

STATE COLLEGE AREA HIGH SCHOOL NEWS RELEASE

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SCASD Board of Directors To Vote On Adopting 2015-16 Final Budget

On Monday, the State College Area School District Board of Directors will vote on adopting a 2015-16 final budget that calls for a 5.49 percent real estate tax increase but also contains 8.3 percent more revenue than the 2014-15 budget.

The Board approved a preliminary budget Feb. 9, and then approved the proposed final budget May 4. A required budget hearing for public comment was held June 1.

Since the May 4 approval, the final budget has undergone the following changes:

- The Total Fund Balance increased by \$90,000 because of a decrease in the debt service budget line item.
- The Unassigned General Fund Balance increased by \$17,000 from budgeting changes stemming from the district ending a contract with a third party provider for substitute services.
- The district's taking on substitute services added \$1,390,060 and \$491,159 in salary and benefits expenses, respectively.

Other key details include:

- The proposed final budget consists of \$136,368,756 in revenues — a \$10,442,513 increase from last year. This is an 8.3 percent increase.
- Within the proposed tax increase, 3.59 percent represents the referendum debt exception above the 1.9 percent Act I Index. Under state law, the district had to tax the full Act I Index for the Pennsylvania Department of Education to approve the referendum exception.

- The proposed millage increase is 2.1684 to 41.6740 mills of the assessed value (\$4.1674 per \$100 of assessed value) on all real estate within the State College Area School District.
- The average district residential taxpayer will pay \$156 more in taxes in 2015-16.
- The district is expected to receive 82 percent of its revenue from local sources in 2015-16, primarily from real estate taxes. The budgeted total is \$112,155,974.
- For the rest of the projected revenue, 17 percent will come from the state, with 1 percent from federal sources.
- Salaries and benefits constitute the bulk of budget expenses — about 70 percent.
- About 11 percent of expenses are allocated to debt service and capital projects, showing a commitment to maintaining and upgrading the district facilities.
- More than half (52 percent) of budgeted expenses support direct contact with students through instruction.
- Support for local charter schools accounts for 4 percent of budgeted expenses.
- The district employs 1,200 people and has about 7,000 students enrolled. The pupil to teacher ratio is 23:1 in elementary schools and 24:1 in secondary schools.
- Across 150 square miles, the district operates nine elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school campus including the intensive Career and Technical Center, and the Delta Program alternative program's middle level and high school.
- The district also runs community education programs, including afterschool and summer extended learning opportunities.
- Here are [highlights of the 2015-16 proposed final budget](#).
- Here is [a breakdown of the 2015-16 proposed final budget](#), including fund balance summaries and changes from last year, revenue sources, budgeted expenses and budget projections for the future.

- Here is [the PowerPoint budget presentation](#) that will be given to the Board on Monday.

Supplemental Property Tax Rebate Program

The Board will vote on a formal resolution for the supplemental property tax rebate program approved May 4.

In the 2015-16 proposed final budget, \$200,000 has been set aside for the program.

For more information, the district has prepared [a program summary](#). The district website contains [additional information](#).

Real Estate Tax Installment Payment Plans Resolution

The Board will vote on a resolution outlining installment plans for paying real estate taxes. School districts are required to pass such a resolution by June 30.

Here is [the complete resolution](#).

2015 Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion Resolution

The Board will vote on a resolution stating the funds available for homestead and farmstead real estate tax reductions starting July 1, 2015, as outlined under the provisions for the Homestead Property Exclusion Program Act (part of Act 50 of 1998) and the Taxpayer Relief Act (Act 1 of 2006).

Within the district are 12,971 approved homesteads and 99 approved farmsteads.

Under Act 1, the Pennsylvania Department of Education will pay the district \$1,419,503.90 in gambling tax funds as a property tax reduction allocation.

Here is [the resolution](#).

State High Project 90 Percent Design Update

The Board will hear [an update from the district administration](#) about the State High Project 90 percent design stage.

Here is [a PowerPoint presentation](#) for the 90 percent stage. During its update, the design team will review a major change in floor plans: the physical education area going from concept status to being included in the formal 90 percent plans.

Since the 60 percent review, most of the design work has been focused on advancing the MEP (mechanical, electrical and plumbing) drawings.

Milestones for the rest of the design and bid phases include:

- June 15, Board work session on 90 percent documents
- June 16, community forum on 90 percent documents
- July 13, Board review of 90 percent cost estimate
- July 27, Board vote to approve 90 percent and construction documents

- Sept. 1, open bids
- Sept. 2 or 3, Board work session to review bids and alternates
- Sept. 9 or 10, Board special meeting if needed
- Sept. 16, award bids