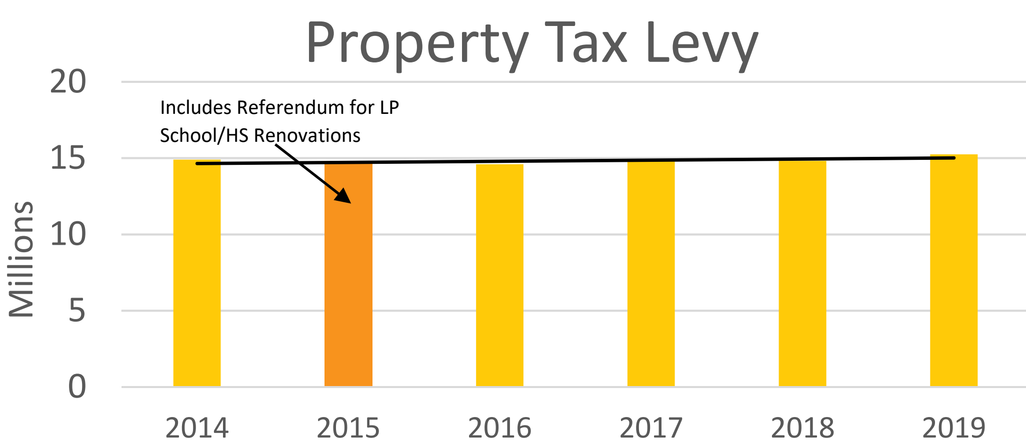
Levy 2.88% Increase for East Troy Community School District; Mill Rate Decreases

At the October 21, 2019 school board meeting, the ETCSD approved a 2.88% levy increase for the 19-20 tax levy cycle.

"With property values increasing an average of 3.26% from the October valuations issued by the Department of Revenue, this nets to a -0.37% decrease in the mill rate – from $9.21 last year to $9.18 this year," stated business manager Kathy Zwirgzdas. "Last year's state average for mill rates was $9.44. While this year's average won't be known until all of the District's certify and report their levies, we stand to be well below the average again."

A significant change in the way levies are computed this year included a 41.7% increase state-wide in the expanded choice (voucher) programs to private schools. East Troy's amount went from to $16,800 last year to $187,801 this year – a 91% increase. "This amount is added into the overall levy," stated Zwirgzdas. "Taxpayers are then responsible for the same percentage of this cost as with public school funding. The private school vouchers accounted for 1.3% of the property tax increase. Without this mandate, the levy increase would have been 1.61%, not 2.88%, and the mill rate would have decreased further." Per a recent DPI update, the substantial increases state-wide in the aid withholding exemption for private school vouchers are the result of continued growth in the number of participating private schools and students, as well as a $292 per pupil increase in the payment amounts for these programs.



Year	Levy Change
2015	-2.03%
2016	0.00%
2017	1.50%
2018	0.00%
2019	2.88%

While property taxes remain flat, revenue for the school district remains severely limited. "This year a $175 revenue limit increase and a $88 per pupil aid increase from the state resulted in a 2.35% revenue increase. In year two of the biennial budget we know we will have a $179 revenue limit increase and a $0 per pupil aid increase. Projections of this combination of funding means a 1.06% revenue increase for 20-21. Between declining enrollment, increasing services, and greater than inflationary costs of insurance and maintenance, we will have a very difficult process for balancing the budget in 20-21 and the future," stated Dr. Christopher Hibner, Superintendent. "Our total revenues from the state are just now finally higher than what they were in 2010-11. Continued reductions to expenses and additions of new costs without additional funding to balance the budget each year have our operating budgets strained."