefits for administrative and clerical support staff, costs for administration and supervision of each of the six schools, staff development, business operations and central administration.

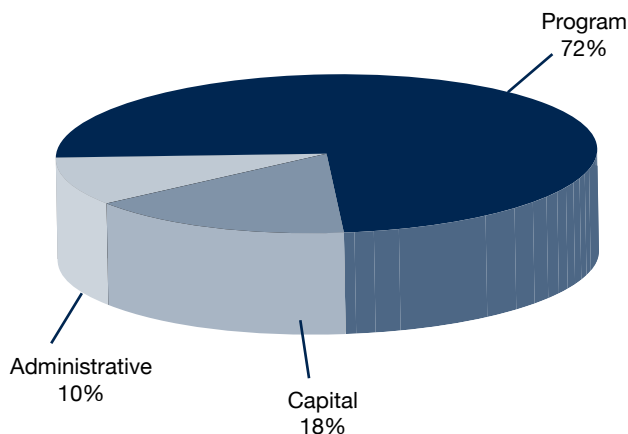
Program	2022-23	2023-24
Amount	\$89,211,398	\$92,097,290
Percent of Budget	73%	72%

Provides instruction and educational support services for the district's students. This includes the transportation costs, special education services and benefits for the instructional and non-instructional program staff.

Capital	2022-23	2023-24
Amount	\$21,093,439	\$22,787,280
Percent of Budget	17%	18%

Provides maintenance and custodial services for six schools, the surrounding property, utility services, debt service payments and benefits for maintenance and custodial staff.

Proposed 2023-24 Three-Part Budget



What's on the ballot?

Residents will vote on the following propositions:

Proposition 1 – School Budget

The school budget proposition authorizes the Gates Chili Central School District to spend \$128,552,415 for school purposes during the 2023-24 fiscal year and to levy the necessary tax therefore.

Proposition 2 – Bus Purchases

This proposition authorizes the purchase of school buses at a total cost of no more than \$1,929,330. New York State reimburses Gates Chili approximately 75% of the cost of bus purchases.

Proposition 3 – Establishment of Capital Reserve Fund

This proposition authorizes the creation of a capital reserve fund to finance reconstruction and improvement of school buildings and facilities. This fund shall not exceed \$15,000,000 with a 10-year life.

Proposition 4 – Student Representative to the Board of Education

This proposition authorizes a student to serve as an ex officio student member of the Gates Chili Board of Education.

Board Candidates

Residents will vote to fill three Board of Education seats for three-year terms and one Board of Education seat for a one-year term. Candidates, in ballot order, are: Kathryn Davis (incumbent), Linda Palmer, Scott Bubel, Robert Long (incumbent), Catherine Coffee (incumbent), Michelle Jennings and Jahmar Elliott.

Estimated Tax Rate

Estimated 2023-24 tax rates use 2022 tax rolls and equalization rates.

2022-23 Tax Rate	\$24.14
Estimated 2023-24 Tax Rate	\$24.25

Where does the money come from?

REVENUE SUMMARY

Revenue Sources	2022-23 Adopted Budget	2023-24 Proposed Budget
Appropriated Fund Balance	2,800,000	1,100,000
Capital Technology Reserve	300,000	0
Employee Benefit Accrued Liability Reserve	100,000	100,000
Employee Retirement System (ERS) Reserve	1,550,000	1,550,000
Federal Aid Interfund Aid	135,000	135,000
Forfeitures and Refunds	1,350,000	1,170,000
PILOT Agreement	2,580,000	2,624,782
Sale of Equipment, Material and Other	105,000	105,000
Sales Tax	4,000,000	4,066,069
State Aid	48,796,297	55,351,646
Tax Cert Reserve	100,000	100,000
Tax Levy	58,213,112	59,954,918
Teachers Retirement System (TRS) Reserve	800,000	800,000
Tuition, Fees, Interest	1,508,000	1,495,000
Total	\$122,337,409	\$128,552,415

Where does the money go?

EXPENSE SUMMARY

Budget Category	2022-23 Adopted Budget	2023-24 Proposed Budget
Administrative Component - \$13,667,845 or 10% of the budget		
Board of Education	34,495	38,995
Central Administration	341,317	365,000
Central Services	907,500	1,438,092
Employee Benefits	3,343,798	3,659,002
Finance	1,120,091	1,454,011
Instructional Administration and Staff Development	834,538	918,302
Specialty Items	1,712,390	1,809,826
Staff	924,550	1,010,164
Supervision of Schools	2,813,893	2,974,453
Administrative Budget	\$12,032,572	\$13,667,845
Program Component - \$92,097,290 or 72% of the budget		
Community Services	546,187	465,240
District Transportation	5,001,933	5,871,845
Employee Benefits	27,315,718	28,808,645
Instructional Administration and Staff Development	528,025	504,789
Instructional Services	55,559,535	56,186,771
Transfer to School Food Service Fund	1,092	0
Transfer to Special Aid Fund	258,908	260,000
Program Budget	\$89,211,398	\$92,097,290
Capital Component - \$22,787,280 or 18% of the budget		
Central Services	5,475,903	7,262,547
Employee Benefits	2,011,478	2,291,295
Specialty Items	10,000	10,000
Transfer to Debt Service Fund	13,496,058	13,123,438
Transfer to Other Funds	100,000	100,000
Capital Budget	\$21,093,439	\$22,787,280
Total Budget	\$122,337,409	\$128,552,415



Learn more at gateschili.org/vote **PROPOSED BUDGET INFORMATION**

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted 2022-23	Budget Proposed 2023-24	Contingency Budget 2023-24*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$122,337,409	\$128,552,415	\$127,454,471
Increase/Decrease for the 2023-24 School Year		\$6,215,006	\$5,117,062
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		5.08%	4.18%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		8%	
A. Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$58,213,112	\$59,954,918	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable			
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Available**			
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy			
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$58,213,112	\$59,954,918	\$59,954,918
F. Permissible Exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit	\$3,497,332	\$3,728,301	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$54,715,780	\$56,226,617	
H. Total Proposed Tax Levy for School Purposes, Excluding Permissible Exclusions and Levy for Library Debt, Plus Prior Year Tax Cap Reserve (E - B - F + D)	\$54,715,780	\$56,226,617	
I. Difference: (G - H); (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions)	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$12,032,572	\$13,667,845	\$13,417,845
Program Component	\$89,211,398	\$92,097,290	\$91,506,346
Capital Component	\$21,093,439	\$22,787,280	\$22,530,280

* If a contingent budget is required, the Board of Education will review all areas of the budget to develop a contingency budget for the 2023-24 school year, pursuant to §2023 of the Education Law. Should the 2023-24 budget be defeated, the following items may be deleted: equipment purchases, free public use of buildings, instructional and non-instructional positions, to be identified.

To authorize the school district to undertake the acquisition of school buses at an estimated net aggregate cost of \$1,929,330 after such trade-in value, potential rebates, and/or incentives, and that such costs, or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be raised by the levy of a tax to be collected in annual installments; and, in anticipation of such tax, debt obligations of the school district as may be necessary not to exceed \$1,929,330 shall be issued, or the school district may enter into an installment purchase contract if the board of education determines that it is in the best interest of the school district to finance the purchase in that method.

To authorize the establishment of a Capital Reserve Fund pursuant to §3651 of the Education Law, to be known as the "2023 Capital Reserve Fund," for the purpose of financing, in whole or in part, reconstruction and improvement of school buildings and facilities, and the acquisition of furnishings, equipment, machinery or apparatus; not to exceed \$15,000,000 with a 10-year life.

To authorize a student who is a senior and who has attended high school within the District for at least two (2) years serve as an ex officio student member of the Board of Education; being entitled to sit with Board of Education members at all public meetings of the Board of Education and participate in all Board of Education hearings and meetings, but not vote, attend executive session, and/or be entitled to receive compensation of any form for participating at Board of Education meetings.



	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$662

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

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2023-24 by the qualified voters of the Gates Chili Central School District, Monroe County, New York, will be held on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at the Gates Chili Field House, 1 Spartan Way, from 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. or by mail-in ballot. Mail-in ballots must be received by the district clerk no later than 5 p.m. on May 16 in order to be counted.

STAR Exemption

The School Tax Relief (STAR) program provides eligible homeowners in New York State with relief on their property taxes. Whether you receive the STAR exemption or the credit, there are two types of STAR benefits.

Basic STAR

- Available for owner-occupied, primary residences
- Income limit for the Basic STAR credit is \$500,000 (the income limit for the Basic STAR exemption is \$250,000)
- Based on the first \$27,300 of the full value of a home

Enhanced STAR

- Provides an increased benefit for the primary residences of senior citizens (age 65 and older) with qualifying incomes:
 - o \$92,000 or less for the 2022 tax year
 - o \$93,200 or less for the 2023 tax year
- Based on the first \$74,070 of the full value of a home for the 2023-24 school year

For more details about STAR exemptions and credits, go to gateschili.org/STARexemption

	2023-24 Estimated STAR Values	
	Gates	Chili
Basic STAR Exemption	\$27,300	\$27,300
Enhanced STAR Exemption	\$74,070	\$74,070

Veterans' Exemption

This exemption provides relief to wartime, combat and disability veterans. Veterans must apply for this exemption with their town assessor's office. For more details, go to gateschili.org/VeteransExemption

	Assessed Value	Maximum Assessment of
Wartime Veteran Exemption	15%	\$9,000
Combat Exemption	addtl 10%	\$6,000
Disability Exemption	per individual	\$30,000



Budget Ambassadors wrap up third year

The Gates Chili Budget Ambassador program wrapped up on March 9 after another productive year of budget development education and discussion. Ambassadors met with Superintendent Christopher Dailey, Assistant Superintendent for Business Dr. Mitchell Ball, Assistant Business Administrator Anna Lamb and District Treasurer Sally Sanford for two three-hour sessions. During each session, participants engaged in discussion on the budget development process and where funds are generated and allocated in the budget each year. Thank you to all the budget ambassadors for their participation in this important process.



Still have questions about the budget process and all the information in this newsletter? Check out the district's award-winning video series, "A Bit of Budget with Dr. Ball!" Twice a week from April 24 through May 12, Assistant Superintendent for Business Dr. Mitchell Ball breaks down various aspects of the budget to help district residents make an informed decision at the polls. To watch the series, go to gateschili.org/BitOfBudget or use your phone's camera to scan the QR code.



Board of Education Candidates

Four candidates will be elected to the board at the annual district vote on May 16, 2023. The three candidates with the highest number of votes will serve a three-year term from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2026. The candidate with the fourth highest number of votes will serve a one-year term from May 17, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Below are statements provided by each candidate, in ballot order, about their experience and interest in serving on the board.



Kathryn (Katie) Davis

Katie Davis is presently serving her first year on the Gates Chili Board of Education. She is a Gates Chili alumna and has been a member of the community for a total of 30 years. Over the years that her own children have been students, she has been passionate about staying engaged in the district. Her involvement includes serving on the District Improvement Team and as President of the Paul Road School and Family Association, as well as participating in the district's superintendent search. She is also a Girl Scout leader to a group of amazing young women. Katie holds a B.A. in Sociology from Syracuse University and has been employed by The Hartford for 20 years, currently as a Customer Support Specialist. She and her husband Shawn have two daughters currently attending Gates Chili in 11th and 7th grade. Katie is a strong supporter of public education and all that it offers to students of various backgrounds, abilities and interests. She understands the importance of being fiscally responsible while providing an equitable education for all students and hopes to continue the district's work through her role on the Board of Education.



Linda Palmer

Linda Palmer has been a Spanish teacher in Brighton Schools for 25 years. She holds a BA in Spanish from Nazareth College and an MA from SUNY Brockport. In the course of her career, she has served on curriculum review committees for English, Special Education, and World Languages, among others. She has also participated in Brighton's strategic planning committee and Teachers' Center Policy Board as well as numerous hiring committees. Linda served in a leadership role in Cub Scout Pack 100 and was active for several years in the Neil Armstrong PTO. She organized and currently facilitates a support group for caregivers of students with school-related anxiety in Brighton. Linda and her husband Steve have lived in Gates for 23 years. Their eldest son graduated from Gates Chili in 2018 and is currently pursuing a psychology degree at SUNY Brockport. Their youngest is a student at Gates Chili Middle School with promising future in writing and illustration.



Scott Bubel

Scott Bubel is a Senior Quality Control Engineer with BCC Software and holds a B.S. in History from SUNY Brockport and a Liberal Arts degree from Monroe Community College. He has been a member of the High School Music Boosters as a part of the pit crew for 6 years and has also served as a chaperone for the music department. He also works as part of the leadership committee for ROCLug, the Rochester Lego User Group which organizes regular meetings and public events. Previously he worked with several public volunteer organizations in both a volunteer and leadership capacity. Scott and his wife of 12 years have two daughters. His oldest is a graduate of Gates Chili class of 2020 and is attending SUNY Brockport. His youngest daughter is currently a student at Walt Disney Elementary School and will attend middle school in the fall of 2023. Mr. Bubel grew up in the town of Gates and graduated from Gates Chili class of 1998. He and his family have lived in the district for the last 13 years.



Robert Long

Rob was elected to the school board June 2020. Rob is a 1998 graduate of Gates Chili and serves on the Safety/Security Committee. He is employed by the Town of Gates Police Department holding the rank of Police Chief. Robert serves as the Vice President of the Gates Chili Community Connections (GC3) and is on the Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES Criminal Justice advisory board. Robert holds a B.A. in Criminal Justice from Gannon University.



Catherine (Katie) Coffee

Katie Coffee is finishing her second term a member of the Gates Chili Board of Education. Katie is currently serving as the president of the BOE. She is an active participant in the District Improvement Team, District Equity Team, Finance and Facility Committee, and Education Foundation. She participates in the Middle School Equity Team and has also served on the Ad Hoc Committee and Policy Committee. Katie is committed to growing and learning to support the students of the Gates Chili community through engaging in book studies, trainings and workshops through the Monroe County School Board Association. Katie and her family have lived in Gates for eight years. Katie is a Special Education teacher in a local public school district and is completing her studies in educational leadership through the University of Rochester. Her children are students in the middle school and Florence Brasser Elementary which serves to strengthen her commitment to the continual success and improvement of the Gates Chili Central School District.



Michelle Jennings

Michelle Jennings serves as the Associate Director of Ambulatory Pediatrics at the University of Rochester Medical Center. Michelle's educational journey has successfully allowed her to acquire a Bachelor's degree in Economics and Finance from SUNY Buffalo State University and a Master's degree in Business Administration from Medaille College. She serves on the Parent teacher association at Florence Brasser Elementary School as well as Gates Chili Jr. Spartan Basketball Team Mom. Over the years Michelle has consistently served her community through various volunteer activities: The American Heart Association-Heart walk, The American Cancer Society- Breast Cancer Walk, Trillium Health- food pantry, The Episcopal Church Home- resident companion, just to name a few. Michelle also serves as a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc® a service organization whose mission is to be of 'Service to All Mankind'. When Michelle is not working, she enjoys spending time with her family, trying new recipes, visiting museums, vacationing and serving her community. Michelle was born and raised in the Rochester, New York area and currently resides in Chili, NY with her high school sweetheart, their two children and one dog.

Board of Education Candidates (continued)



Jahmar Elliott

Jahmar Elliott is a seasoned Human Resources professional with over 12 years of experience in high-paced environments. He is a passionate humanity advocate for public education and a trained servant leader. Jahmar has successfully led and supported some of Rochester's largest employers, earning recognition as an Emerging Leader, an African American Leadership Development Program (AALDP) graduate, and a Causewave Community HR Superstar. He currently serves as the Assistant Director of Talent Acquisition & Staff Diversity Outreach at the Rochester Institute of Technology, where he also earned his degree from the Saunders College of Business. In addition to his professional work, Jahmar has served on various community boards and currently sits on the Advisory Board for the Westside YMCA and has participated in numerous committee and subcommittee initiatives. Jahmar is also a small business owner of Elliott Lawn Care & Landscape Group. As Spartan parents, He and his wife Marina, along with their two sons (soon to be three), reside in the town of Gates.



Learn more at
gateschili.org/vote

Capital Project Update

As the district finished one capital project, it is taking steps to prepare for the next. Phase one of the next construction project, which was approved by district voters in February 2022, is awaiting approval from the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

The first phase includes upgrades and renovations to high school and middle school technology classrooms, middle school music classrooms, and high school family and consumer science (FACS) classrooms to bring these spaces up to 21st-century standards. This phase also includes the relocation of district office staff to the high school due to the conversion of the Administration Building into a prekindergarten center. Once NYSED approves the plans and issues building permits for the work, which can take up to a year, the district will open up bidding so that contractors may submit proposals to complete the work. It is anticipated that construction would begin in the spring of 2024 and continue through the fall of 2025.

Meanwhile, planning meetings are underway for the second phase of the project. That phase mainly consists of work at Florence Brasser Elementary School and the construction of a multi-purpose field to the south of Gates Chili Middle School. At Brasser, work will be done to revise the bus loop and traffic pattern and create additional parking for staff and visitors, as well as improve safety, security and accessibility with the relocation of the main office and some classrooms.

At the middle school, the new turf field will be utilized for various sports including baseball, softball, lacrosse and soccer. Similar to Spartan Stadium, this field would provide students and student-athletes the opportunity to utilize fields regardless of weather conditions. With the construction of the multi-purpose field, there are also plans to create additional parking for staff and event attendees. As with other Gates Chili facilities, this space will be available for community group use.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Facilities

- Gates Chili facilities team members are on site from as early as 5 a.m. to as late as 11:30 p.m. to ensure facilities are clean, safe and ready for student and community use.
- Despite the mild winter this year, crews still used more than 345 tons of rock salt on parking lots and roadways and 800 bags of ice melt treating sidewalks and entryways to ensure safe conditions for students, staff and visitors to campus.
- As part of the district's energy conservation project, the middle school roof features a small section of solar panels to help offset the peak electric load for buildings on the main campus.

Transportation

- Gates Chili bus drivers are everywhere! They transport students to 82 different schools per day, including 234 trips in district and 147 trips to special education placements, private, charter or other schools.
- The district added three additional electric school buses this year, which will provide long-term cost savings to the district and contribute to a healthier school community.
- While not a requirement, by June 2023, all Gates Chili school buses will be equipped with seat belts thanks to the careful planning of bus purchases.



RETURN ON INVESTMENT**Grades UPK-5**

- There's been an increase in clubs and extra-curricular opportunities for students at the elementary level with more diverse options based on student interests such as kickball club, ukulele club, robotics, garden club and even Rubik's cube club!
- Elementary schools are working hard to re-engage families in the school community through a variety of events such as Elementary Football Night, Bingo Nights, Fall Festivals, Movie Nights, Art Shows and more!
- Gates Chili is gearing up to host its ninth year of Universal Prekindergarten (UPK), which provides 138 students with early literacy and math education through play.

Library and Literacy

- With 75+ library resources available, Gates Chili staff and students are on pace to use 81,791 print books, 4,914 audio and ebooks, 123,033 uses of digital databases and 10,912 hands-on maker experiences this school year.
- Kindergarten and first-graders are getting ahead in reading by using decodable text sets that are focused on building knowledge and vocabulary.
- Gates Chili has been expanding literature selections to include authors from diverse backgrounds, such as author Kwame Alexander, who spoke to students in grades 6-8 virtually this fall about his career in writing.

Traveling 'A Million Miles Away' without leaving school

Gates Chili's partnership with the Rochester Broadway Theatre League (RBTL) is helping students discover a whole new world through the arts!

The ARTS Partners program, now in its sixth year at Gates Chili, gives students the opportunity to see a Broadway show in person at the Auditorium Theatre. This year, students in grades 2-4 were set to take on the beloved classic "Aladdin," but long before buses were boarded and playbills were distributed, students explored Agrabah from the comfort of their classrooms as they studied the themes of the show.

Important themes like being true to yourself, valuing what matters and a sense of freedom were woven into activities throughout the second-, third- and fourth-grade curriculum. Students honed important literacy skills through lyric analysis, made critical connections to characters and their personality traits and, inspired by the genie's lamp, considered their wishes for the world.

After months of preparation, in mid-April, hundreds of students boarded buses and headed to the Auditorium Theatre to see the show in action. Even more magical, in the days following, cast members from the musical visited them for a special Q and A session at the Gates Chili Performing Arts Center (GCPAC).



Elementary *engineers* at work

From crafting a structure that can withstand a natural disaster to using everyday materials to build a human hand with bones and tendons, Gates Chili elementary students are transforming into scientists at every grade level.

With the recent introduction of new state standards, Gates Chili is creating consistency across elementary schools and grade levels by using the BOCES 4 Science kits. The new kits help teachers tackle the three domains covered in the state standards: life science, physical science and earth/space science. Gates Chili is going one step further by offering its students additional activities tied to STEM, or science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The materials in each STEM kit help teachers to create experiences that help students connect to the content in an authentic way. Using these kits, these STEM experiences allow all students the opportunity to design, create and learn through a hands-on experience. They collaboratively create a plan to build their structure, test it, and depending on the outcome, they might have to go back and redesign their structure. This inquiry-based approach is essential to help students develop critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. In Richelle Ritz's class at Florence Brasser Elementary School, kindergarteners recreated a scene from their favorite story using gears and blocks to bring the story to life.

"This gives students the chance to be a scientist; to design and engineer something and ultimately, problem solve to find a solution," said Ritz. "Students were also excited to share their learning with their families and show off their new problem-solving skills."



Students take a STEP towards STEM

A partnership between Gates Chili and Monroe Community College (MCC) is helping to prepare students to take on STEM and health-related fields in college.

At Gates Chili Middle School, the STEP program focuses on strengthening students' academic skills and test-taking abilities while bringing awareness to higher education and career opportunities related to these fields. Students in the program learn a wide array of technical knowledge using technologies that are not only important for their potential future, but also fun and engaging. A few recent examples at the middle school include 3D printing, robotics and even coding their own video game.

Even more important than the opportunities STEP brings is the support the program provides. Just like other clubs, groups or programs, STEP is an opportunity for students to find a group of people with whom they might have a lot in common. GCMS STEP Advisor Nicole Fedele said the program offers a level of mentorship that is hard to come by.



"Many students will drop by during the day or after school to get help with their homework, or just have a conversation about what is troubling them," said Fedele. "More than anything, the program is about instilling confidence in its members to pursue higher education and find their calling in the STEM world, as well as helping them develop on a personal level."

Students in the STEP program also take part in important field trips to places including the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and Code Ninjas, where students can create their own video games. The Summer Bridge program at MCC also allows students to continue their fun and learning during the summer months. In addition to helping students build knowledge, skills and confidence, it's also helping students foster a love for STEM.

"STEP has been a great opportunity for me," said Natalie Q., eighth-grader at GCMS. "I've made many friends, went on fun trips and learned new things to help me with my future."

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Grades 6-8

- Gates Chili teachers ensure history is not told through a single narrative by embedding historical views from a variety of races, religions, genders and more.
- Students in the 6:1:1 class at the middle school are utilizing a specially constructed apartment-like space in the school to hone important life skills such as laundry, cooking, cleaning, as well as simulated exchange of money and making purchases.
- Teachers are presenting rigorous instruction in a way that is relevant, helping students to be more engaged and connect learning to their own lives.



World Languages

- Gates Chili offers four languages at the middle and high school levels including, French, Italian, Latin and Spanish.
- Gates Chili Middle School now offers a specialized ENL program with intensive English literacy development support in content area subjects such as math, English language arts (ELA) and social studies.
- Registration forms for new students and some recruitment materials for prospective staff members are now available in multiple languages.



McAlpin leading Amerks community

Gates Chili is proud to welcome Daniel McAlpin as the new assistant principal of the Amerks Community at Gates Chili Middle School. McAlpin most recently served as Director of Human Resources at Newark Central School District. Prior to that, he spent many years as a school building leader.



Celebrating culture and language

With the help of local college students, Gates Chili Middle School students traveled to the other side of the world through language! The school's first ever Korean Exchange Event gave students in the school's Multicultural Club the chance to learn about Korean culture. Korean language students from the University of Rochester guided middle school students through various activities including learning the Korean alphabet, how to write their names in Korean, playing Korean school games and even trying Korean food such as Gimbap, Tteokbokki and others.



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Grades 9-12

- The high school led its first-ever schoolwide book club study of Elizabeth Acevedo's "Clap When You Land" with 250+ students and staff participating!
- Students studied curriculum and themes related to "Hamilton" before attending a live performance of the musical at the Auditorium Theatre in November, meanwhile, others are studying themes from "Six" and will attend a performance of that show in May.
- High school students can try their hand at teaching through a new opportunity called the Future Educators Club, a club that pairs students and teachers for shadowing experience.

Technology

- Every classroom SmartBoard in the district has been replaced with a 4K Samsung Interactive Display, which allows teachers more flexibility and opportunity to enhance student learning.
- The district continues to improve network security by enhancing systems that keep students safe online and safeguard against phishing and other malicious online viruses.
- Thanks to grant funding allocated for technology, every teacher in the district received a brand-new state-of-the-art laptop this year that is equipped with the tools they need to maintain rigorous instruction.



Class of 2023 Top 20

Congratulations to the top 20 ranked seniors from the Class of 2023, according to their weighted GPA. The seniors' academic achievements were announced and celebrated at the annual Top 20 breakfast on April 19.



1. Michael Lin
2. Nissa Vanham
3. Jericho Yates
4. Megan Firnstein
5. Marilee Panyasith
6. Cecelia Gardner
7. Quang Huynh
8. Kelsey D'Imperio
9. Giovanni Buonomo
10. Kristy Lin
11. Gracie Day
12. Joelle Lavalley
12. Jazalynn Thompson
14. Daniel Oquendo Marrero
15. Kayla Maragh
16. Brianna Warden
17. Faith Walter
18. Emily McManus
19. Jo Zimmer
20. Emily Montulli

Spartans lead the change

Hundreds of students from 40 Rochester-area high schools came together at the Gates Chili Field House on March 31 for the spring ROC 2 Change Student Summit on Race. Spartans worked with their counterparts at Holley High School and the School of the Arts (SOTA) to plan, co-host and organize the event centered on combating racism and fostering a culture of understanding and appreciation of other cultures. The day's theme was "Deconstructing Tolerance Rebuilding Understanding" and

featured keynote remarks by recent SOTA graduate Isaiah Santiago, as well as breakout sessions led entirely by students.

"We were able to connect through hard-to-talk-about topics," shared GCHS student Laila G. "I hope students bring back to their districts that although they

may be seeing the world through their own eyes and experiences, to take a step back and try to see it through someone else's perspective."



Making 'herstory'

Gates Chili student-athletes made history on April 24 when they played in the first-ever varsity girls flag football game. The scrimmage home opener against Edison Tech was filled with excitement from the players to the fans, with Trelani H. walking away with the team's first-ever touchdown.





BUILDING A CHAMPIONSHIP CULTURE: Cheer success starts with a strong base

“Like a dream.” That’s how senior Kayla M. describes her experience at the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) Competitive Cheerleading Championships. She and her Gates Chili Varsity Cheerleading teammates are flying high after a history-making trip to states.

The squad qualified for the championships for the first time ever after coming in second in their division at winter sectionals. It was a huge feat, and the excitement spread far beyond the team. Before they departed for the March 4 championships, the entire high school lined the halls to cheer on the cheerleaders as they were led out of the building by the drumline.

“Honestly, it really didn't even matter if we placed or made it to the second round, just going was incredible because we made history,” said team member Olivia L., a junior. After making it to the final round, the team did place, coming in fifth in the Division 2 Small Squad Class.

“It’s been a huge honor, and we’ve really worked hard to progress and grow and get to this point as a team,” said Kayla, who received a sportsmanship award at the competition. “We’ve definitely shown what we can bring to the table.”

Continue reading at gateschili.org/CheerBACC



Champions upon champions

Outstanding winter seasons are in the books for two more Gates Chili teams. In February, Boys Bowling were crowned Class B Section V Champions. After their big win, they received a champions' welcome back to campus with an escort from Gates Police, Gates Ambulance and Gates Fire District! Meanwhile, five Gates Chili athletes traveled to the NYSPHSAA Indoor Track and Field State Championship on Staten Island in March. Cameron G., Josiah L., Krystopher M. and Jayden R. competed in the Boys 4x200 Meter Relay. Kyra P. placed sixth in her section in the Girls 3000 Meter and fifth overall in the Girls 1500 Meter Race Walk. Congratulations to both teams on their accomplishments!



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Physical Education and Athletics

- Gates Chili is proud to be among the first schools in Section V to offer varsity girls flag football as a new athletic program this spring.
- In physical education classes throughout the district, students participate in 12-15 units each year, including activities such as archery, swimming, gymnastics, Pickleball and disc golf.
- The athletics department is removing financial barriers by offering free clinics for many athletic programs including girls' volleyball, boys' lacrosse, girls' lacrosse, wrestling, baseball, softball, track and field, golf, tennis and swimming and diving.



Health and Safety

- Gates Chili's school nursing staff recorded more than 1,400 student physical exams since September 2022 with more than 500 of those having been performed at GC for free.
- During health classes each year, students practice evacuating a school bus using the district's specially designed safety bus, an old school bus repurposed and redesigned for emergency evacuation lessons.
- The district is beefing up security throughout the district with more security guard presence and an upcoming upgrade to cameras to provide better quality and more coverage.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Arts

- Elementary school students celebrated Music in Our Schools Month with a trip to the Auditorium Theatre to hear musicians from the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra.
- High school musicians had the chance to work with jazz icon Tom Bones Malone before performing alongside him at Java Jazz in February of this year.
- Artists at Gates Chili elementary and middle schools brought the concept of community to life through the collaborative art project called We Are Gates Chili.



Student Support

- The district has been providing Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) training to ensure staff have the tools they need to support students' varying behavioral needs
- Gates Chili has partnered with Monroe One BOCES to provide training on supporting LGBTQIA+ learners and engaging in restorative practices.
- The district is collaborating with the University of Rochester for MAAPS, Modular Approach to Autism Programs in Schools, to further enhance practices in 6:1:1 classrooms.



Spartans become Wildcats in first public musical performance

Students brought to life the energizing message that "We're All in This Together" in Gates Chili High School's production of "High School Musical." In the group's first public performance at the new Gates Chili Performing Arts Center (GCPAC), the Spartans traded in their blue for red to become the East High Wildcats and converted the GCPAC stage into the steps of East High School. Hundreds of theatergoers joined the more than 70 cast and crew members in singing the show's popular tunes, including "Get'cha Head in the Game" and "Start of Something New."

Save the dates
for next year's
performances:
March 22-24, 2024



Nazareth College collaboration gets Bears moving

A new collaboration is bringing dance to Florence Brasser Elementary School. For two weeks in March, Nazareth College dance students traveled to Brasser to help Donna Dunn's fifth-grade music students choreograph their own dances.

"The students are not only learning about music through what they see in what they hear but also how their bodies experience it," said Allison Thomashefski, adjunct professor of dance at Nazareth College.

Thomashefski calls the project a "collaborative choreographic experience." It is part of the college's Dance and Collaboration class, which focuses on bringing dance opportunities to new places, and was the idea of adjunct dance professor Mariko Yamada, who is a Brasser parent and substitute teacher at the school. After subbing for Dunn, Yamada was impressed with the way the music teacher incorporated movement into her lessons. Wanting to help expand on that, Yamada reached out to Dunn about a possible collaboration involving her Nazareth dance students.

"Music can be very abstract, especially with our younger kids," explained Dunn. "So, the way I teach music is just very movement heavy because it really emphasizes those abstract concepts and makes them a little bit more tactile to kids."

Continue reading at gateschili.org/NazCollab



Staff Spotlight



Georgianna Irons
Cook
Neil Armstrong
Elementary School

What began as a way to be closer to her kids has blossomed into a career for Neil Armstrong's Georgianna "Georgie" Irons. After working part-time in the middle school, Irons started helping with breakfast at Armstrong, where her kids attended school. Then when a position opened there as a cook, Irons made the switch.

"My day is filled with so much laughter," said Irons. "This age group says the funniest things."

In addition to the smiling faces that brighten her day-to-day experience, Irons also enjoys seeing the kids grow and change from kindergarten to fifth grade. She said she knows her work is meaningful.

"It feels good to be able to feed kids breakfast and lunch knowing that they will have

a good, healthy meal to fuel their day," said Irons. "And it takes the burden off families to not worry about having to pack a lunch or if their children didn't have enough time to eat breakfast in the morning."

Irons has been on the team at Armstrong since 2016. As a cook, she prepares food, tracks inventory and ensures students are equipped to learn with a well-balanced meal. She has done extensive training, including becoming ServSafe® certified, a certification in food safety. In the summer months, you can find Irons supporting the delivery of free meals throughout the district. She even steps up to serve as a fill-in manager whenever she is needed.

"Georgie is a great member of our team. She shows initiative and has been committed to growing here at Gates Chili," shared Janice Phillips, director of school nutrition. "Her even-keeled demeanor brings calm to even the busiest times of the day in the kitchen. This

helps keep the team moving together."

In addition to her life at work, Irons loves being a mother of three as well as a dog mom. Some of her favorite activities to do as a family are taking vacations and weekend trips like camping in the summer. She and her family also love backyard barbecues and late-night campfires.

Irons and her Spartan work family are a close-knit group who enjoy seeing each other every day and working to make the lunchroom experience the best it could possibly be for students. When asked about her favorite part of working at Armstrong, Irons stated, "Gates Chili is filled with so many great people. I really love my job!"



Oh the pastabilities with Pasta Madness!

Students at GCMS are rolling up their sleeves and taking a turn in the school kitchen for a competitive food contest. On the heels of the wildly successful Pizza Madness contest last year, dozens of students entered recipes into Pasta Madness. This partnership between Student Council and the School Nutrition Department gives students a chance to prepare unique recipes for their peers. Out of the almost 40 recipes that were entered, Student Council chose three recipes to put forth to their fellow students. The dishes, Creamy Penne by Zachary D., Feta Pasta by Aaliyah G. and Matt's Amazing Mac by Matthew C. were all major hits with students. In the end, Matthew C. won the contest. Great job to all Spartan chefs and food critics!



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

School Nutrition

- Thanks to student and family feedback, the School Nutrition team is incorporating more student choice into meals with at least two fruit and two vegetable options at each lunch along with a variety of entrees.
- This year, the district rolled out a new software system that includes updated point of sale and more convenient ways to apply for free and reduced meals through MySchoolApps.
- About a quarter of the school nutrition team districtwide mirrors the diversity of our school community; they hail from many different countries around the world including Turkey, Vietnam, Lebanon, Jamaica, Indonesia, Colombia, Egypt, Italy and China!

Professional Learning

- This school year, the district opened the Gates Chili Professional Learning Center (GCPLC), a flexible learning space for staff to engage in their continued growth.
- More than 100 professional learning in-service courses were offered in-house to staff this school year including book studies, collegial circles, classroom technology use, engagement strategies and more.
- Since this time last year, over 130 teachers were empowered to better support the varying abilities of students thanks to the LETRS professional learning program.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Equity and Inclusion

- Gates Chili has been partnering with the Pathstone Foundation to integrate the inquiry-based antiracist curriculum.
- This school year, Gates Chili launched a monthly district e-newsletter to ensure families have access to important information from and about the district.
- Gates Chili's equity work was highlighted in a statewide magazine by the School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS) and nationally at the National School Boards Association (NSBA) Annual Conference.

Community

- In January, the district launched the Gates Chili Food Pantry, which has served more than 65 families in the community.
- In 2022, More than 7,500 district residents utilized the Gates Chili High School fitness center, indoor track and pool as part of the district's community membership—almost double last year's use!
- Already this year, Gates Chili Continuing Education offered more than 300 courses, attended by nearly 1,000 participants.



Continuing the journey to *equity*

Students may have had the day off from school on March 10, but Gates Chili employees were busy learning. More than 800 staff members from across the district, including teachers, teacher aides, school nutrition workers, cleaners, clerical support staff, bus drivers and more, gathered at the high school for the second Superintendent's Conference Day of the year dedicated to equity work.



"These conference days have become the vehicle that drives our work forward," said Superintendent Christopher Dailey in his opening remarks. "Providing access to learning for all our staff members is not only imperative to our work but is also truly equity in action."

The day of learning kicked off with a keynote presentation emceed by Hayley B. and Mekhi H. of the Class of 2023 and featuring a performance by the cast of "High School Musical." Student Dyllon P. sang the national anthem. This all led up to a keynote address by Principal Baruti Kafele entitled "It's Not Enough to DO EQUITY ... You Must BE EQUITY." One of the most sought-after equity presenters in the country, Kafele is a highly regarded urban educator from New Jersey who has dedicated himself to public education for more than 20 years. His inspiring and empowering speech centered around developing an "equity mindset" toward ensuring the academic, social and emotional growth and development of all the learners.

Following the keynote presentation, staff members participated in smaller breakout sessions facilitated by diversity, equity and inclusion experts from around the region.

A Rochester Top Workplace...again!

Gates Chili was once again named a Rochester Top Workplace! The district made the list of top workplaces in the area, which was announced by the Democrat and Chronicle on March 26. In the issue, it was also announced that Gates Chili is one of a handful of local companies recognized for its diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. Join this winning team by completing an application at gateschili.org/jobs.



GC PRIDE Award

Gates Chili CSD is proud to recognize students, staff and community members who go above and beyond on behalf of the district and its students. The GC PRIDE Award stands for and honors professionalism, respect, innovation, dedication and excellence. Congratulations to all of the recipients since late February.



Feb. 28 recipients:

John Mistretta, Matthews Buses; Kelsey D., HS student; Dylan W., HS student; and Jennifer Merkel, BOCES 2.



March 28 recipients:

Robin Carter, Brasser cook; Matthew Oliveri, Continuing Education speaker; and Patricia Cipolla, continuing education receptionist.



April 18 recipients:

Jacob M, NA student; Ellis P, MS student; and Skye V., NA student.

Gates Chili Central School District · 2023-24 · At-a-Glance District Calendar

○	First Day of School for Students (Gr. P-12)
●	No School for Students (Gr. P-12), All Staff Report
●	No School for Students (Gr. P-12) and All Staff
■	No School for Students (Gr. P-12) and 10-Month Staff
■	No School for Students (Gr. P-5)
■	No School for Students (Gr. 6-12)
■	Half Day for Students (Gr. P-5)
■	Half Day for Students (Gr. 6-12)
■	Half Day for Students (Gr. P-12)
■	NYS Gr. 3-8 Assessments
□	NYS Regents Exams

JULY 2023

July 4 (Tues).....Independence Day

AUGUST 2023

Aug. 29-30 (Tues-Wed).... Superintendent's Conf. Days

SEPTEMBER 2023

Sept. 4 (Mon)..... Labor Day

Sept. 5 (Tues)..... First Day of School for Students

OCTOBER 2023

Oct. 6 (Fri)..... Superintendent's Conf. Day

Oct. 9 (Mon).... Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day

NOVEMBER 2023

Nov. 10 (Fri)..... Veterans Day (Observed)

Nov. 22-24 (Wed-Fri)..... Thanksgiving Recess

DECEMBER 2023

Dec. 4 (Mon)..... P-5 Parent Teacher Conf. / Conf. Day

Dec. 21 (Thur)..... P-5 Parent Teacher Conf. / Conf. Day

Dec. 22-29 (Fri-Fri)..... Holiday Recess

Dec. 25 (Mon)..... Christmas

JANUARY 2024

Jan. 1 (Mon)..... New Years Day

Jan. 15 (Mon)..... Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Jan. 23-26 (Tues-Fri)..... NYS Regents Exams

Jan. 26 (Fri)..... Conf. Day

FEBRUARY 2024

Feb. 19 (Mon)..... President's Day

Feb. 19-23 (Mon-Fri)..... Mid-winter Recess

MARCH 2024

March 8 (Fri)..... Superintendent's Conf. Day

March 29 (Fri)..... Spring Recess

APRIL 2024

April 1-8 (Mon-Mon)..... Spring Recess

April 10-17 (Wed-Wed).... 3-8 ELA Assessment Window

MAY 2024

May 7-14 (Tues-Tues).... 3-8 Math Assessment Window

May 24-27 (Fri-Mon)..... Memorial Day Recess

JUNE 2024

June 4 (Tues)..... NYS Regents Exams

June 14-25 (Fri-Tues)..... NYS Regents Exams

June 19 (Wed)..... Juneteenth

June 25 (Tues)..... Last Day for Students

June 26 (Wed).... Conf. Day/Last Day for 10-Month Staff

Required Days in Attendance

Faculty = 187 Students = 181

**If there are more than two emergency closing days, it may be necessary to adjust school days in May and/or June.*

Updated March 21, 2023

JULY 2023						
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APRIL 2024						
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JUNE 2024						
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GATES CHILI CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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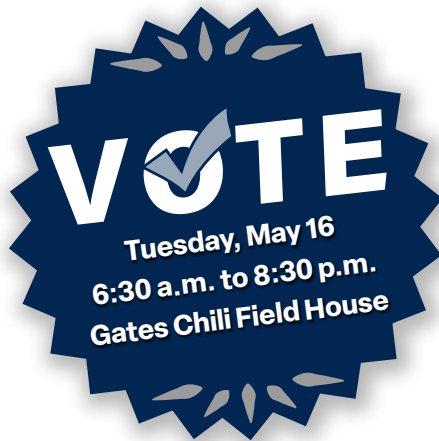


Spartan Eats Summer Meals

Gates Chili is proud to once again host the USDA Summer Meals Program this summer! Summer meals will kick off on July 5 and run through Aug. 11. Hours, locations and menus will be shared in mid-June at gateschili.org/SchoolNutrition.



Prices of meals for next school year will be shared on the website this summer. The district encourages families to apply for free and reduced-price meals ahead of the new school year at gateschili.org/FreeReducedApp.



Proof of Residency

The school district may require all persons offering to vote at the budget vote and election to provide one form of proof of residency pursuant to the Education Law §2018-C. Such form may include a driver's license, a non-driver identification card, a utility bill or a voter registration card. Upon offer of proof of residency, the school district may also require all persons offering to vote to provide their signature, printed name and address.

Voter Eligibility

Anyone who is at least 18 years old, a U.S. citizen and a resident of the Gates Chili Central School District for at least 30 days prior to the Tuesday, May 16, 2023 vote, is eligible. You do not need to be registered to vote, but you must bring identification and proof of residency.

Absentee Ballots

Residents unable to vote because of disabilities, illness, travel or other reasons listed as valid under election law, may request applications for absentee ballots at Gates Chili Central School District Administration Building, 3 Spartan Way, or by calling the Gates Chili District Clerk Condenssa Brown at 247-5050 ext. 12101. Once the application is approved, an absentee ballot will be mailed or can be picked up. Completed absentee ballots must be received by the district clerk's office no later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 16, 2023.

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