

SchoolGram

KENMORE-TOWN OF TONAWANDA UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Registration is Open for K & UPK Programs



Registration is continuing for the free Ken-Ton School District Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Program, which offers both a half-day and full-day program, as well as full-day Kindergarten programs at all five elementary schools in the district. **Page 3**



BUDGET VOTE & BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTION

**7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Tuesday,
May 16, 2023
In-Person**

Hoover Middle School,
249 Thorncliff Road
(use the Sheridan
Drive entrance)

Budget Information:
www.ktufsd.org/budget

Candidate Information:
www.ktufsd.org/candidates

CONTENTS:

Highlights & Achievements

Page 2

Community Bus Tour

Page 3

Capital Project Progress

Page 4

New Groundskeepers & Security Officers

Page 4

Life-Saving Blizzard Response Honored

Page 6

Job Opportunities

Page 6

Visually Impaired Department Feature

Page 7

School Highlights

Page 8-9

Budget & Vote Information

Page 10-12

Budget Vote & Board Election: May 16, 2023

On Tuesday, May 16th, 2023, Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District voters will have the opportunity to vote on the proposed 2023-24 budget. There will be two additional propositions on the ballot as well as candidates for two seats on the Board of Education. Voting will take place from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, May 16th at Hoover Middle School (use the Sheridan Drive entrance). We encourage all Ken-Ton School District residents to learn about these propositions and vote.

District personnel and the Board of Education worked hard to prepare a spending plan for next year which contends with record-high inflation while minimizing the impact on property tax payers. The budget proposal includes a proposed tax levy increase that is below the 18-year historical average and within the tax cap. Keeping the property tax levy underneath the tax cap was a major priority for the district



Sabatino Cimato,
Superintendent of
Schools



Matthew Chimera,
Board of Education
President

because we are always mindful of the impact on property taxpayers.

This was a difficult year for school districts throughout the state due to inflation. Leading up to 2022, inflation had averaged only 1.58% per year over a 10-year period. In 2022, inflation spiked to 4.7% and this year, it is estimated to exceed 8%. Just as residents have seen significantly higher costs for everyday expenses, the district has also seen

increased prices for necessary expenditures such as instructional supplies, fuel, utilities, etc. This made balancing the budget while staying under the tax cap a challenge. We were able to achieve this by finding innovative opportunities to reduce costs and find savings wherever possible while aggressively seeking out additional areas of funding such as grants. This was truly a team effort by all schools and district departments.

Continued on Page 11

HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

These are just some of the many achievements and accomplishments of students and staff over the past year.

STUDENTS:

- The **Kenmore East Model UN Team** won the WNY Model UN competition for the 15th time out of the past 17 competitions. The school also placed 1st in 3 different Model UN committees.
- Kenmore East student **Vincent “Vinny” Guarino** was awarded the 2021-22 New York State Sons of the American Legion Member of the Year Award.
- Kenmore West student **Karli Schmitt** won a prestigious Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange scholarship which enabled her to study in Germany for a year.
- Former Lindbergh Elementary student **Lucy Sciandra** (now at Hoover Middle) was the 1st-place Gr. K-4 winner in the WNY Invention Convention last spring.
- Former Hoover Elementary student **Leo Burt** (now at Hoover Middle) was selected to participate in the National Youth Leadership Forum (NYLF) Pathways to STEM in New York City during the summer.
- Kenmore West student **Emma Kresge** placed in the top 10 finals at the National Shakespeare Competition last spring.
- A total of 23 **Kenmore East Chorus** students were invited to participate in the all-new massed choir performance “Sing the World” at Walt Disney World in December.
- Kenmore East student **Patrick Reilly** won 1st place in the men’s senior lightweight solo competition at the Canadian Secondary Schools Rowing Association (CSSRA) Regatta last spring.
- A total of 3 students (**Caspian Bara** from Kenmore East and **Everett Gianni** and **Owen Wagner** from Kenmore West) were selected for the prestigious Conference All-State ensembles. Additionally, 16 students were selected for Area All-State and 92 students were selected for All-County ensembles.
- As a student at Kenmore East, **Katie Lawson** was accepted into the Honors Performance Series Orchestra in Vienna, Austria last summer.

ATHLETICS:

- The **Girls Ice Hockey Team** won its seventh Section VI championship title in 12 years.
- A relay team of 4 students from the Kenmore East Boys Track & Field Team (**Joshua Alderman**, **Henry Morris**, **Sidney Morris**, and **Andrew Roland**) won the Section VI Championship during last year’s spring season.
- **Kenmore Girls Bowling** won the Section VI Class A title.
- Kenmore East students **Jake Willard** and **Kaelynn Weber** both competed in the NYS Bowling Championships. Both bowlers were also named NYSPHSAA Sportsmanship Award Winners.
- Three students from the Kenmore East Indoor Track & Field Team qualified for the New York State Championships: **Sidney Morris**, **Daniel Reinhart**, and **Henry Morris**.
- The **Kenmore West Unified Bowling** and **Unified Basketball** Teams were both named the Section VI Divisional Champions within the past year.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CLASS OF 2022

- 157 Kenmore East, Kenmore West, and Big Picture Program graduates earned an **Advanced Regents** or **Advanced Regents with Honors**.
- 17 students were candidates for the prestigious **International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma**. IB students are accepted into some of the most selective and prestigious colleges in the U.S. and some can begin college as sophomores.
- 52 students earned a special **Technical Endorsement** on their Regents Diploma for completing a Career & Technical Education Program.
- Ken-Ton was one of a handful of schools in WNY to adopt the **Civic Seal of Readiness** Program and approximately 20% of graduates were among the first students in the state to earn this new distinction.



From top to bottom, scenes from the Big Picture Program Graduation on June 17th, the Kenmore East Graduation on June 25th, and the Kenmore West Graduation on June 26th.

- 13 Kenmore East and Kenmore West student-athletes signed their letters of intent to compete at the college level last spring.

STAFF:

- Kenmore East Band Director **Phil Aguglia** made history as one of the first WNY music teachers to be named a top 10 finalist for the 2023 GRAMMY Music Educator Award.
- Franklin Middle health teacher **Shannon Pariso** became the 25th educator from Ken-Ton to earn her National Board Certification, considered the gold standard in teaching.
- Kenmore West teachers **Dawn Brown** and **Jennifer Gazdovich** were selected for the NYS Master Teacher Program.
- 4 members of the Ken-Ton staff were named winners of the WNY Educational Service Council Award of Excellence: District Music Coordinator **Laura Anderson**, Board President **Matthew Chimera**, Hoover Head Custodian **Tom Gominiak**, and Assistant Superintendent **Kelly White**.

Continued on Next Page

It's Time to Register for Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten!

Now is the time to register for Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) and Kindergarten in the Ken-Ton School District!

The free UPK Program will once again include both half-day and full-day options at Hamilton Elementary. To be eligible for the 2023-24 school year, children must be four years of age on or before December 1st, 2023. The traditional classroom-based UPK framework is designed to introduce academics and enhance socialization, physical activity, communication, and creative thinking while preparing your child for kindergarten. Availability of seats is based on NYS funding. Families are strongly encouraged to register for UPK by May 26th. A lottery will be used if the number of registrations exceeds the number of seats prior to May 26th. If there are still open seats after May 26th, registration will continue on a first-come/first-served basis.

Kindergarten programs are offered in all five Ken-Ton School District elementary schools. To be eligible for kindergarten during the 2023-24 school year, children must be five years of age on or before December 1st, 2023. The kindergarten curriculum encompasses engaging, hands-on, rigorous instruction for the whole child including math, ELA, science, social studies, music, art, physical education, and health.



A pre-kindergarten student enjoys the new and improved playground at Hamilton.

These programs also offer large group/small group instruction, enrichment opportunities, daily recess, wonderful playground facilities, an extensive collection of children's books, an iPad/Chromebook for every child, comprehensive social-emotional support, an unparalleled breakfast/lunch program, special events/activities, field trips, and much more.

For registration information, visit www.ktufsd.org/CentralRegistration. On this page, you will find comprehensive information about how to register, required documents, and accessing the online registration system.

District Begins Offering Educational Bus Tour of the Community

The Ken-Ton School District has initiated a new bus tour exploring local history and notable locations within the Ken-Ton School District community.

The tour was first offered during the summer for all new teachers entering the district followed by a tour for all members of the district administrative team. In January, the tour was offered for members of the community for the first time with another tour scheduled to take place on Saturday, May 13th followed by a hot breakfast with Board of Education members.

The May 13th tour will depart promptly from Kenmore Middle School (Door #9) at 9 a.m. and the breakfast will begin at 10:30 a.m. inside Kenmore Middle. Residents can attend the tour, the breakfast, or both. You can find the sign-up link on the district homepage at www.ktufsd.org. Space is limited for the bus tour and registration is required. Call 716-874-8400 for more information.

The 90-minute tour includes dozens of locations of historical significance in areas



Residents participate in a tour of the district on January 28th followed by a breakfast with Board of Education members.

throughout the town and village as well as current and former school locations. All participants receive a map which includes the tour route and detailed information about dozens of different locations of interest.

Ken-Ton has a very rich history going all the way back to the early 19th Century. You can learn more about the history of the district at www.ktufsd.org/OurStory.

Highlights & Achievements (cont.)

Continued from Previous Page

- Board of Education President **Matthew Chimera** was awarded the Erie County Association of School Boards Laura Burns Advocacy for Children Award.
- Director of Athletics **Brett Banker** received the NYS Athletic Administrators Association 2023 Judith Ann Knight Positive Change Award.
- Holmes Elementary teacher **Tracy Caruana** received the Exceptional Cooperating Teacher Award from Buffalo State College.
- Board of Education President **Matthew Chimera** was inducted into the NYS Softball Hall of Fame and maintenance mechanic **Patrick Huntington** was inducted into the WNY Baseball Hall of Fame.
- Numerous Ken-Ton music teachers were selected as event chairpersons or conductors at the all-county and area all-state events.
- Instructional Support Specialist for Science **Lisa Davidson** received the Science Teachers Association of NYS Gr. K-8 Outstanding Teacher Award.
- Kenmore West Family & Consumer Science (FACS) teacher **Gina Muroff** received the NYS Association of Family & Consumer Science Educators Promising New Professional Award.

DISTRICT:

- Ken-Ton was once again among a tiny fraction of the nation's school districts to be designated as a Best Community for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation.
- The district was selected as the host site for several regional and statewide events including the NYS Gymnastics Championships at Kenmore West, the Erie County Elementary and Junior High (North) Music Festivals at the Franklin Complex, and the Section VI Rifle Championship at Kenmore East.
- Ken-Ton was one of 4 school districts in WNY to be distinguished by the NYS School Public Relations Association as part of the 2022 Communication Awards (for social media and the district website).

Capital Project Continues to Transform District Facilities

All across the district, the ongoing Capital Project is resulting in significant improvements to district buildings and facilities. The project, which was approved by district voters in February 2020, will address critical capital needs at all schools while also enhancing safety and security for students.

Construction began in June 2021 and will continue in overlapping phases over the next few years. Much work has already been completed including:

- A new multi-use artificial turf athletic field at Kenmore East High School
- A newly reconstructed parking lot at Kenmore West High School, which includes a new parent pick-up/drop-off loop to enhance safety and traffic flow
- An adaptive playground, which can be enjoyed by children



New artificial turf athletic field at Kenmore East High School

of all abilities (located at Hoover Elementary)

- Critical roof replacements, more secured entrances, new water pipes to improve drinking water quality, resurfaced parking lots, and other enhancements at the Franklin Complex and Holmes Elementary.
- Beautiful new energy-efficient windows at Edison and Lindbergh Elementary

Additional construction is currently taking place at Edison Elementary and the Hoover Complex. Both schools

will receive new additional classrooms, more secured single points of entry, new water pipes, resurfaced parking lots, and more. To address traffic and safety concerns during arrival/dismissal, Edison will receive a new bus loop and pick-up/drop-off lane and Hoover will receive a new pick-up/drop-off loop. Work on these components of the project has already begun. All of these projects are slated to be completed by summer 2024.

In the months to come, work will also continue on the new,

more secured single point of entry at Kenmore West High School, which will also receive other renovations, upgrades to the old gymnasium, and new water pipes.

The final phases of the project, which is expected to be completed in 2025, will encompass significant work at Kenmore East High School. This will include a more secured entrance, new water pipes, a resurfaced parking lot, and a new bus loop.



The new adaptive playground installed behind Hoover Elementary School

District Welcomes New Security Officers

Earlier this year, the Ken-Ton School District forged a partnership with Vista Security Group, a NYS-licensed security agency headquartered in Amherst, to enhance safety and student engagement across the district.

The partnership with Vista has added one School Safety Officer at each of the following locations: Franklin Elementary/Middle School, Hoover Elementary/Middle School, Kenmore Middle School, and on a rotating basis at Edison, Holmes, and Lindbergh Elementary School.



This is in addition to the two full-time School Resource Officers at Kenmore East and Kenmore West through the Town of Tonawanda Police Department. All School Safety Officers are retired law enforcement personnel. This group is called the Safety and Engagement

Team (SET) and is focused on enhancing school culture, forging relationships with students/staff, and maximizing safety and security.

You can learn more about the Safety and Engagement Team and meet the new School Safety Officers at www.ktufsd.org/SET.



Students pose for a photograph after cleaning up the Shoreline Trail on October 22nd.

Students Help Clean Up Shoreline Trail

A dedicated group of students and staff from Kenmore East High School and Kenmore West High School have been working hard to keep the Niagara River Greenway Shoreline Trail clean and in perfect shape for visitors.

The Niagara River Greenway Shoreline Trail runs from the Tift Nature Preserve south of Buffalo along Lake Erie and the Niagara River, along the western shoreline of Grand Island, and then along the Niagara River all the way to Lake Ontario. The Niagara River Greenway has established an "Adopt a Trail" initiative which allows organizations and municipalities to "adopt" and care for specific sections of the trail. The Ken-Ton School District has adopted a one-mile section of the trail between Aqua Lane Park and the Erie County Water Authority and it was this section of the trail that participants cleaned up.

Since adopting this section of the pathway, students and staff have been organizing clean-up efforts on Saturdays to maintain this section of this trail and keep it pristine for the community. The most recent clean-up effort took place April 22nd.

New Groundskeepers at Crosby & Adams

Earlier this year, the Ken-Ton School District was pleased to welcome two new groundskeepers: Cameron Lauricella at Adams Field and Lucien LoDestro at Crosby Field. These positions provide a dedicated, full-time staff member for these two athletic fields, which are heavily utilized by students, families, residents, and all members of the community.

This resource was intended to forge connections with students and community members visiting and using our fields, perform maintenance and routine repairs



Cameron Lauricella



Lucien LoDestro

to keep these facilities in excellent shape, and safeguard our community's investment.

The next time you are at Adams or Crosby Field, please be sure to say hello to the new groundskeepers.

Grant Enables Teachers to Develop Innovative 'Future Ready' Lessons

Teachers from the Ken-Ton and City of Tonawanda school districts have teamed up with the NYS Education Department Smart Start Program to explore and develop innovative new lessons which can be modeled in elementary/middle school classrooms. These exciting and creative activities incorporate technology, engineering, or computer science topics in order to inspire students to become "future ready."

A dedicated team of educators set out to design these new lessons and received grant funding to help bring their ideas to life. Their projects, which were on display at the first-ever Ken-Ton School District Future Ready Project Showcase on March 9th, leveraged instructional technology to engage students in critical thinking and collaborative learning.

For example, one activity challenged students to create and program a device capable of monitoring the water level in soil and self-watering plants. A second project involved programming an Ozobot to help students retell a beloved story. Another empowered students to create their own world and models and then explore them in virtual reality.

This exciting program was one small part of a five-year \$1.1 million grant secured by the Ken-Ton and City of Tonawanda



Ken-Ton teacher Andy Lueth demonstrates his lesson, "Understanding Electricity and Using Computers as an Engineering Tool," at the Future Ready Project Showcase on March 9th.

School Districts through the Smart Start Program to give teachers the skills needed to educate students how to live safely and productively in a digitally-dominated world; how to effectively utilize technology to create, research, communicate, and collaborate; and to increase the number of students graduating with computer science skills.

These projects, plus other instructional resources created as part of the Smart Start grant program, will be available on our district website for all NYS educators at www.ktufsd.org/SmartStart.



A Kenmore East High School student participates in the first ConnectLife blood drive of the year at Kenmore East on November 3rd. ConnectLife nominated Ken-Ton for the Chamber of Commerce Large Business of the Year Award.

District Receives Ken-Ton Chamber of Commerce Recognition

Earlier this year, the Ken-Ton School District was proud to be recognized by the Ken-Ton Chamber of Commerce with their Large Business of the Year award.

The award was presented at a luncheon on September 16th as part of the Ken-Ton Chamber's 50th Anniversary Jubilee. It's an award given to a business/organization with a history of long-standing success and significant economic contributions to the region.

The district was nominated for this distinction by ConnectLife, Western New York's blood bank and eye, organ, and tissue donation center, due to a long-standing partnership with the organization. Since 2010, the Ken-Ton School District has been responsible for collecting over 1,750 units of blood through this partnership, most recently during the March 17th Superintendent Conference Day.

Thanks to the hard work and commitment of Ken-Ton School District staff members Kim Mahone, Leanne Schmitz, and Rimme St. George, as well as the continued dedication of students and staff who donate, that's nearly 5,300 lives right here in Western New York that have been impacted by our students and staff.

IB Students Make the Community a Better Place Through 'CAS' Projects

The Ken-Ton School District is one of only two school districts in the entire WNY region to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program, one of the most rigorous high school programs in the world. A major component of the IB Program is the "CAS" project (short for Creativity, Activity, and Service), through which IB students strive to help the community, give back to those in need, and make the world a better place.

"It's a way for students to show growth outside of the classroom setting, while reflecting on the experiences they are involved in," said Chelsea Grosskopf, Ken-Ton's IB CAS Coordinator.

The CAS project centers around something the student is passionate about. They're first introduced to the guidelines their junior year and have a little more than one year to plan, advertise, and implement their chosen project.

"This gives students the opportunity to figure out how they can use their talents or something they are passionate about to help



others," Grosskopf said.

Since CAS projects center around something a student is passionate about, Ken-Ton has seen a variety of ideas that aim to help others, like food drives, fundraisers, and delivering holiday cards to veterans. Other projects aim to inspire, like introducing younger students to jazz music, something IB senior Jake Gradzewicz implemented this semester for students at Holmes Elementary.

"We were able to have a student participate with us in our jazz performance and it was really cool because we were able to see his excitement," Gradzewicz recalled. "Hopefully this sparks inspiration in a young music student who will remember his time playing with the high school kids."

At the beginning of the project, students develop goals for themselves and will later reflect on what they've learned and what they would've changed. Another key component of the project is collaborating with others, whether it be classmates, teachers, or members of their community.

Staff Recognized for Life-Saving Blizzard Response

In January, Superintendent Sabatino Cimato and the Board of Education were proud to recognize 32 individuals from the Ken-Ton School District and Town of Tonawanda for their life-saving efforts during the deadly blizzard that struck Western New York beginning December 23rd.

Leading up to the storm, the Town of Tonawanda initiated a plan to establish warming centers to accommodate individuals who lost power or became stranded. One was established at the Hoover Elementary and Middle School complex in partnership with the district. This warming center operated for approximately 80 hours over a four-day period beginning at 12 p.m. Friday, December 23rd as the storm settled over the Town of Tonawanda. It provided a safe, warm refuge for 106 people, including 24 children as young as 2 weeks old along with 82 adults ranging from age 18 to 92. Throughout the duration of the storm, these individuals had access to a facility that was secure, supervised, heated, and powered, as well as a fully stocked kitchen which provided three meals a day plus snacks and drinks.

Numerous individuals were recognized for their role in not only establishing the center but their work during the duration of the storm as they took time away from their families during the holidays to support this effort. This included Town of Tonawanda Supervisor Joseph Emminger;



Town of Tonawanda and Ken-Ton School District personnel are recognized at the January 10th Board of Education meeting for their life-saving efforts during the December 2022 blizzard.

Town of Tonawanda Emergency Services Coordinators James Chatham and Robert Lutz; members of the Town of Tonawanda Community Emergency Response Team (CERT); Town of Tonawanda police officers including Officers Christopher Ryan and Colin Farrell; members of the Ken-Ton School District Buildings & Grounds Department led by Director of Facilities Tim Ames and Assistant Director of Facilities John Wille; and individuals from the Food Service Department led by Food Service Director Kim Roll.

Another group of individuals were recognized for their efforts on the evening of December 26th. Several feet of snow had fallen and the area had only begun the long recovery process when a fire broke out at the

Safire Rehabilitation residence on Sheridan Drive. This fire could have necessitated the evacuation and relocation of residents while firefighters worked to contain and extinguish the blaze. The district received a request to assist in being prepared should residents need to be transported to another location. Thanks to the efforts of Buildings & Grounds staff as well as Transportation Department staff led by Director of Transportation Mike Klemann, a path was cleared at the Transportation Department on Military Road and a school bus was ready to be used within minutes of receiving the request.

The efforts of all these individuals were nothing short of heroic and the continued partnership between the district and town very likely saved lives in our community.

Pursue a Career in the Ken-Ton School District!

Did you know the Ken-Ton School District, one of the area's largest employers, is continuously hiring for a multitude of instructional and support staff positions? Ken-Ton is a great place to work, begin a new career, or work beyond retirement. Part-time/full-time positions are continuously posted online at ktufsd.recruitfront.com.

Support Staff Positions

Support staff play a vital role in the educational environment and are in high demand. Many interact with students on a daily basis while others perform vital work behind the scenes.

In the Ken-Ton School District, support staff earn competitive pay plus benefits including NYS retirement for some positions as well as sick days and holidays. A variety of work schedules are available, ranging from 3 to 8 hours per day and including weekdays, weekends, and split schedules. Most positions offer the opportunity to work family-friendly hours (the same schedule as school-age children – no nights, holidays, weekends, or summers). Additionally, the district offers a signing bonus of up to \$1,000 for bus drivers.



A Franklin Elementary class on the first day of school

Instructional Opportunities

Teaching is an extremely rewarding profession and teachers in all areas are also in very high demand. The path to becoming a teacher begins with a Bachelor's Degree, traditionally in the field of teaching (although NYS offers options for those with a different degree). A candidate must earn their initial certificate followed by entrance into an approved Master's Degree program which puts them on a path toward earning their professional certification.

Ken-Ton is widely recognized as a prime destination for new teachers. In Ken-Ton, teachers begin their career with the full support of the district's innovative Teacher Mentor Program, which has served as a model for similar programs across the nation. Teachers are also supported by Ken-Ton's own Staff Development Center and full-time Instructional Support Specialists, who provide day-to-day coaching and support for teachers.

Experienced educators who meet the minimum NYS requirements may also choose to pursue their School Building Leader (SBL) or School District Leader (SDL) certification. These require successful completion of a NYS-approved administration program. This is required in order to pursue leadership positions such as school and district administrators.

How to Apply

All support staff positions and instructional positions are posted online. You can view and apply for any position at ktufsd.recruitfront.com. Check back often as positions are continuously posted.

Helping Every Child Thrive & Grow

Teachers of the Blind & Visually Impaired Help Students Meet Their Full Potential

By Jenna Stockman
Ken-Ton School District

If you walk into Alicia Schwock's classroom at Edison Elementary, you'll often see her working with fourth-grader Madison McCombs. Madison is one of the many visually impaired students in the Ken-Ton School District who are continuing to thrive and grow thanks to teachers like Ms. Schwock.

"When I was an undergrad, I had no idea this field even existed," said Ms. Schwock, one of the district's three Teachers of the Visually Impaired. "I literally learn something new from my students every day and love watching them flourish."

Ms. Schwock, along with teachers Sheila Ewing and April Kress, and visual aide Deborah Fose, make up Ken-Ton's Visually Impaired Department. They cover all 10 district buildings and work hard to educate and bring opportunities to the 60 students they serve. Every student has different needs depending on how their brain is interpreting information. Some students' eyes don't work together, while others, like Madison, are legally blind.

"We always try to make the curriculum super accessible," Ms. Schwock said. "That involves a lot of hands-on learning because they don't learn the way other students typically do."

Ms. Schwock learned about the importance of teaching in a "hands-on way" during her three years at the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind in St. Augustine. She recalls her students taking a field trip to an aquarium where they were able to use nets to catch cannonball jellyfish.

"The experience was amazing because they were able to physically touch and feel them," Ms. Schwock said. "We are able to give kids something you couldn't do with a textbook. We were helping them experience the world and the things that others may sometimes take for granted."

That experience has helped Ms. Schwock develop different ways to teach her students. For example, she and the other teachers use different sized blocks to explain number values (10, 100, etc.) and will sometimes take them outside so they can walk the length of a football field to understand various lengths of measurement. She'll also wear a blindfold in her house and try to accomplish everyday tasks, learning from her experience and then finding ways to teach her students how to do those things.

When it comes to reading, the difference between Braille and print is extremely complicated and takes a lot of learning.

"It's a lot more difficult for a Braille



Edison Elementary School teacher Alicia Schwock guides a fourth-grade student using a Braille reader.

"I had a student who transferred into the district as a middle schooler and was losing his vision. He was so frustrated. I told him he could do anything and all we had to do was find a different way to do it. He wound up continuing on and recently graduated from the University at Buffalo. To see him do that was beyond rewarding."

Alicia Schwock, Teacher of the Blind & Visually Impaired

learner to learn how to read than the average student. Sometimes people think a visually impaired child is just educationally delayed, but that's not the case," Ms. Schwock said. "Yes, they're typically a grade level or more behind, but that's because they're learning so much more information than a print reader."

That's why Ms. Schwock is continually working to build a community of understanding when it comes to the Braille language. She's taught lessons to local Girl Scout troops in order to spread awareness and has also encouraged undergraduate teachers to pursue the field. She's also teaching her own students self-advocacy by giving them opportunities within their own school.

"Madison is in her second year of a reading contest where she is attempting to read as many minutes as she can over a certain period of time. In the past, she would read for principals and other teachers and this year we stepped it up a notch and are

reading to students," Ms. Schwock said. "She has gone to different classrooms and has shown them her way of reading. The younger kids think it's so cool to see her read using her fingers rather than her eyes. She's become very confident with what we call her 'superpower.'"

In a constantly evolving field, Ms. Schwock and the rest of the department are in awe of what their students continue to achieve. Whether it be the lessons in the classroom or the new technology that continues to assist them in everyday life, they've seen their students overcome hurdles and thrive in the real world.

"Many years ago, I had a student who transferred into the district as a middle schooler and was losing his vision. He was so frustrated," Ms. Schwock recalled. "I told him that he could do anything and all we had to do was find a different way to do it. He wound up continuing on and recently graduated from the University at Buffalo. To see him do that was beyond rewarding."

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

Big Picture, KW Students Present at Environmental Summit

In February, the Big Picture Program and Kenmore West High School were represented at the Niagara River Greenway's first-ever Environmental Ambassador Summit at the Linde facility. The purpose of the event was to bring students and organizations together to improve green space in the greater Tonawanda area. The teams were challenged to develop innovative proposals which they showcased at the summit. Students then presented their proposals before a panel of judges.

The Big Picture Program's proposal was for a beautiful new garden which would be dedicated to the victims of domestic violence and sponsored each year by students. The garden would be in the shape of a heart and filled with species of plants and flowers that are native to this region.

Kenmore West's proposal was for a campaign to increase awareness of three small islands in the Niagara River (Strawberry Island, Tern Island, and Motor Island) and the important role they play for many different species of birds. The students hope to see signage and viewfinders installed near the riverfront so visitors can see the islands and learn about the different species of birds that live and nest there. This initiative has also been presented to the Town of Tonawanda Youth, Parks & Recreation Department for consideration.

These students were commended for the outstanding job they did presenting their proposals and for their leadership and the care they have demonstrated for our local environment.



Top photo, the Kenmore West team; bottom photo, the Big Picture Program team.

Edison Elementary Hosts First-Ever District Harvest Festival

Edison Elementary School staff in partnership with the Ken-Ton School District Food Service Department have helped keep the district on the forefront of health and wellness.

Hundreds of families from across the district enjoyed the district's first-ever Harvest Festival, which was hosted at Edison on October 20th. The event featured a wide variety of activities/games, prizes, vendors, an assortment of free food and treats, produce bags for every family, and special guests. The event was spearheaded by Nicole Zugelder, Edison physical education teacher, and Kim Roll, Ken-Ton's food service director, and made possible by the hard work and dedication of many Edison staff.



Hundreds attend the District Harvest Festival at Edison Elementary on October 20th.

Ms. Zugelder and Ms. Roll were also instrumental in making Ken-Ton one of only 16 districts in NYS to secure a grant through the NYS Farm-to-School Program, which has

been facilitating exciting new opportunities for students and families all year.

The grant has facilitated different opportunities such as fresh fruits and vegetables for families to bring home; take-home kits to make homemade oatmeal, applesauce, vegetable soup, baked apples, vegetable pizza and more; and educational learning kits.

The Farm-to-School program helps schools connect with area farmers, use locally grown foods on their school menus, and give students healthy lunch options. Additionally, through Ms. Roll's leadership, students are able to enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables from local farms and delicious new recipes from locally grown produce.

Hoover Elementary Becomes Pilot School for Sabres Program

Earlier this year, a new partnership took shape between Hoover Elementary School and the Buffalo Sabres. The program is called "Students of the Game" and brings Sabres development coaches to introduce the sport of floor hockey into each school's physical education curriculum.

Hoover was chosen to be the pilot school for this new initiative, which will soon be launched in 40 schools across Western New York. The goal of the program is to get students interested in the sport of hockey. As part of this program, members of the Buffalo Sabres organization were at



A Hoover Elementary PE class poses with representatives of the Sabres.

Hoover Elementary in the fall to teach second-, third-, and fourth-grade students hockey skills. Each student also received a "Students of the Game" T-shirt, a magnetic 2022-23 season calendar, and a free ticket with the purchase of another ticket to select Sabres home games.



Technology Education at FMS

In January, Technology Teacher Joseph Stawisuck's seventh-grade classes at Franklin Middle School explored technology concepts and topics by building their own fully functioning robots which had to engage and compete with one another. Meanwhile, fifth-grade students were challenged to create "rockets" which they launched using a Josh Allen-themed "rocket launcher" and aimed at targets.

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

Sabres Players Visit Kenmore East 'Best Buddies' Club

In the fall, students in Kenmore East High School's Best Buddies Club were excited to meet Buffalo Sabres' center Peyton Krebs and defenceman Owen Power. The two players surprised students who had gathered for a special celebration called "Friendsgiving." They signed autographs, played games, and posed for photographs with students. The event featured dancing, the limbo, a photo booth, and more fun activities.

Best Buddies, now in its fourth year at Kenmore East, is dedicated to creating opportunities for students with disabilities. Kenmore East



Best Buddies Club at Kenmore East

was the first school in WNY to be home to a Best Buddies chapter. In just a short time, it has become a special part of the Kenmore East community, providing opportunities for students of all abilities to forge new friendships and build an even more welcoming and inclusive school community.

Franklin Elementary Students Demonstrate Creativity in VR

Earlier this year, Franklin Elementary School students had the opportunity to demonstrate their creativity and practice coding skills using virtual reality.

The activity was facilitated by David Rogalski, instructional support specialist for technology. After discussing and writing folktales, third-graders learned how to create 3D characters in a modeling program called Tinkercad then put them in a creation app called CoSpaces, where they learned how to code and record themselves reading their stories in virtual worlds. Using virtual reality goggles, students were then able to



A Franklin Elementary student explores original characters in VR.

explore each other's worlds and listen to one another's stories.

Not only did students learn more about the programs, but they also forged stronger connections by providing support and encouragement for one another.

Holmes Partners With Buffalo State University

A unique partnership is allowing Holmes Elementary to further educate its students, improve literacy in the classroom, and develop relationships with future educators.

For three school years, Holmes and Buffalo State University have engaged in a Professional Development Schools (PDS) partnership. It's an idea that started with teaching and learning literacy in the classroom and has evolved into different layers of teamwork and collaboration. The two schools started collaborating in early 2020 and since then, Holmes has welcomed several students every semester to observe, learn, and teach. Last semester, 11 future educators and literacy



Holmes students visit Buffalo State.

mentors got hands-on experience in one of several Gr. 1-4 classrooms.

As the partnership continues to evolve each semester, Holmes is seeing their students benefit even more through on-site field trips thanks to grant funding. In the fall, several students were able to tour Buffalo State's

campus, visit the planetarium, see what a college classroom looks like, and connect literacy with science elements.

At the end of the semester, Principal Matt Raines meets with every teaching candidate to go over their experience and reiterate how much their presence means to the Holmes community. He says it's a way to positively reinforce the partnership and keep future conversations open.



'Day in the Life of the Watershed'

Students on Teams 6-1 and 6-5 at Hoover Middle School were able to take part in the 10th annual "Day in the Life of the Niagara River/Lake Erie Watershed" program earlier this year. The event was sponsored by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and Reinstein Woods with more than 550 students participating from throughout WNY. Hoover Middle sixth-grade teacher Susan Rusinski was selected to take part in the program and chose the Burchfield Nature and Art Center in Cheektowaga as the team's field lab experience site. Students visited the center and collected data from the Buffalo River tributary. Six stations were then set up where students were able to analyze things like water transparency, cloud cover and wind, water temperature, pH, and dissolved oxygen, nitrate, and phosphate. The data collected from this year's students will be analyzed to see the changes from last year's collection.

Lindbergh Celebrates 'Love of Literacy' Week

Lindbergh Elementary School celebrated "Love of Literacy Week" from February 27th to March 3rd to inspire in students a lifelong love for reading.

On Monday, with funds from the PTA, each classroom teacher received a copy of the school's book of the week: "Change Sings" by Amanda Gorman. Each class read the book and completed coinciding activities. The following day, classrooms welcomed several visiting readers, including Superintendent Sabatino Cimato and Board of Education President Matt Chimera, who brought a book of their choice to read and then asked questions and interacted with the students.

On Wednesday, second-, third- and fourth-grade classrooms paired up with younger grade levels for Buddy Reading Day. The older students visited the younger classmates to share



Superintendent Sabatino Cimato reads to students.

a story and make a bookmark together. The week capped off with a "book swap" on Thursday and a special "I Love to Read" assembly on Friday.

BUDGET INFORMATION

Item	Amount	Item	Amount
Budget	\$186,035,714	Tax Levy	\$93,331,100
Budget Increase	\$9,541,432	Tax Levy Increase	\$2,432,321
Budget-to-Budget % Increase	5.41%	Tax Levy % Increase	2.68%
Fund Balance & Reserve Use	\$8,032,413	Estimated Increase (\$100K Full Market Value House)	\$3.54/month

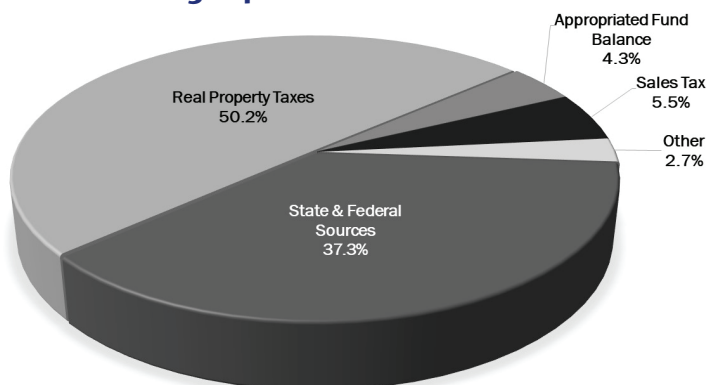
2023-24 REVENUE COMPARISON

	2022-23 Budgeted	2023-24 Budget	2023-24 Increase
State & Federal Sources	\$64,496,303	\$69,364,401	\$4,868,098
Real Property Taxes	\$90,898,779	\$93,331,100	\$2,432,321
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$7,700,000	\$8,032,413	\$332,413
Sales Tax	\$9,000,000	\$10,250,000	\$1,250,000
Other	\$4,399,200	\$5,057,800	\$658,600
Total Revenue	\$176,494,282	\$186,035,714	\$9,541,432

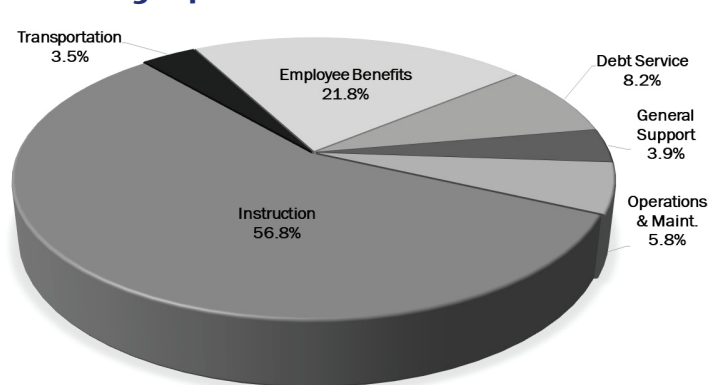
2023-24 EXPENDITURE COMPARISON

	2022-23 Budgeted	2023-24 Budget	2023-24 Increase
General Support	\$6,863,925	\$7,225,595	\$361,670
Operations & Maint.	\$10,475,860	\$10,802,245	\$326,385
Instruction	\$102,122,834	\$105,656,210	\$3,533,376
Transportation	\$6,566,603	\$6,525,023	-\$41,580
Employee Benefits	\$39,333,910	\$40,565,423	\$1,231,513
Debt Service	\$11,131,150	\$15,261,218	\$4,130,068
Total Expenditures	\$176,494,282	\$186,035,714	\$9,541,432

2023-24 REVENUE COMPARISON



2023-24 EXPENDITURE COMPARISON



ALLOWABLE GROWTH VS. INFLATION

Allowable Levy Growth and Inflation Factors for Entities with a July 1 - June 30 Fiscal Year



Note: Allowable levy growth factor is expressed as a percentage.

TAX RATE HISTORY



VOTING INFORMATION

Voter Qualifications:

- Voters must be a U.S. citizen, 18 years of age or older, and a resident of the district for 30 days prior to the vote. Those who are not registered to vote will need to complete an affidavit confirming that they are a qualified voter. Photo identification and proof of citizenship, age, and residency are required for those who are not registered.

Absentee Ballot Information:

- Contact the District Clerk at (716) 874-8400 ext. 20342 for an absentee ballot application. Those on the permanent absentee ballot list do not need to apply for an absentee ballot. Applications must be received no later than seven days prior to May 16, 2023. Absentee ballots must arrive no later than 5 p.m. the day of the vote on May 16, 2023.

BUDGET INFORMATION

Message from the Superintendent of Schools & Board President (cont.)

Continued from Page 1

Several key initiatives are included in the 2023-24 budget which are aligned to our long-term strategic plan, the Ken-Ton Forward. These include safety priorities such as increased security officers and door access controls, cyber-security measures, and social-emotional health and wellness resources. The 2023-24 budget also continues extremely impactful investments that have been made in recent years such as our expanded full-day Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program at Hamilton Elementary, expansion of our extremely successful Big Picture Program, mental

health supports, and enhanced technology infrastructure.

In addition to the proposed 2023-24 budget, residents will also vote on two other propositions. One is the annual bus replacement purchase. This seeks to replace the district's fleet incrementally each year to ensure safety and reliability for the buses that transport thousands of students to and from school each day. This year, we plan to purchase eight 65-passenger buses and two 40-passenger wheelchair buses. Approximately 70% of this purchase will be covered by New York State aid, so the district's share will be approximately

\$480,000. A final proposition is to rename the Kenmore West High School natatorium after former varsity swimming coach Robert Pufpaff. This proposal was considered as part of our new facility naming procedure and was approved by the district Naming Committee and Board of Education.

You can find more information on the proposed 2023-24 budget and the two propositions in these pages and online at www.ktufsd.org/budget. We encourage everyone to learn about the budget and vote on Tuesday, May 16th. As always, thank you for your continued support for the students of our district.

WHAT VOTERS WILL SEE ON THE BALLOT:

Proposition 1: Proposed 2023-2024 Budget (funds all district-operated public schools/educational programs as well as services provided for all non-public/private schools located in the district as required by law)

PROPOSITION NO. 1: 2023-2024 BUDGET

RESOLVED, that the basic budget of \$186,035,714 for the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024 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 2: Annual Bus Replacement Purchase (replaces 8 65-passenger buses and 2 40-passenger wheelchair buses at a total cost of \$1,600,000 with 70% of funding coming from NYS Aid; approximate district share: \$480,000)

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

Shall the following resolutions be adopted?

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 similar vehicles (and related equipment) for use in the transportation program of the District, at an estimated maximum cost of \$1,600,000 (with such estimated maximum cost reflecting the value of any trade-ins), and to expend therefor an aggregate sum not to exceed \$1,600,000; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the sum of \$1,600,000 (which may include certain up-front financing costs), 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

Proposition 3: Proposal to rename the Kenmore West High School natatorium after former Varsity Coach Robert Pufpaff (approved by the Naming Committee and Board of Education)

PROPOSITION NO. 3: RENAME THE KENMORE WEST HIGH SCHOOL NATATORIUM "THE ROBERT PUFFPAFF NATATORIUM"

WHEREAS, pursuant to Policy 3111, the Board of Education of the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District established procedures for the naming of District facilities;

and in accordance with such procedures, a committee was formed to consider a request to change the name of the Kenmore West Natatorium;

and upon careful and thorough consideration in accordance with such procedures, the committee has recommended that the Kenmore West Natatorium be renamed "The Robert Pufpaff Natatorium" to reflect the service of former swimming Coach Robert Pufpaff;

and in order to rename the Kenmore West Natatorium, the procedures require District voters to approve a proposition to rename the facility;

and the procedures also require the Board of Education, by a supermajority vote, to support the submission of the proposition to the District voters; and therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District is hereby authorized to rename the Kenmore West Natatorium, "The Robert Pufpaff Natatorium."

☐ Yes ☐ No

Board of Education Candidates: Vote for 2

☐ Karen Whitelaw ☐ Lee Ann Vogt

Budget/proposition information at www.ktufsd.org/budget & candidate information at www.ktufsd.org/candidates



KENMORE-TOWN OF TONAWANDA UFSD
1500 COLVIN BLVD.
BUFFALO, NY 14223-1196

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BUFFALO, NY
PERMIT #4321

Board of Education

Matthew Chimera, President
Lesley Battaglia, Vice President
Todd Marquardt, Trustee
Jennifer Morrow, Trustee
Paul Spors, Trustee

Sabatino Cimato,
Superintendent of Schools

Sign up to receive the
Ken-Ton Weekly Connection,
a weekly update from
Superintendent Sabatino
Cimato for the Ken-Ton
School District community, at
www.ktufsd.org/connection



Budget Vote & Board of Education Election: 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at Hoover Middle School

Overall Budget Proposal

	Budget Adopted for the 2022-23 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2023-24 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$176,494,282	\$186,035,714	\$183,603,393
Increase/Decrease for the 2023-24 School Year		\$9,541,432	\$7,109,111
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		5.41%	4.03%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		8.0%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$90,898,779	\$93,331,100	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$0	\$0	
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)	\$90,898,779	\$93,331,100	\$90,898,779
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$975,115	\$925,000	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$89,923,664	\$92,406,100	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$89,923,664	\$92,406,100	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$17,241,483	\$17,826,625	\$17,512,712
Program Component	\$135,012,345	\$139,491,140	\$137,719,076
Capital Component	\$24,240,454	\$28,717,949	\$28,371,605

Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2023-24 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 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 Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)**

Description	Amount
Bus Purchase	\$1,600,000

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2023-24 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$538

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2023-2024 by the qualified voters of the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District, Erie County, New York, will be held at Herbert Hoover Middle School in said district on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 between the hours of 7:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the Herbert Hoover Middle School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

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