



NEWS RELEASE

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NORWIN SCHOOL DISTRICT
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NORWIN APPROVES PROPOSED FINAL BUDGET FOR THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR Board, Administration Will Continue Their Work to Reduce Budget Shortfall; 3.0 Percent Tax Increase Being Recommended

NORTH HUNTINGDON, Pa. — At the Norwin Board of Education's May 13, 2019, Special Meeting, a majority of members approved a 2019-2020 proposed final budget that calls for \$73.5 million in expenses and a proposed 3.0 percent tax increase, which is the increase allowed under the Act 1 limit without exceptions. This increase equates to a 2.4-mill increase in real estate taxes in Westmoreland County and a 0.36-mill increase in real estate taxes in Allegheny County due to State Tax Equalization Board variations among county assessment rates.

Norwin School District's current tax rate is 80.0 mills in Westmoreland County. One mill of tax generates about \$400,000 for the School District. If the tax increase is approved at the proposed rate next month, the new tax rate will be 82.4 mills. This tax rate includes 1.2 mills, or approximately \$490,000, that the Norwin School District collects and remits annually to the Norwin Public Library. This was the result of a Norwin Library Association-generated referendum approved by School District voters in 2000.

The proposed final budget and millage increase can be modified between now and the Board's final budget adoption on Monday, June 17, 2019. The tax increase will generate approximately \$970,000 in additional revenue that is needed to cover the increased operational costs of the District. A homeowner with a property at the median assessed value of \$22,010 would pay an additional \$52.82 per year.

State subsidy increases have not kept pace with increased expenditures during the past several years. The State's 2019-2020 proposed budget provides the following increases for Norwin:

- Basic Education Funding increase: \$182,185 (net) Total: \$16.8 million
- Special Education Funding increase: \$117,931 Total: \$2.8 million

The \$117,931 increase in special education funding for Norwin does not come close to covering the increased expenses of the special education program. The School District intends to meet requirements of special education and student services with the Board voting on May 20, 2019, to create a new Special Education Teaching position, hire a Ten (10) month School Psychologist, and also restore the number of contracted hours for the Behavior Consultant for the 2019-2020 school year. In addition, the School District intends to contract for a new Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant position and add contracted mental health services for both individual and group counseling next year.

State retirement pension costs, tuition for charter and cyber schools, healthcare, and increased costs for special education programs and services continue to impact the District's Education Budget significantly. Superintendent Dr. William Kerr has long been outspoken about fair, adequate, and equitable public education funding.

It is projected that Norwin School District will be required to pay \$1.1 million in the current school year and another \$1.1 million in the 2019-2020 school year for cyber school tuition.

Norwin School District educates approximately 5,300 students in Grades K-12 at seven Norwin school buildings. Norwin School District also pays tuition expenses for more than 100 students who are enrolled in out-of-District placements, such as students in alternative education programs, cyber charter schools, or students with special needs who attend specialized schools.

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