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East Troy School Finalizes 2013-14 Budget, Adopts Nearly Flat Tax Levy

EAST TROY, Wis. — During its meeting October 28, the East Troy Community School Board voted to increase the school tax levy by just 0.41 percent from the previous year, which was significantly lower than expected.

In September, the board approved a levy increase of 3.7 percent based on conservative aid estimates. However, final numbers provided by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction on October 15 showed that the district gained \$377,000 in state aid. This was combined with proceeds provided by the passage of Act 46 at the state level and lower spending at the district level, resulting in an overall lower-than-expected levy.

“While we are proud of the fact that the district is able to maintain a minimal average levy increase to the local taxpayer, it is important that community members understand taxpayer relief does not increase the school’s budget,” said Dr. Chris Hibner Superintendent. “The amount of money the schools have to work with is still painfully low. In fact, its revenue limit for the 2013-14 school year is only slightly higher than it was in 2008-09.”

In Wisconsin, public school districts are subject to state-imposed revenue limits on the amount of money districts can receive through various sources. Therefore, legislative changes in Madison can result in savings for local taxpayers and revenue decreases for schools. Because of the way in which school funding laws work, the school board ensured that within the flat tax levy increase, the district was able to continue to pre-pay debt.

Although the district’s overall levy increase is only 0.41 percent, where residents live and their own assessment situations will determine the amount they see on the school’s tax line in December.

For example, the average tax levy for the Town of East Troy calculates to a decrease of 1.83 percent, whereas the Village of East Troy will see a 1.49 percent increase. This is because of changes in property values within those areas, which affect how much of the total levy each municipality carries from one year to the next.

“We are continuously trying to balance the impact to the taxpayer, the needs of the district, fiscal responsibility and improving programming for the students of our community,” said Dawn Buchholtz, School Board President.

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