

School Board Certifies Any Potential Tax Increase for 2008-2009 Will Be Within Index Limit

The Avon Grove School District Board of School Directors voted on December 13, 2007, to opt out of the accelerated budget schedule set forth by the legislature in Special Session Act 1 of 2006, and certified that the district’s 2008-2009 tax rate will be within the district’s allowable index for a real estate tax increase.

The accelerated budget cycle called for Pennsylvania school districts to develop a preliminary budget and make it available for public inspection by January 3, 2008, or to adopt a resolution by that date indicating that the school district will not raise the rate of any tax for the next fiscal year by more than its adjusted index, as calculated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Avon Grove School District’s current real estate tax rate is 23.82 mills, and the district’s adjusted index limit for 2008-2009 is 5.9 percent, or 1.41 mills.*

Under Act 1, the proposed real estate tax rate in Avon Grove for 2008-2009 must be no more than 1.41 mills higher than the existing tax rate.**

The Board of School Directors must approve the district’s 2008-2009 proposed budget by May 31, 2008, and must make the proposed budget available for inspection no later than June 10, 2008. Districts must adopt their final budgets by June 30, 2008.

The administration and Board continue to work diligently to reduce the need for a real estate tax increase for 2008-2009.

More information on Avon Grove School District’s 2008-2009 proposed budget will be posted online later this spring at www.avongrove.org under About Us then Business Office.

For more information about school finance, see the state education Web site at www.pde.state.pa.us/ and click PDE Quick Links, then School Finances.

AGSD Historical Tax Rate Data

Year	AGSD Tax Rate (Mills)	% Increase from Previous Year
2001-2002	21.20	4.95 percent
2002-2003	22.41	5.71 percent
2003-2004	23.82	6.29 percent
2004-2005	23.82	0 percent
2005-2006	23.82	0 percent
2006-2007	23.82	0 percent
2007-2008	23.82	0 percent
2008-2009	**Between 23.82 and 25.23 mills	*Up to 5.9 percent increase (or 1.41 mills) allowable without a referendum

Building & Grounds Update

New School Construction Project on Hold

After reviewing the Pennsylvania Economy League’s (PEL) updated demographic study for Avon Grove School District in February, the Board of School Directors decided to put plans for constructing a new middle school on hold.

The report, dated January 16, 2008, indicates a slowdown in the district’s projected population growth as compared to projections in the earlier PEL study, completed in 2005.

Based on the 2005 growth projections, the district was anticipating building a 1,700-seat middle school to open by the 2011-2012 school year. The design of the proposed new building would be flexible enough to accommodate a high-school addition if needed in the future.

In March 2007, after completing a lengthy process to identify land suitable for a secondary school campus, the Board approved the purchase of 152.4 acres in Penn Township. The site is located between South Jennersville Road and Sunnyside Road, south of Old Baltimore Pike.

The district has begun the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Planning and Construction (PlanCon) process for the project. The PlanCon workbook includes a set of forms and procedures used to apply for reimbursement from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Based on the lower growth projections in the 2008 PEL report, however, the Board of School Directors is now considering the feasibility of renovating Fred S. Engle Middle School and Avon Grove High School. Renovations being considered include providing additional space, and making necessary repairs, including addressing issues with the plumbing system at the middle school. The Board is evaluating the possibility of expanding the high school cafeteria, and adding six classrooms above the science wing. Four new portable classrooms will be added to the high school campus this year.

In evaluating options, the Board will consider whether a portion of the cost for any proposed renovations would be reimbursable by the Department of Education.

District Considers Constructing New Softball Field

At the March 13 Future Growth meeting, Dale Lauver, Supervisor of Building & Grounds, presented plans for the possible construction of a new softball field to be used by the high school girls’ varsity softball team. The proposal calls for a PIAA regulation-sized field to be located on the high school/middle school campus. District officials were scheduled to prepare an estimate for the project, including projected costs for constructing the necessary retaining walls and items such as irrigation systems, sod and dugouts. The estimate is scheduled to be presented to the Board in early April.

Hand Sanitizers Installed in District Classrooms

As part of an ongoing effort to promote proper student hygiene and reduce the spread of germs, the district installed hand sanitizers in each classroom and common area earlier this school year. The units contain an alcohol-based gel, which can be used to cleanse hands in lieu of soap and water.