



WEST CHESTER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Educating and inspiring students to achieve their personal best

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WCASD Passes Final Budget for 2019-20 School Year

West Chester, PA - The West Chester Area School District School Board of Directors passed a final budget for the 2019-20 school year of \$261,809,403, an approximate \$8.4 million increase over the current budget (3.3 percent.) More than \$2.9 million of that increase is directly related to the following state and federal mandates:

- \$1.9 million increase in state-mandated pension expenses, a 6.0 percent increase over the current year budget.
- \$700,000 increase in tuitions and services for special education students, a 7.1 percent increase over the current year.
- \$230,000 increase in student transportation costs, a 1.5 percent increase over the current year.

The current budget includes a 1.8 percent tax increase for Chester County property owners (about \$74 per average household) and a 1.1 percent increase for Delaware County property owners (about \$52 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 \$9.2 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 3.0 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, one instructional coordinator to assist with changes in technology, one support staff member, 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 \$3.9 million.

"Our budget planning includes looking at future expenses due to enrollment growth," said superintendent, Dr. Jim Scanlon. "We have also budgeted for additional student services to help address the needs of our children."

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, and other operating expenses.

“The board and administration worked very hard to maintain a balance between meeting the program needs of students and our taxpaying community,” said school board president Chris McCune.

2019-20 District Tax Rates

Based on the proposed final budget, the real estate tax rate for Chester County will increase by 39 mils over the previous year’s budget to 21.6622 mils, up 1.8 percent, and the rate for Delaware County will increase by 18 mils to 16.2597 mils, an increase of 1.1 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 \$74 for Chester County residents and \$52 for Delaware County residents. The differences in county average assessments account for formula differences resulting in the differing tax rates.

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