



WEST CHESTER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Educating and inspiring students to achieve their personal best

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WCASD Board of Directors Approves Budget for 2020-21 School Year

West Chester, PA – The West Chester Area School District School Board of Directors passed a final budget for the 2020-21 school year with a zero percent tax increase for Chester County property owners, and a 2.5% increase for Delaware County residents (fewer than 10% of the district’s residents live in Delaware County, and will see an average tax increase of about \$115/year.) The 2020-21 budget is \$269,815,667 and includes an approximately \$8 million increase over the current budget (3.1 percent.) Those increases are largely due to enrollment growth, mandated expenses such as pension costs, and other mandated education-related expenses.

The property tax millage rates for West Chester remain one of the lowest in Chester County. The District used savings in health care costs and savings related to the state-ordered shutdown to help balance the 2020-21 budget.

The largest component of the budget is the salaries and benefits for the District’s 1,440 employees, which rose \$4.6 million (2.4 percent increase). This includes some additional staff needed to accommodate enrollment growth, special education mandates, and the need to offer an online cyber program in the fall

In addition, the budget includes \$1 million set aside for staffing in preparation for the opening of a new elementary school in 2021. The total increase in salary and benefits is about \$4.6 million.

“The board and administration worked very hard to maintain the tax rate for our community in response to the downturn in our economy,” said Board President Chris McCune. While the board is not increasing tax rates, it recently received word from the Pennsylvania Department of Education that the money allocated by the state to reduce property taxes for homeowners is being cut in half. The law (Act 1) requires the Pa Department of Education to certify taxpayer relief funds no later than April 15 of each year, so school districts can deduct that amount from the tax bill.

“While the tax rate won’t increase for our taxpayers in Chester County, they will see an increased payment due to a state cut in property tax reduction,” said Dr. Jim Scanlon, Superintendent. “This is not a school board decision, but one made by the state.”

2020-21 District Tax Rates

Based on the proposed final budget, the real estate tax rate for Chester County will not increase over the previous year’s budget of 21.6622 mills, and the rate for Delaware County will increase by .40 mills to 16.6626 mills, an increase of 2.5 percent over 2019-20. 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 \$0 for Chester County residents and \$115 for Delaware County residents. The differences in county average assessments account for formula differences resulting in the differing tax rates.

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