

## A Message From the Cato-Meridian Board of Education

Dear Resident:

The details of the proposed 2021-2022 school budget are included in this newsletter. The total budget of \$22,459,281 represents a \$1,565,591 increase which is a 7.49% budget to budget change. As you may remember last year we had a decrease of (\$948,789) which was approximately a (4.34%) budget to budget decrease. Due to COVID-19, last year there was an expected decrease in school aid from Albany. We are happy to report New York State has returned school funding to pre-pandemic levels, thus our budget increase. This budget includes 0% local tax levy increase. The 0% local tax levy is under the 2% tax cap.

This budget reflects the increase in State Aid to pre-pandemic levels. This budget represents adding and enhancing programs so the school district can fill educational gaps left by the pandemic.

Our three strategic planning goals of Success for All (Literacy), Wellness (Social-emotional supports), and facilities planning are reflective in our budget. In order to achieve our three strategic planning goals this budget includes the addition of an Elementary Library Media Specialist, Music Teacher, Literacy Coach, creation of a Summer Educational Program, establishing a 4-year technology replacement plan, and continues to prepare us for the next capital project. We believe this budget supports all of our district strategic planning goals.

In addition to the budget, there is one proposition for consideration. The proposition is to purchase two 65-passenger school buses, and one 30 passenger bus. The purchase of these buses allows the district to continue the 10-year replacement plan of our entire fleet. The 10-year plan allows us to keep our fleet under warranty.

It is our desire that the residents of the Cato-Meridian School District will support the 2021-2022 school budget in order to enhance our programming and services for the children in our community. We,

the Cato-Meridian Board of Education, believe that this budget represents a balance between educational opportunities for our students as well as fiscal responsibilities to our taxpayers.

Please review the enclosed information and feel free to ask for any necessary clarification. Dr. Terry Ward, our Superintendent of Schools; Brenda Semeraro, our School Business Administrator; or any Board of Education member will be happy to answer any questions or address any concerns that you may have.

The school budget presentation will be on Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 6:30 PM in the Round Table Cafeteria in the Elementary School and will also be available via livestream which you can access by going to our school website ([www.catomeridian.org](http://www.catomeridian.org)) and click on District, Board of Education, Online Meetings. More importantly, the budget vote and election will be held on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 between 9:00 AM and 9:00 PM in the Round Table Cafeteria in the Elementary School. COVID-19 safety protocols will be in place and face coverings are required to enter the polling place.

As always, we welcome your support for our district and the students we serve. Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Mr. Paul Byrne, Board President*

*Mr. Michael Lees, Board Vice-President*

*Mrs. Kathleen Bratt, Board Member*

*Mrs. Kristin Cox, Board Member*

*Mr. Timothy Hulbert, Board Member*

*Mr. Jason Hirvela, Board Member*

*Mrs. Jenny Kyle, Board Member*

### 2021-22 School Budget

## Key Dates

### Budget Hearing

Wednesday, May 5, 2021 | 6:30 p.m.

Round Table Cafeteria/Livestream

Please  
*Vote!*

## Budget Vote

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Round Table Cafeteria



## School District Budget Notice Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2020-2021 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2021-2022 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2021-2022 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$20,893,690	\$22,459,281	\$22,320,391
Increase/Decrease for the 2021-2022 School Year		\$1,565,591	\$1,426,701
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		7.49%	6.83%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.23%	
A. Proposed tax levy to support the total budgeted amount	\$6,128,352	\$6,128,352	
B. Levy to support library debt, if applicable	\$75,000	\$75,000	
C. Levy for non-excludable propositions, if applicable**	0	0	
D. Total tax cap reserve amount used to reduce current year levy	0	0	
E. Total proposed school year tax levy (A + B + C - D)	\$6,203,352	\$6,203,352	0
F. Permissible exclusions to the school tax levy limit	\$496,606	\$400,587	
G. School tax levy limit, <u>excluding</u> levy for permissible exclusions	\$5,802,201	\$5,731,334	
H. Total proposed tax levy for school purposes, <u>excluding</u> permissible exclusions and levy for library debt, plus prior year tax cap reserve (E - B - F + D)	\$5,631,746	\$5,727,765	
I. Difference: (G - H); (Negative value requires 60.0% voter approval - See note below regarding separate propositions) **	\$170,455	\$3,569	
Administrative component	\$2,002,211	\$2,084,141	\$2,049,751
Program component	\$14,169,368	\$15,444,436	\$15,375,936
Capital component	\$4,722,111	\$4,930,704	\$4,894,704

### Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings\*

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2021-22 School Year, the Estimated Basic STAR Savings: **\$515**

**STAR** is New York State's School Tax Relief program that provides a partial exemption from school property taxes for owner-occupied, primary residences such as homes, condominiums, farm homes. In effect since January 1997, Senior citizens age 65 or older whose incomes do not exceed \$ 90,550 are eligible for the enhanced STAR exemption. Senior citizens who have not enrolled in the Income Verification Program must apply each year for the Enhanced STAR program. For all other homeowners the original application for the Basic STAR exemption automatically renews each year as long as they own their home. Homeowners that have not purchased a new home have the option to switch to the STAR credit no later than June 17, 2021.

**Absentee Ballots** - Qualified school district voters may vote in the Annual School District Election and Budget Vote by absentee ballot if they are unable to vote in person on Tuesday, May 18, 2021. Individuals who may use an absentee ballot include those who are temporary or permanently ill (temporarily illness includes being unable to appear due to risk of contracting or spreading a communicable disease like COVID-19), hospitalized, physically disabled, away on business, on vacation or who are detained in jail awaiting action by grand jury, awaiting trial or confined for an offense other than a felony.

Applications for an absentee ballot are available in the district office and may be filed up to one day prior to the date of the vote. Absentee ballot applications may be requested from Gwendolyn Marriam, District Clerk, by email at [gmarriam@catomeridian.org](mailto:gmarriam@catomeridian.org), by telephone at 315-626-3439, extension 5001, or by mail at Cato-Meridian Central School District, 2851 State Route 370, Cato, NY 13033.

When will your absentee ballot be sent to you? If you request on your application that your absentee ballot be mailed to you, the district clerk will mail your ballot by regular mail no later than 6 days prior to the election. Otherwise, the district clerk will deliver your ballot to you or your agent, as designated on your application, when you or your agent appears in the district clerk's office. For your ballot to be canvassed, it must be received by the school district clerk by 5:00 p.m. on the day of the election.

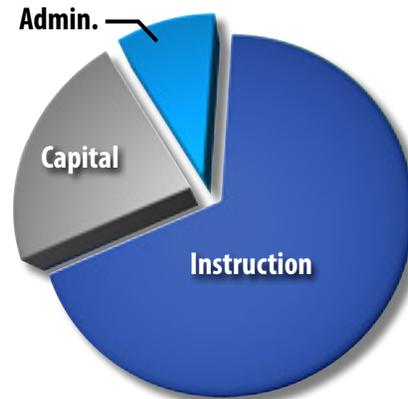
\*Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2021-22 school year should the proposed budget be defeated. Operational and financial modifications will be made to meet contingent budget requirements for administrative budget cap, elimination of equipment purchases that do not meet the test of contingent expenses and computation of a cost to be charged for all community use of Cato-Meridian Central School Facilities.



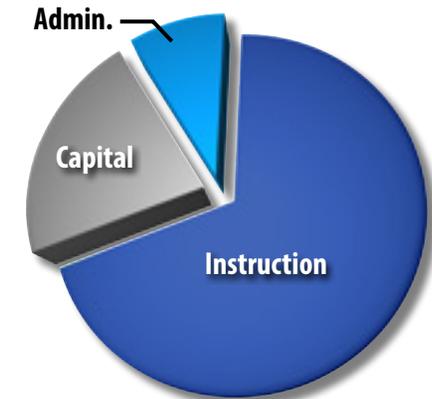
### Three-Component Budget 2021-2022

Administrative Component	2020-2021	2021-2022	\$ Change	% Change
Board of Education	\$35,988	\$35,988	0	0
Central Administration	\$236,000	\$242,500	\$6,500	2.75%
Finance	\$228,200	\$271,700	\$43,500	19.06%
Legal	\$37,821	\$33,821	(\$4,000)	(-10.58%)
Personnel	\$41,000	\$41,000	0	0
Public Information	\$54,400	\$54,400	0	0
Central Services	\$108,700	\$108,700	0	0
Special Items	\$268,400	\$276,400	\$8,000	2.98%
Supervision	\$598,000	\$614,000	\$16,000	2.68%
Special Programs	\$75,422	\$80,000	\$4,578	6.07%
Benefits	\$318,280	\$325,632	\$7,352	2.31%
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,002,211</b>	<b>\$2,084,141</b>	<b>\$81,930</b>	<b>4.09%</b>
Instructional Component	2020-2021	2021-2022	\$ Change	% Change
Central Services	\$65,000	\$95,000	\$30,000	46.15%
Teaching - Regular School	\$4,972,901	\$5,334,517	\$361,616	7.27%
Teaching - Handicapped	\$1,482,864	\$1,887,530	\$404,666	27.29%
Special Needs/Occ. Ed.	\$882,000	\$987,000	\$105,000	11.90%
Special Schools	\$166,000	\$174,500	\$8,500	5.12%
School Library & Audio Visual	\$979,426	\$1,049,985	\$70,559	7.20%
Student Services	\$67,840	\$77,500	\$9,660	14.24%
Co-Curricular Activities	\$293,252	\$363,252	\$70,000	23.87%
Interscholastic Activities	\$696,000	\$753,000	\$57,000	8.19%
Pupil Transportation	\$1,225,415	\$1,270,257	\$44,842	3.66%
Benefits	\$3,338,670	\$3,451,895	\$113,225	3.39%
<b>INSTRUCTIONAL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$14,169,368</b>	<b>\$15,444,436</b>	<b>\$1,275,068</b>	<b>9.00%</b>
Capital Component	2020-2021	2021-2022	\$ Change	% Change
Central Services	\$1,482,822	\$1,508,822	\$26,000	1.75%
Special Items	\$1,500	\$1,500	0	0
Benefits	\$236,364	\$243,159	\$6,795	2.87%
Debt Service	\$3,001,425	\$3,177,223	\$175,798	5.86%
<b>CAPITAL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,722,111</b>	<b>\$4,930,704</b>	<b>\$208,593</b>	<b>4.42%</b>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$20,893,690</b>	<b>\$22,459,281</b>	<b>\$1,565,591</b>	<b>7.49%</b>

### 2020-21 Three-Component Break Down



### 2021-22 Three-Component Break Down



cato·meridian  
central school district

### 2021-2022 Proposed Revenue

Description	2020-2021	2021-2022	\$ Change	% Change
Real Property Tax Levy	\$6,203,352	\$6,203,352	\$0	0.00%
Basic State Aid	\$6,074,027	\$7,235,703	\$1,161,676	19.13%
Excess Cost Aid	\$1,373,287	\$1,441,840	\$68,553	4.99%
Building Aid	\$1,911,994	\$2,230,793	\$318,799	16.67%
Transportation Aid	\$1,660,392	\$1,568,943	(\$91,449)	-5.51%
Lottery Aid	\$1,229,215	\$1,656,549	\$427,334	34.76%
BOCES Aid	\$1,501,423	\$1,388,321	(\$113,102)	-7.53%
Hardware/Software/Library/Other State Aid	\$90,000	\$83,780	(\$6,220)	-6.91%
Rent/Fees/Adm/Misc/Unclassified	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$0	0.00%
Medicaid	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	0.00%
Fund Balance	\$300,000	\$200,000	(\$100,000)	-33.33%
Debt Reserve Fund	\$50,000	\$0	(\$50,000)	-100.00%
Unemployment Reserve Fund	\$50,000	\$0	(\$50,000)	-100.00%
Insurance Reserve	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$0	0.00%
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$20,893,690</b>	<b>\$22,459,281</b>	<b>\$1,565,591</b>	<b>7.49%</b>

**Dr. Terry Ward**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

**Board of Education**

Paul Byrne, President  
Michael Lees, Vice President  
Kathleen Bratt  
Kristin Cox  
Timothy Hulbert  
Jason Hirvela  
Jenny Kyle

Cato-Meridian Central School District  
2851 Route 370  
Cato, NY 13033  
315.626.3439  
[www.catomeridian.org](http://www.catomeridian.org)

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## 2021-22 Propositions

### Proposition 1

Shall the Board of Education be authorized and directed to expend the sum of \$22,459,281 for General Fund appropriation.

### Proposition 2

Resolved that the Board of Education of the Cato-Meridian Central School District is hereby authorized to undertake the acquisition of two (2) 65-passenger school buses at an estimated maximum cost of \$122,056 each, one (1) 30-passenger school bus at an estimated maximum cost of \$59,679, all at an estimated maximum aggregate cost of \$303,791, less trade-in value, if any, 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 \$303,791 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.

## Qualifications For Voters:

1. A citizen of the United States
2. At least 18 years of age
3. A resident of the district at least 30 days prior to the date of the vote

## BOARD CANDIDATE BIOS VOTE FOR 2

There are two (2) vacancies on the Board of Education that shall be voted upon at the annual budget vote and election on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, each for a three-year term commencing July 1, 2021 and concluding June 30, 2024.



**Jenny Kyle** - I am a mother of 5 Children (Ages 13, 11, 8, 4, and 1). My husband Chuck and I own and operate Kyle Farms which is a crop farm right here in Cato, NY. I was born and raised in Northern Michigan on a dairy farm. I came to New York in 2001 to finish up my undergrad at Cornell University where I met my husband. I remember when we were dating he said, "I want our children to attend school in the Cato-Meridian School District." I quickly learned why he said that and he couldn't have been more right. Just don't tell him I said that! I believe anything you do in life you have to know your why. What are the things that put that fire in your step? When you know your why in life, that is when you are able to serve at your maximum potential. So, what is Jenny Kyle's why? I choose to serve on the Cato-Meridian School Board because I have a love for education and children. Education is huge! To me it opens up so many opportunities for children and helps to prepare them for their adult lives. We as community members have an obligation to make sure every single child has the best education our community can afford. I am proud of our school, the students, staff, and community members that make up our district and I am honored to be a part of making Cato-Meridian School District the best school district in New York State.



**Michael Lees** - I have served on the Cato-Meridian Central School Board of Education for the past 15 years. My wife, Laurie, and I have had 3 children graduate from C-M. With our fourth child in ninth grade, I still have a vested interest in continuing to see Cato-Meridian School District improve. We have a very good Board of Education in place and I want to continue to do my part helping our district navigate our continuing challenges. Our school has made great strides over the past several years and I look forward to continuing to serve on the Board and building upon these successes.

