



WEST CHESTER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Educating and inspiring students to achieve their personal best

Dr. James R. Scanlon, Superintendent of Schools

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WCASD Passes Proposed Final Budget for 2019-20 School Year

West Chester, PA - The West Chester Area School District School Board of Directors passed a proposed final budget for the 2019-20 school year of \$262,345,000, a 3.5 percent increase over the current budget. The district is anticipating an \$8.9 million increase in expenses, and more than \$3.2 million of that increase is directly related to the following state and federal mandates:

- \$1.9 million increase in state-mandated pension expenses, a 6.1 percent increase over the current year budget.
- \$1.3 million increase in tuitions and services for special education students, a 7.1 percent increase over the current year.

The current budget includes a 2.2 percent tax increase for Chester County (about \$89 per average household) and a 1.5 percent increase for Delaware County (about \$69 per average household). The property tax millage rates for West Chester remain one of the lowest in Chester County. The budget includes the planned utilization of \$9.0 million from the district's fund balance, leaving approximately \$15.7 million in an undesignated fund balance.

The largest part of the school district's budget is salary and benefits. The budget includes a 3.2 percent increase in these areas for 1,400 employees. This budget includes the addition of ten new teachers and one nurse needed to accommodate student growth, two instructional coordinators to assist with changes in technology, two support staff members, and three employees in the facilities department. This budget also includes \$1 million set aside for staffing in preparation for the opening of the district's eleventh elementary school in 2021. The total increase in salary and benefits is about \$4.0 million.

"Our budget planning must focus on multiple years. This budget includes funding for some of the projected expenses for the opening of the new Greystone Elementary school in 2021," said Superintendent Jim Scanlon.

The District is projecting a \$480,000 increase in alternative education expenses, which includes the expansion of mental health programs at the middle school level. The remaining \$1.2 million increase in this year's budget covers books, supplies, utilities, debt service, transportation, and other operating expenses.

“Before we pass the final budget in May, the board and administration will work to find additional revenue and savings. We are looking for ways to lessen the impact to taxpayers that are a result of federal and state mandates such as special education and pension costs – the largest contributors to this year’s budget,” said Gary Bevilacqua, chair of the Property and Finance Committee.

“The board remains committed to properly funding programs for our students while maintaining a relatively low property rate,” said board president Chris McCune.

The budget will be available for public review for 30 days on the district’s website. The school board will vote on the final budget on Tuesday, May 28 at 7:00 p.m. at the Spellman Administration Building.

2019-20 District Tax Rates

Based on the proposed final budget, the real estate tax rate for Chester County will increase by .47 mills over the previous year’s budget to 21.7406 mills, up 2.2 percent, and the rate for Delaware County will increase by .24 mills to 16.3185 mills, an increase of 1.5 percent over 2018-19. The average assessed home value in Chester County is now \$189,850, and the average assessed home value in the Delaware County portion of the district is \$285,700. Assessed value is approximately one-half of a home’s actual market value. At the proposed rate increase, the average tax hike would be \$89 for Chester County residents and \$69 for Delaware County residents. The differences in county average assessments account for formula differences resulting in the differing tax rates.

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