



# School Gram

May 2019 Budget Edition

KENMORE-TOWN OF TONAWANDA UFSD

## BUDGET VOTE & BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTION

**7 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Tuesday,  
May 21, 2019**

**Hoover Middle School**  
249 Thorncliff Road,  
Buffalo, NY 14223  
(Use the Sheridan Drive  
entrance for easy access)

## BUDGET HEARING

**6:30 p.m.  
Tuesday,  
May 14, 2019**

**Kenmore Middle School,**  
155 Delaware Road  
(Community Room)

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## Message from the Superintendent & Board President

We are pleased to present the special budget edition of the SchoolGram, the official newsletter of the Ken-Ton School District. This publication includes information on the proposed 2019-20 school district budget, as well as news and updates for our greater Ken-Ton School District community. Please take this opportunity to learn about the proposed 2019-20 budget, and cast your vote in the annual Budget Vote and Board of Education Election. The election takes place from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, May 21 at Hoover Middle School (use the Sheridan Drive entrance for easy access). Also on the ballot will be the annual bus purchase, which allows the school district to replenish its aging school bus fleet on an incremental basis.



**Stephen Bovino,  
Superintendent of  
Schools**



**Dr. Jill O'Malley,  
Board of Education  
President**

As a result of the property tax cap and Foundation Aid allocations, the proposed 2019-20 budget represents a budget-to-budget increase of only 2.02 percent in revenue and spending. Though school districts may exceed the property tax cap with a supermajority vote by the community, this has not been considered here in Ken-Ton. Instead, we sought to balance the budget primarily by keeping new costs

to a minimum and continuing to identify areas of savings.

Despite the challenges in this year's budget, the district did not have to consider programming or staffing cuts and was able to maintain key investments that have been made in recent years. These include expanded summer school opportunities, dedicated elementary school science teachers, instructional coaches and specialists to support teachers, the addition of eighth grade to the innovative Big Picture Program, and expanded technology innovation, just to name a few. The 2019-20 budget will also include two additional English as a New Language (ENL) teachers, which will help our schools better serve our growing population of English language learners, and will continue the implementation of initiatives in our 2018-23 strategic plan entitled "Ken-Ton Forward."

Though there were additional investments we would have liked to have considered, the district had an obligation to design a spending plan for the 2019-20 school year that accounted for the fiscal limitations that are projected in the coming year. The strong financial position of the Ken-Ton School District, which has improved significantly over the past few years, has helped us to meet these fiscal limitations and challenges while preserving current programming.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about the proposed 2019-20 Ken-Ton School District budget, and please vote on Tuesday, May 21.

The proposed 2019-20 school district budget would have a minimal impact on taxpayers. The New York State property tax cap limits school districts' ability to increase property taxes over a certain threshold. This threshold is determined by several different factors including Consumer Price Index (CPI). For the 2019-20 school year, the property tax cap limits the Ken-Ton School District to a property tax levy increase of only 1.38 percent. This amounts to a total increase in the property tax bill on a \$100,000 full-market-value home of only \$26.10 – just over \$2 a month.

This was a challenging budget for the Ken-Ton School District, which started the budgeting process with a more than \$4 million gap. Foundation Aid, which is the primary source of New York State education aid to support our schools and programs, will increase next year by only 2.35 percent – more than half a percentage point less than Foundation Aid increased this current school year. This is not nearly high enough to keep pace with costs that continue to rise each year, such as health insurance costs and New York State retirement system contributions.

## Candidates for the Board of Education

There are two three-year terms open on the Board of Education that will begin July 1, 2019 and end June 30, 2022. Voters will have the opportunity to elect the two candidates who receive the largest number of votes during the May 21, 2019 Budget Vote and Board of Education Election. Due to time constraints, information about the official May 21, 2019 candidates will be posted to the District website and accessible from the District homepage at [www.ktufsd.org](http://www.ktufsd.org).

The SchoolGram is published in e-newsletter format throughout the school year. To view past editions or to join the SchoolGram mailing list, visit [www.ktufsd.org/schoolgram](http://www.ktufsd.org/schoolgram).

# 2019-20 Budget Information

Item	Amount	Item	Amount
Budget	\$167,276,161	Tax Levy	\$86,036,814
Budget Increase	\$3,318,618	Tax Levy Increase	\$1,174,693
Budget-to-Budget % Increase	2.02%	Tax Levy % Increase	1.38%
Fund Balance & Reserve Use	\$8,750,000	Increase on \$100K Full Market Value House	\$26.18

### 2019-20 Revenue Comparison

	2018-19 Budget	2019-20 Proposed	2019-20 Increase
State & Federal Sources	\$58,532,239	\$59,704,000	\$1,171,761
Real Property Taxes	\$84,862,121	\$86,036,814	\$1,174,693
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$7,850,000	\$8,750,000	\$900,000
Sales Tax	\$8,150,000	\$8,150,000	\$0
Other	\$4,563,183	\$4,635,347	\$72,164
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$163,957,543</b>	<b>\$167,276,161</b>	<b>\$3,318,618</b>

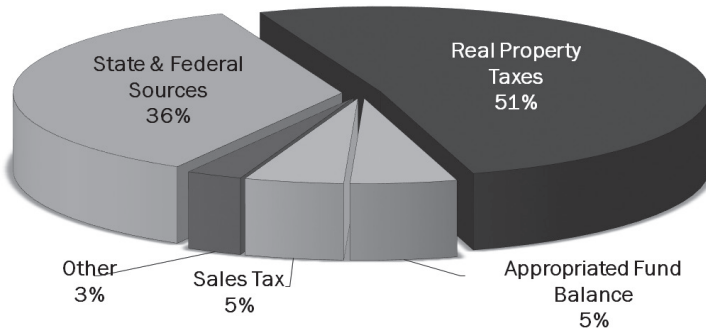
Budget-to-Budget Percentage Increase: 2.02%

### 2019-20 Expenditure Comparison

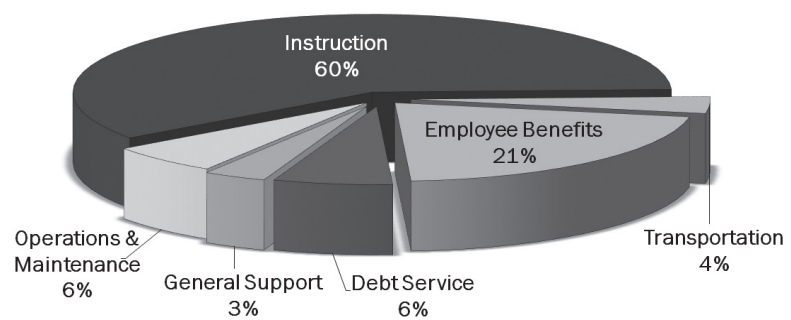
	2018-19 Budget	2019-20 Proposed	2019-20 Increase
General Support	\$5,439,499	\$5,662,593	\$223,094
Operations & Maint.	\$10,245,673	\$10,151,063	-\$94,610
Instruction	\$94,826,122	\$99,405,502	\$4,579,380
Transportation	\$5,745,328	\$5,812,681	\$67,353
Employee Benefits	\$35,529,518	\$35,511,897	-\$17,621
Debt Service	\$12,171,403	\$10,732,425	-\$1,438,978
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$163,957,543</b>	<b>\$167,276,161</b>	<b>\$3,318,618</b>

Budget-to-Budget Percentage Increase: 2.02%

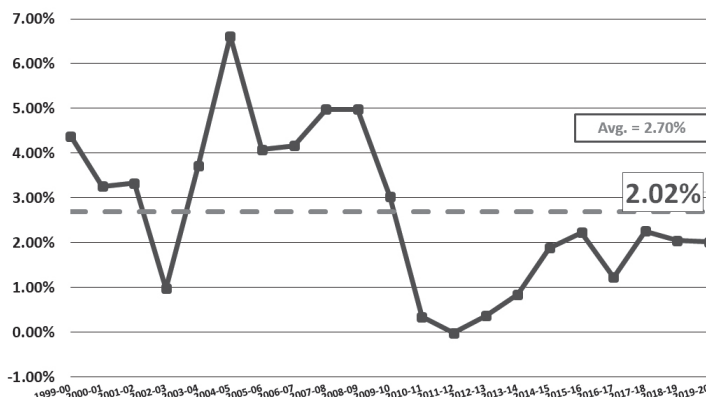
**2019-20 Revenue Budget by Function: \$167,276,161**



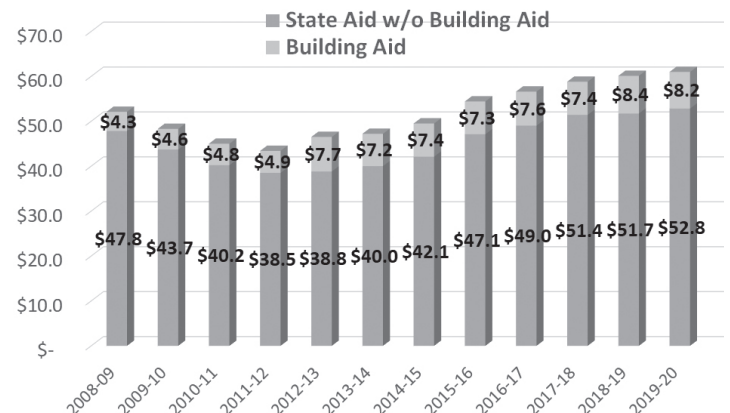
**2019-20 Proposed Expenditures by Function: \$167,276,161**



**Historical Comparison of Ken-Ton UFSD Budget Increases**



**Historical Comparison of Ken-Ton UFSD State Aid (In Millions)**



# 2019-20 Propositions

## Proposition 1: 2019-20 Budget (\$167,276,161)

### Proposition 2: Bus Purchase

- Three (3) 65-Passenger Gasoline Buses \$316,233
- Seven (7) 35-Passenger Gasoline Buses \$462,637

**Total Proposition:** \$778,870

*State Transportation Aid: Approximately 70%  
District Share: Approximately \$233,659*



## Sample Ballot

### PROPOSITION NO. 1: 2019-20 BUDGET

RESOLVED, that the basic budget of \$167,276,161 for the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020 as presented by the Board of Education, is hereby approved and adopted and the required funds therefore are hereby appropriated and the necessary real property taxes required shall be raised by a tax on the taxable property in the District to be levied and collected as required by law.

Yes  No

### PROPOSITION NO. 2: ACQUISITION OF SCHOOL BUSES (AND RELATED EQUIPMENT)

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District, Erie County, New York (the "District"), is hereby authorized to purchase school buses (and related equipment) for use in the transportation program of the District, including seven (7) thirty-five (35)-passenger buses, at an estimated maximum cost of \$66,091 each and three (3) sixty-five (65)-passenger buses, at an estimated maximum cost of \$105,411 each, and to expend therefor an aggregate sum not to exceed \$778,870; and be it further RESOLVED, that the sum of \$778,870 (which may include certain up-front financing costs and is the total of the aforesaid estimated maximum cost figures), plus an amount for interest thereon, shall be funded by the levy of a tax upon the taxable property of the District and collected in annual installments as provided by Section 416 of the Education Law; and be it further RESOLVED, that in anticipation of such tax, bonds or other obligations (including, without limitation, obligations arising under leases, lease/purchase contracts or installment purchase contracts having a term of not more than five years) of the District shall be issued or entered into in accordance with applicable provisions of New York State law; and be it further RESOLVED, that New York State Transportation Aid funds expected to be received by the District are anticipated to offset a substantial part of such costs, and such funds, to the extent received, shall be applied to offset and reduce the amount of taxes herein authorized to be levied.

Yes  No

## Voting Information

### Voter Qualifications:

- Registered to vote by five days prior to May 21, 2019
- U.S. citizen, 18 years of age or older
- Resident of the district for 30 days prior to the vote
- Proof of citizenship, age, and residency required
- You do not have to register if you are already registered with the Erie County Board of Elections or have voted within the past four years.

### Absentee Ballot Information:

- Contact the District Clerk at (716) 874-8400 ext. 20342 for an absentee ballot application.
- Those who already receive absentee ballots do not need to apply.
- Applications must be received no later than seven days prior to May 21, 2019. Absentee ballots must arrive no later than 5 p.m. on May 21, 2019.

# KT➔ KEN-TON FORWARD

## Plan Represents Shift in Governing Philosophy of Ken-Ton Schools

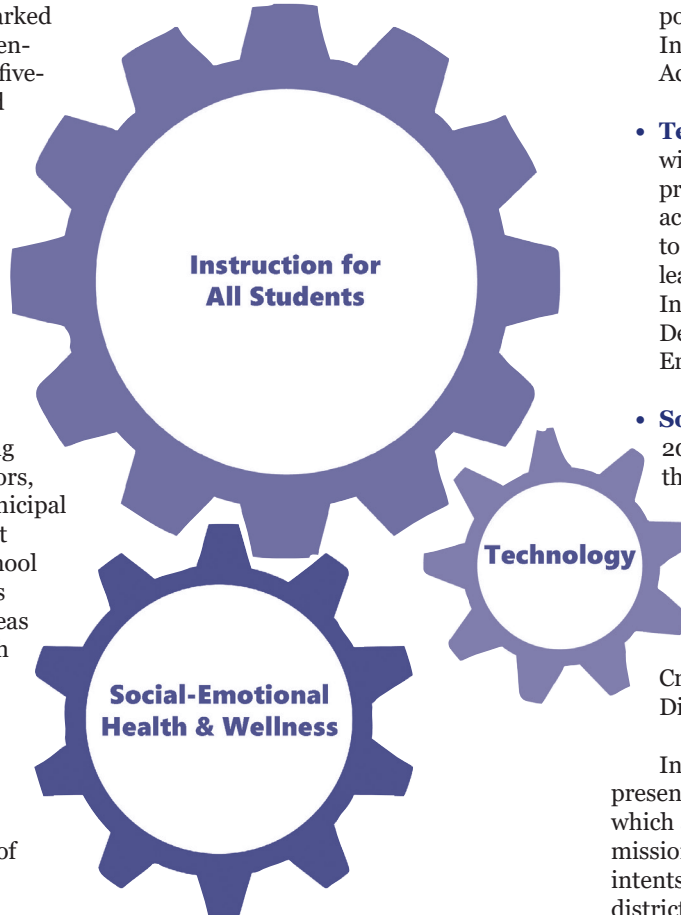
The 2018-19 school year marked the very first year of the Ken-Ton School District's new five-year strategic plan entitled "Ken-Ton Forward," which will be the driving force behind district decision-making and investments over the next five years.

"Ken-Ton Forward" is more than just a five-year plan: it represents a significant shift in the vision and governing philosophy of the school district. It was the product of months of hard work by a dedicated group of school district stakeholders including parents, teachers, staff, administrators, residents, business owners, and municipal representatives. This Core Team met several times during the 2017-18 school year and had in-depth conversations about the district's strengths and areas of need. District-wide surveys, which captured the voices of students, teachers, support staff, families, and the community, provided the foundation for this work.

The Core Team established a renewed vision, mission, and values which will guide the everyday work of Ken-Ton staff:

- **Our Vision:** A community that creates dynamic learners who possess social awareness, confidence, and a belief in their power to succeed.
- **Our Mission:** To provide our students with the supports, tools, and diverse opportunities needed to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world.
- **Our Values:** Mutual Respect, Independence, Trust, Teamwork, Integrity, Passion for Excellence, Responsibility.

Next, the Core Team identified three areas where they saw the greatest opportunity to achieve meaningful progress for students, and articulated three long-range measurable goals. The Core Team established three task forces to create strategies and action plans in



each of these three areas. These action plans detail the very specific initiatives the district will take over the next five years in order to achieve its three strategic intents, as well as performance indicators and measures to track progress along the way. In short, "Ken-Ton Forward" creates a blueprint to achieve the community's collective vision for the Ken-Ton School District.

The three strategic intents and strategy areas are:

- **Instruction for All Students:** By 2022-23, all district schools in Ken-Ton will provide comprehensive academic opportunities that support and extend learning in the critical areas of core instruction, academic intervention, and accelerated programming so that all K-12 students may achieve their highest

potential. (Strategy Areas: Core Instruction, Academic Intervention & Accelerated Programming)

- **Technology:** By 2022-23, Ken-Ton will embody a culture of innovation by providing all district schools increased access to technology-rich resources to enhance every aspect of our learning community. (Strategy Areas: Integration of Technology, Technology Devices and Infrastructure & Engaging All Learners)
- **Social-Emotional Wellness:** By 2022-2023, Ken-Ton will provide the necessary staff, support, and structures so that 85% of Ken-Ton students will display improvement in social-emotional wellness as compared to our baseline measures. (Strategy Areas: Student Resilience & Create a Trauma-Informed School District/Embed Restorative Practices)

In July, Ken-Ton Forward was presented to the Board of Education, which approved the district's new vision, mission, core values, and strategic intents. The plan was introduced to school district staff and administrators during the summer, and a dedicated team has been meeting to implement the plan and monitor progress to ensure the district remains on track. This team will also make regular updates to the Board of Education on their progress.

"Ken-Ton is a unique and diverse school district with a long and proud history, a world-class staff, proud school communities, strong institutional values and traditions, and unrivaled academic programs. We have a very strong foundation, and 'Ken-Ton Forward' will allow us to take the success of our students, schools, and staff to new heights," said Superintendent Stephen Bovino and Board of Education President Dr. Jill O'Malley. "The future is filled with opportunity and promise, and we hope everyone shares our excitement as we embark on this new chapter."

Ken-Ton Forward can be found at [www.ktufsd.org/forward](http://www.ktufsd.org/forward).

## 3 New Teachers Earn National Board Certification

Three teachers have joined the growing list of educators in the Ken-Ton School District who have earned National Board Certification, the gold standard in teaching.

Earlier this year, National Board Certification was earned by Robyn Brydalski, elementary school teacher at Franklin Elementary; Larissa Gramza, school support specialist at Franklin Elementary; and Mike Ihde, music teacher at Kenmore East. Also, Laura Howse, Kenmore West High School International Baccalaureate (IB) coordinator, became the second Ken-Ton teacher to earn her recertification, which is now required every five years.

This brings the Ken-Ton School District to a total of 23 current or recently retired National Board Certified Teachers, with four additional Ken-Ton teachers who are currently pursuing their certification.

The Ken-Ton School District is among the districts in New York State with the highest number of National Board Certified teachers. Also, Ken-Ton has one of the highest percentages – if not the highest percentage – of its teaching staff who have earned this distinction in the Far West Region.

“It has been exciting to see how this has grown, and how our students ultimately benefit from their teachers’ reflection and achievement,” said ELA instructional coach Kathleen Reiser, one



**Ken-Ton's newest Board-Certified Teachers – from left, Larissa Gramza, Mike Ihde, and Robyn Brydalski – are recognized by KTA President Peter Stuhlmiller.**

of Ken-Ton's Board Certified Teachers.

Reiser and her colleague Amy Klose, another Board Certified Teacher, have been trained in candidate support and are helping other educators achieve National Board Certification with support from Ken-Ton's Staff Development Center and the New York State United Teachers.

Board certification, awarded by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, is considered to be the gold standard for teaching. It is a performance-based peer-review process similar to board certification in medicine. Earning National Board Certification is a rigorous process which includes written entries, exams, and video submissions, and can take one or two years.

## Staff Recognition & Highlights

The following is a summary of some of the recognitions earned by members of the staff, administration, and Board of Education over the past year.

Board of Education President **Dr. Jill O'Malley** was honored with the 2018 Laura M. Burns Advocacy for Children Award.

Superintendent **Stephen Bovino** was the recipient of the 2019 Western New York Educational Service Council (WNYESC) Award for Excellence in the Superintendent category.

Once again, several music teachers were among the winners in the annual JazzBuffalo Poll: **Laura Anderson, Lisa Hasselback, Phil Aguglia, and E.J. Koepfel** (a fifth, **Mike Ihde**, was among those nominated).

**Kim Roll**, food service director, was the recipient of the NY School Nutrition Association's Outstanding Director of the Year Award.

**Robert O'Connor** from Kenmore East High School was named a NYS Master Teacher.

Kenmore West softball coach **Matthew Chimera** was inducted into the Western New York Softball Hall of Fame.

Edison Elementary physical education teacher **Nicole Zugelder** received the Empire State Excellence in Teaching Award.

Three new Ken-Ton teachers – **Robyn Brydalski** and **Larissa Gramza** from Franklin Elementary, and **Mike Ihde** from Kenmore East – earned National Board Certification.

Instructional coach **Phil Jarosz** was named the 2018 Person of the Year by the Buffalo Theatre Guild.

Lindbergh Elementary music teacher **James Holden** was named the Buffalo State Music Department's Music Educator of the Year.

**Dr. Michael Lewis**, director of special education and student services, was named a Leadership Niagara Distinguished Alumni.

The "Here We Are" exhibit at Buffalo's Artspace Gallery featured photography by two Ken-Ton School District art teachers (**Denise Carr** and **Gustavo Glorioso**).

For the 9th year, Ken-Ton was named a **Best Community for Music Education**.

The Career and Technical Education Technical Assistance Center (CTE TAC) of NY named the **Pre-Engineering Academy** as a NYS CTE Model Program.

Ken-Ton Schools was again distinguished in this year's NYS Public Relations Association (NYSPPRA) **Communication Awards**, including the highest achievement possible, an Award of Excellence, for the "SchoolGram."

## Changes to Visitation Procedures

In August 2018, the Ken-Ton School District announced a new initiative to help foster a safe and secure learning environment while school is in session. The first phase of this initiative was establishing a single point of entry in all nine school buildings, which was accomplished at the start of the 2018-19 school year. The second phase of this initiative is the implementation of a secured visitor management system. One component of this is the Raptor system, which has been piloted in select school buildings during the 2018-19 school year in anticipation of district-wide implementation.

These initiatives represent a change for visitors but are helping to

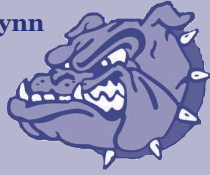
create an added layer of safety and security while schools are entrusted with the supervision of students. The district and its schools appreciate the patience and understanding of families and visitors as these changes have been implemented.

Anyone who wishes to visit a school building during the regular school day for any purpose are asked to familiarize themselves with the new visitor procedures. Most importantly, anyone wishing to visit a school building during the regular school day must possess a valid government-issued ID. Find more information about the visitation procedures at [www.ktufsd.org/visitors](http://www.ktufsd.org/visitors).

## Sports Highlights

The following is a brief description of just some of the many accomplishments and achievements by Kenmore East and Kenmore West athletes and teams over the past year:

Kenmore East student **Kaelynn Weber** helped lead the Section VI Bowling Team to a NYS Championship and bowled the second highest game of the tournament.



**Kenmore West Hockey** finished the regular season 15-6-0-1, clinching the Division II Championship, and making it all the way to the Section VI semifinals.



The Kenmore West Indoor Track Team had two qualifiers for the NYS Championships: **Chris Kaszynski** (Section VI pole vault champion) and **Mark Marrelli**.

Kenmore East student **Austin Orlowski** from the combined Rifle Team won first place at the Section VI Championship in the Kneeling position and set a new Section VI record.

The combined Swimming and Diving Team had five swimmers qualify for the NYS Championships: **Mazin Awad, Brandon Garcia, Benjamin Harper, Colin Janis, and Matthew Walker**. Harper went on to place fifth in the 50 freestyle.

In their individual weight classes, wrestler **Noah Michael** won second place at the Class AA Championships and fifth place at the Section VI Large School Championships, and wrestler **Nolan Sander** won fourth place in both tournaments.

Kenmore East soccer player **Kyle Hofschneider** was named to the 2018 All-American High School Boys Soccer Team, was selected as the league's Player of the Year, and made the first team All-WNY and first team East All-Region.

For the second year in a row, **Kenmore West Girls Cross Country** won the Niagara Frontier League Championship.

Kenmore West swimmer **Gillian Boal** qualified for the NYS Championship.

Last spring, Kenmore West Track & Field had several top-three finishers at the Section VI Championships: **Mark Marrelli** (Section VI 110-meter hurdles champion); **Chris Kaszynski**; and **Christina Wende**. Wende finished fourth in the state in the triple jump. Kenmore East Track & Field had several top-five finishes at the Section VI state qualifier: **Nick Coburn, John O'Connell, Kahlil O'Neal**, and the 4 x 100 relay squad.

Kenmore West golfer **Zac Boyes** qualified for the NYS Championships.

Finally, a total of 24 graduating athletes were honored at three special ceremonies after signing their intent to compete at the college level last spring.

## Local Educators, Leaders Gather to Address Looming Teacher Shortage

Local and state officials joined with education leaders, teachers, administrators, and students in the Ken-Ton School District on Thursday, Jan. 24 to address a significant issue facing school districts in New York State: a looming shortage of teachers.

Approximately one-third of NYS teachers are eligible to retire within the next five years. Many communities are already struggling to fill teaching positions in difficult-to-staff subject areas, and enrollment in teacher education programs declined by 47 percent since 2009. The U.S. Department of Education has identified 16 teacher shortage areas throughout New York State (up from only two recognized shortage areas a decade ago). New York State will need an estimated 180,000 teachers in the next decade.

Local and state officials were joined by education leaders, higher education representatives, as well as Board of Education members, teachers, administrators, and students to address this challenge



Participants discuss the looming teacher shortage at the "Take a Look at Teaching" Summit in January.

and brainstorm ways to increase the number of prospective teachers ahead of the shortage.

The summit was organized by the Kenmore Teachers Association and the New York State United Teachers. It was part of a broader initiative entitled "Take a Look at Teaching" that aims to increase the number of students and career changers entering careers in teaching, improve diversity in the workforce, and elevate teaching.

## Schools & Districts Issue Warnings Over Dangers of E-Cigarettes

Schools and communities across the country, including Ken-Ton, are experiencing an emerging threat to public health: the rapidly increasing use of electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes, among adolescents.

E-cigarettes are electronic devices that heat a liquid to produce an aerosol that users inhale and exhale. This liquid is marketed in thousands of different flavors and usually contains nicotine, the highly addictive and dangerous chemical that is found in cigarettes and other tobacco products.

There is a misconception that e-cigarettes are safe. They are not. The consensus among experts is that there are many health risks associated with e-cigarette use. The liquid used by e-cigarettes contains toxic particles that can increase the risk of heart disease, lung cancer,

and asthma attacks. Another danger is the presence of nicotine, often in high concentrations. Nicotine has long been known to impair adolescent and young adult brains. Because nicotine is so highly addictive, e-cigarettes make it very easy for young people to become addicted to nicotine-containing products for a lifetime. For many, this will lead to the use of other nicotine products, including cigarettes.

The Ken-Ton School District is committed to engaging the entire school district community in curbing e-cigarette use by students and supporting students in making healthy choices. Information and resources which may be helpful to students, families, and staff can be found on the district website at [www.ktufsd.org](http://www.ktufsd.org) under Resources.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

## School Counselor Introduces Students to Mindfulness

The benefits of practicing mindfulness have been understood for centuries, but it has only been within the last few years that practicing mindfulness in schools has become common in the U.S.

During the 2018-19 school year, Franklin Elementary School has made the practice a cornerstone of its efforts to improve social-emotional health and well-being among students. It's called "Mindful Minutes," and leading this effort is school counselor Michele Melligan.

"Classrooms that participate in Mindful Minutes take one to two minutes out of their day to take deep breaths and refocus," said Yasmin Ramsey, a fourth-grade student at Franklin Elementary. "This helps with clearing our minds and being thankful for the things in our day."

Mindful Minutes coincided with the new NYS mental health curriculum and district-wide goal of improving social-emotional wellness. Melligan's proposal for "Mindful Minutes" was chosen as a finalist in the district's 2019 Innovation Contest, which sought proposals for new initiatives for possible implementation.

"It is very simple – taking two minutes each day built into the schedule to take a moment and just breathe," Melligan said in her proposal.

Even before she had known her proposal was selected as a finalist in the contest, Melligan had already begun implementing her idea at Franklin Elementary. And the results have been exactly what she had anticipated. A student survey at Franklin Elementary conducted before and after the implementation of Mindful Minutes showed a significant increase in the percentage of students who felt confident in their understanding of how to calm themselves.

"I have noticed an increase in students' ability to self-calm and monitor themselves," said third-grade teacher Robyn Brydalski. "So I feel like it's really impacting the well-being of



Two students at Franklin Elementary School relax and breathe while taking part in a "Mindful Minute" during class.

our students here at Franklin."

Mindfulness is the ability to be in the present moment – a moment-by-moment awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, sensations, and surrounding environment. Research consistently shows that practicing mindfulness improves health and well-being among young people. Everyone is capable of practicing mindfulness, and even a minute or two can have significant benefits.

In classrooms at Franklin Elementary, participating teachers would make it part of their daily routine. They would take a break from the busy activity of the day and lead their students in a "Mindful Minute." Before long, it was something the students were able to do on their own.

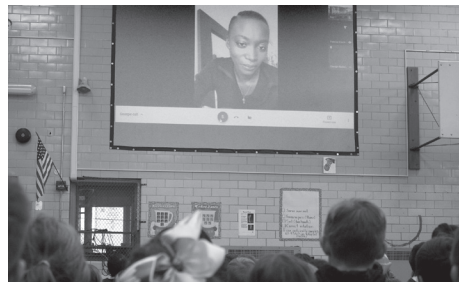
"I have noticed that the children are able to make quick transitions much easier with Mindful Minutes, and we do this often throughout the day," said second-grade teacher Diane Meachum. "They learn to just stop and refocus and then move on which is an important skill for children to manage."

## Book Inspires Edison Students to Raise Money for Water Well

It started with a reading of "The Water Princess," the story of a girl in an African village named Gie Gie. She wakes up early each day and spends much of her day walking a long distance to fetch drinking water from a far-off well.

At Edison Elementary, "The Water Princess" has inspired students and staff to raise \$10,000, enough to build and maintain one water well in a village just like Gie Gie's. They are well on their way toward accomplishing their goal, having raised more than \$5,000 in just a few months.

The effort began when second-grade students read "The Water Princess," written by author Susan Verde and illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds. The book is based on the true story of model and activist Georgie Badiel, who created a foundation to bring fresh water to the people of Burkina Faso and the neighboring sub-Saharan nations.



Edison Elementary students meet Georgie Badiel via Google Call during a school-wide assembly on Jan. 11.

The work of Verde and Badiel have put a spotlight on the everyday struggles of people in African nations that do not have access to clean water, and the difference a water well can make.

On Nov. 8, the school welcomed Verde who spoke to classes about her work and inspiration. One topic was "The

Water Princess," the real-life childhood experiences of Badiel, and the work of Badiel's foundation. The school decided to make raising money for a water well a school-wide effort. Then, on Friday, Jan. 11, the entire school gathered together in the gymnasium and auditorium where they had the opportunity to meet the real-life Georgie Badiel via Google Call and take part in a reading of "The Water Princess."

There are many ways to support this effort. You can visit the Well Fund Page at [www.ktufsd.org/EdisonWellFund](http://www.ktufsd.org/EdisonWellFund) for information on upcoming and ongoing initiatives. Checks can be made out to the Edison African Well Fund and sent to Edison Elementary School, 236 Grayton Road, Tonawanda, NY 14150. Also, the refunds from recycling bottles and cans at the recycling center located at 2790 Sheridan Drive can be designated for the Edison African Well Fund.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

At Hoover, LEGO Robotics Club Introduces Students to Coding

A new after-school club at Hoover Elementary School is giving students an introduction to coding. Best of all, it is doing it in a fun and engaging way using one of the students' favorite toys: LEGOs.

Now in its second year, the Hoover Elementary School LEGO Robotics Club has been extremely popular with students. Nearly half of all fourth-graders – approximately 60 altogether – will participate in the after-school club this year. As part of the club, students construct a simple LEGO robot and create a code sequence that guides the robot in accomplishing various tasks.

"The goal of LEGO Club is quite simple: I want to introduce these students to coding and spark their interest in these ever-expanding fields," said advisor Tony Orzel.

The 2017-18 school year was the first year that each elementary school had a science lab, and the Ken-Ton School District Technology Department provided each lab with 15 LEGO Education "WeDo" kits. These sets combine the beloved



Hoover Elementary students demonstrate their LEGO robots at a recent Board of Education meeting.

LEGO interlocking brick with classroom-friendly software, engaging standards-based projects, and a discovery-based collaborative approach, introducing students to computational thinking and engineering principles in a fun and engaging way.

The school's goal was for STEM-focused education which opens students to new subjects, allows for different learning methods, and promotes creativity.

These resources proved so valuable that there was a need to incorporate them into student learning beyond the school day. There simply wasn't enough time during the regular school day to use them to their full potential.

There are numerous benefits in addition to practicing math, engineering, and programming concepts; the activities also incorporate problem-solving, project design, trial-and-error discovery, and perseverance. After they have built their robot, Orzel gives the students a task to solve, such as creating a code that will make the robot stop at specific places then go back to a specific location. If it doesn't work out the way they want it to, the students keep working until they have found a solution.

"LEGO Robotics is basically about taking some LEGOs and turning them into this epic robot that can move around on the floor, on the table, anywhere," said student Maria Mitchell. "Even if you try a certain code and it doesn't work out, you can try again."

Author/Illustrator Kathryn Otoshi Inspires Mural at Holmes Elementary

Holmes Elementary School celebrated the work of acclaimed author and illustrator Kathryn Otoshi during the 2018-19 school year with an author visit and visual art exhibition.

Students in kindergarten through fourth grade spent the previous two months of school focused on the themes of Otoshi's nationally acclaimed work including character building and the encouragement of strong character traits.

The literature-rich program was a collaboration between school librarian Kimberly Conrad and art teacher Diane Shaefer. The study of Otoshi's most recent books, "One," "Zero," "Two," "Beautiful Hands," and "Draw the Line," required students to explore their personal values, empathy for others, and leadership.

The months-long program culminated with the painting of a tree in the school foyer, including hand prints from every student, modeled after Otoshi and Bret Baumgarten's book "Beautiful Hands." While visiting the school, Otoshi added her signature quote "Reach high!" to the mural.



Top photo, Holmes students meet Kathryn Otoshi. Middle photo, Otoshi adds her signature quote to the mural. Bottom photo, the completed mural.



Happy Homecoming

Feb. 4 was a very exciting day for Thomas LaRussa's class at Lindbergh Elementary. After lunch, the students were gathered in the library for a reading of "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Day" when fourth-grader Iliana Pabon was surprised by her father who had just returned to Kenmore after a nearly year-long deployment to Afghanistan. It was a complete surprise for Iliana as well as her older brothers, Uvani at Hoover Middle and Pedro at Kenmore West, both of whom were surprised by their father at their respective schools earlier that day.



MIDDLE SCHOOLS

# Challenging Projects Teach 7th-Graders 21st-Century Skills

During the 2018-19 school year, some seventh-grade students at Franklin Middle School and Hoover Middle School have been challenged like never before. It's called the Capstone Project, and it is an optional program that students can join in addition to their full academic schedule. The Capstone Project is intended to be the foundation of a new academic enrichment program which is currently being planned for Grades 5-7.

As part of this year's Capstone Project, students have taken part in projects that promote 21st Century skills: collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity (the four "C"s). Another fundamental concept is grit, as advisers hope to promote perseverance and passion in students. Grit was central to one of the students' major projects at Hoover Middle School.

"Over the summer, kids were able to choose one of eight books to read, and each book had a gritty character," said adviser Jeffery Kleismit. "The students were told that their task was that they would be presenting at a convention for at-risk teens and their goal was to convince adults that this book would help their teenagers learn to be gritty and to deal with problems and persevere."

Hoover Middle School librarian Jill Dempsey described

**"Their project choices are really diverse and driven by their individual interests and the things that they want to change in the world."**  
*- Jill Dempsey, Librarian*

another project the students were involved in. They were challenged to choose a problem in the real world that is significant to them and find a way to solve it. One student came up with a creative way to address cat obesity: a specialized feeder that dispenses a predetermined amount of a specific food based on the weight of the cat and then disposes of the excess food, so that cats only have access to their own

food. Other students researched issues they are passionate about or interested in: library funding, gun control, the wage gap and sexism in the workplace, animal neglect, and medical research.

"Their project choices are really diverse and driven by their individual interests and the things that they want to change in the world," Dempsey said.

At Franklin Middle School, students have been taking part in activities from BreakOut EDU, a platform of learning games that are very similar to escape rooms. Students must work together to solve puzzles in order to complete the challenge.

"You can see the kids are focused around the table working together to solve puzzles, much like an escape room, and they have to use the four Cs to accomplish that," said advisor Diane Rabb. "Without working together as a team, they are not very successful."

## Country Star Jessie Chris Visits Franklin Middle School

Jessie Chris, a country music star who was named a Billboard Artist to Watch in 2018, visited Franklin Middle School in December with the help of the Devin's Message Foundation for a special concert and anti-bullying assembly.

Chris used the opportunity to advocate against bullying, share from her recent children's book entitled "Dreams," and perform her award-winning music.

Devin's Message is a local foundation named in honor of the late Devin Kurzdorfer. It is dedicated to helping children overcome bullying and build self-esteem. In partnership with Devin's Message, Chris came to Franklin Middle to tell the story of how she was bullied as a child and how she eventually overcame it. Her music is a testament to her beliefs that we should go out of our way to treat others with kindness and to never stop believing in yourself when you follow your dreams.

Following her talk, Jessie played three songs for the audience and then



**Country music star Jessie Chris, left, poses for photographs with Franklin Middle School students following a special concert and anti-bullying assembly.**

stayed afterwards to sign autographs for her newest fans.

She left students with three rules: 1) When you see someone different, say, "You're awesome"; 2) Ignore the bullies; and 3) Don't ever doubt yourself in pursuing your dreams and keep pushing.



### Essay Contest Winner

Sydney Gasiorek, a sixth-grade student at Hoover Middle School, was honored in February for winning first place in the local and regional Lions Club Peace Essay Contest. This year's theme was "Kindness Matters," and Sydney's essay was a heartfelt piece about giving back and bettering the lives of others in the community. From left, Elaine Thomas, Hoover Middle School principal; student Sydney Gasiorek; and Alicia Schwock, teacher of the visually impaired.

HIGH SCHOOLS

# Student Highlights & Achievements

*These are just some of the many achievements and accomplishments of Kenmore East and Kenmore West students over the past year.*

More than half of the 508 members of the Kenmore East/Kenmore West **Class of 2018** earned at least one of the following distinctions: an Advanced Regents Diploma, an Advanced Regents Diploma with Honors, a Technical Endorsement on their Regents Diploma (many through the schools' Career Academies), or were candidates for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma.



The **Kenmore East Model UN team**, coached by Christopher Knab, overcame 51 other teams to win the highest distinction possible at the regional Model UN competition – Best Overall Delegation – for the 14th time in 16 years.

Kenmore West senior **Trevor Higgins** was among 25 NYS high school students to be nominated by the NYS Education Department for the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Trevor also placed 7th in WNY in the Chemistry Olympiad exam.

The **Kenmore West Science Olympiad Team** performed exceptionally in the Western New York Science Olympiad, earning a place at the New York State competition for the first time in school history.



In just 10 months, three students selected by WGRZ Ch. 2 for its new WNY “Great Kids” segment were from Kenmore West High School: **Mason Forney, Jacob Wallace, and Philip Davis.**

Kenmore West students **Scott Arseno and Devontae Halter** won the Buffalo State Horace Mann K-12 Student Award.



Kenmore West senior **Josh Sinclair** won the Regional Shakespeare Competition hosted by the Niagara/Frontier Buffalo English-Speaking Union of the U.S. and won a place at nationals in NYC. Junior **Luci Weatherbee** placed 2nd for the second year in a row.

The **Kenmore East Tech Wars Team** won first place in the SUNY Erie Tech Wars Escape Room competition.

Kenmore West students **Amanda Buettner and Ryan Henneberger** were named Commended Students as part of the 2018 National Merit Scholarship Program.

Kenmore East's **Rachel Hamilton** placed 2nd in WNY in the National French Contest (“Le Grand Concours”) and received the Bronze Award, and Kenmore East's **Angela Melchiorre and Jenna Butler** placed 9th and received an Honorable Mention.

The **Kenmore West High School Physics Olympics Team** came in second place overall out of 27 teams at the 2018 Buffalo State College Physics Olympics.



**Art Distinctions:**



Last spring, 2018 Kenmore West graduate **Catherine Kirk** won first place and a \$2,000 renewable scholarship for her portfolio submission to the Allentown Art Festival Student Art Scholarship.

The “Here We Are” exhibit at Buffalo's Artspace Gallery featured photography by **12 Kenmore East art students.**

Kenmore East student **Jade Valkwitch** won second place at the annual high school photography show hosted by Villa Maria College last May.

At the 34th annual Storrs All High Photo Show sponsored by the Kenan Center in April, awards were earned by Kenmore East students **Anna Nesci** (Best Portrait), **Isabella Colby** (Best Animal), **Alexis Sevrey** (Best Urbanscape), and **Jenna Partsch** (Merit Award), and Kenmore West student **Will Benk** (Merit Award).



**Music Distinctions:**



Kenmore East senior **A.J. Neubert** was accepted into All-Eastern, which represents the top student musicians in the Eastern United States and Europe, and Conference All-State, which represents the top student musicians in NYS, as well as numerous other selective ensembles. He performed in Europe with the Greater Buffalo Youth Orchestra. He was also a finalist for the national radio show “From the Top,” took part in the prestigious Tanglewood Institute music camp, was selected to be a brand ambassador for ScholarshipAuditions.com, and has been accepted into some of the top music schools in North America.

Kenmore East student **Madison Manzella** was accepted to perform as part of the 2019 High School and Young Adult Honors Performance Series at the Sydney Opera House in Sydney, Australia.

A total of **23 Kenmore East and Kenmore West students** from Band, Orchestra and Chorus were accepted into the highly selective Area All-State band, orchestra, chorus, and jazz ensembles, which represent the top student musicians from throughout Western New York.

For the second time in three years, students from the **Kenmore East High School Chorus** were invited to perform at Disney's annual “Candlelight Processional” at Epcot in Orlando, FL.



## HIGH SCHOOLS

## Wilderness Club Expands Learning Outside the Classroom

For 40 years, the Kenmore East High School Wilderness Club has promoted environmental stewardship and an appreciation for nature through a variety of fun outdoor activities. For students participating in Wilderness Club, these experiences have broadened their understanding of topics they have learned in class while also forging memories they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

Some recent activities include overnight camping at Bush Hill State Forest, hiking through the Erie County Forest, cross country skiing at Byrnclyff, weekend camping in McCarty Hill State Forest, backpacking along the Finger Lakes Trail, and white water rafting through Letchworth State Park.

“The types of outings that we do are camping, hiking, backpacking, snowshoeing, canoeing, kayaking, white water rafting, rock climbing, mountain biking, night hiking – we don't necessarily do all of those every year, but most of those. We try to do an outing once a month,” said Alex Sowyrda, the club's advisor.

Wilderness Club was founded in 1979 by retired teacher Dennis Smith. Sowyrda serves as the club's advisor and teacher Sheila Eberhard serves as assistant advisor. The group's mission is to foster environmental ethics, awareness, and appreciation by providing opportunities for direct experience in nature; provide opportunities for students to learn skills for safely enjoying a variety of outdoor activities; and to provide a service to the school community in line with environmental awareness.

The club usually meets once a week. Through dues and fundraising, the club owns its own equipment such as tents, backpacks, cooking gear, sleeping bags, and snowshoes. Students collect recyclables throughout the school including paper, bottles, and cans to ensure they do not end up in the trash. They also discuss and learn about a variety of topics and plan trips.

During trips, students learn a lot about topics they've learned about in class – everything from Earth Science to American History.

“Because we're outdoors, because we're local, it really touches on a lot of the curriculum that happens in Earth Science, but not



**Members of the Kenmore East Wilderness Club are photographed during a backpacking trip along the Finger Lakes Trail last spring.**

just there – also Living Environment, Biology, and U.S. History as well,” said Kenmore East teacher Matthew Kresge, who served as assistant advisor for several years. “It's just a really wonderful experience for the students, and it's beyond enriching when you have an experience that builds knowledge – it's really something you can't replicate in the classroom.”

There are other benefits as well: students also engage in physical activity, build leadership and teamwork skills, make new friends, and enjoy time away from screens.

“When I joined Wilderness Club,” said student Austin Orłowski, “it gave me the opportunity to do what I love all year round and gives me new experiences doing things I've never done before. Wilderness Club isn't just about experiencing something new: it's also about learning to conserve our ecosystem and building awareness about the state of our environment.”

## New Student Thrift Store Opens at Kenmore West

In an effort to foster a positive school culture and allow “friends to help friends,” staff at Kenmore West High School opened a new staff- and student-run environmentally friendly thrift shop named “KW Freestyle” earlier this year.

Freestyle is described as a place where students can renew or revive their wardrobes at no cost. Students can also find gifts for friends and family, especially when they cannot afford to buy them on their own. Freestyle is set up to accommodate those in need in an upbeat store-like setting without having to leave Kenmore West. At the same time, all students are invited to thrift, browse, and donate as much as possible during study halls or lunch.

The effort began last year with several Kenmore West teachers who wanted to make a difference. They met with Dr. Jill



**Kenmore West student Harrison Ring shows WGRZ Channel 2's Claudine Ewing the school's new student thrift store, Freestyle.**

O'Malley, Ken-Ton School District Board of Education president and founder/director of the Ken-Ton Closet. Together, they brainstormed ideas on how they could help and support students at Kenmore West.

They have received a lot of help from the entire Kenmore West community and beyond, from staff who have dropped off donations to the custodians who helped them ready the space.

“We'd like to thank the many people in the Kenmore West community who have helped us in so many ways,” said Kim Zuccari and Melissa Hayek, two Kenmore West teachers who have spearheaded the effort. “We appreciate the support and the countless donations that come in each day.”

Freestyle is open to all students during Periods 2-9. Staff and students alike have been encouraged to donate new or gently-used teen clothing and shoes to help curate the shop. Students can bring donations in through Door #1; there is also a collection bin that others can use at the Administration Building, located at 1500 Colvin Blvd.



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Regularly scheduled Board meetings are open to the public and usually begin at 6:30 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Call 874-8400 ext. 20342 to confirm time and location.

SchoolGram Editor:

Patrick Fanelli, Community Relations Coordinator, pfanelli@ktufsd.org



**Budget Vote & Board of Education Election: Tuesday, May 21, 2019 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. at Hoover Middle School**

Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda UFSD Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2018-19 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2019-20 School Year	Contingency Budget for 2019-20 School Year
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$163,957,543	\$167,276,161	\$166,851,468
Increase (decrease) for the 2019-20 school year		\$3,318,618	\$2,893,925
Percentage Increase (decrease) in each proposed budget		2.02%	1.77%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.44%	
<b>A. Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount</b>	<b>\$84,862,121</b>	<b>\$86,036,814</b>	
<b>B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Levy</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>E. Total School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C + D)</b>	<b>\$84,862,121</b>	<b>\$86,036,814</b>	<b>\$84,862,121</b>
<b>F. Permissible Exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit</b>	<b>\$1,920,624</b>	<b>\$1,045,469</b>	
<b>G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Exclusions</b>	<b>\$82,941,497</b>	<b>\$84,991,345</b>	
<b>H. Proposed School Year Tax Levy for School Purposes, Excluding Permissible Exclusions and Levy for Library Debt, Plus Prior Year Tax Cap Reserve (E - B - F + D)</b>	<b>\$82,941,497</b>	<b>\$84,991,345</b>	
<b>Difference: (G - H); (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>Administrative Component</b>	<b>\$14,743,232</b>	<b>\$15,173,481</b>	<b>\$15,133,607</b>
<b>Program Component</b>	<b>\$124,268,200</b>	<b>\$128,750,839</b>	<b>\$128,552,530</b>
<b>Capital Component</b>	<b>\$24,946,111</b>	<b>\$23,351,841</b>	<b>\$23,165,331</b>

**Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2019-20 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law:**

The Board of Education will review the expenditure budget and make decisions on those items to be included based on Education Law Section 2023. The tax levy increase would have to be \$0 through cuts to programs and staff (including non-contingent items that would have to be removed in accordance with New York State Law) and additional use of fund balance and reserves.

List of Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount:	Description	Amount
	<b>Under the Budget Proposed for the 2019-20 School Year</b>	
<b>Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings <sup>1</sup></b>		<b>\$570</b>

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2019-20 by the qualified voters of the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda UFSD, Erie County, New York, will be held at the Herbert Hoover Middle School in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2019 between the hours of 7:00 AM and 9:00 PM, prevailing time, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine. Call the District Clerk's office with questions at 874-8400 Ext. 20342

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