

For Immediate Release
May 10, 2010

MASD Board of Education Approves Proposed Final Budget, Approval Tentatively Slated for June 28

Moon Area School District school directors approved a proposed final budget tonight totaling \$59,745,349 that contains no property tax increase, while still continuing to provide quality educational programs and facilities for district students.

The budget is available for public inspection and comment at central administration and [online](#) until the final budget approval that tentatively is slated for June 28. Real estate tax bills in Moon Area will stay the same as school directors opted to not levy a .87-mill tax increase for which the district qualified under the state Taxpayer Relief Act or Act 1. Moon Area's millage rate will remain at 21.30 mills, the 16th lowest of 42 county school districts.

Moon Area's spending plan for the next school year allots \$865,495 for the first districtwide language arts curriculum adoption in nearly a decade that will provide new hardcover and online textbooks and new teaching resources specifically designed to coordinate with the district's instructional technology components such as interactive whiteboards, laptop computers and learner response systems. The funds also provide for the "6 Traits of Writing" program that focuses on idea development, sentence fluency, organization and word choice to boost writing skills and intervention materials for special education, Title I, Life Skills and English as a Second Language learners. The budget also finances Moon Area's new \$237,796 extended day kindergarten program, which will provide half-days of additional assistance to as many as 72 at-risk students.

These purchases coupled with \$550,000 for the district's Technology Refresh program that contains \$370,000 for ActivClassroom instructional technology components allow Moon Area to realize our mission of educating our students through comprehensive programs that inspire excellence, lifelong learning and responsibility.

The spending plan also includes new debt payments related to the secondary schools renovation and construction project totaling \$1,283,679, of which \$445,288 will be reimbursed by district's purchase of the federal stimulus plan's "Buy America Bonds." The bonds represented a more worthwhile financial investment due to a more favorable net interest rate than tax-free municipal bonds. A total of \$150,000 for moving expenses also has been allotted to facilitate a January 2011 opening of the new Moon Area High School.

The 2010-11 budget marks a 4.8 percent increase over this year's spending plan, which totaled \$56.9 million and represented a 1.8 percent increase over the 2007-08 budget. Employee salary and benefits remain the largest budgetary expenditure totaling nearly \$25 million and \$11.1 million – an increase of 2.4 percent or \$846,641 over this year. However, due to 37 staff retirements at the end of the school year, salary costs overall diminished \$1,085,000, but employee benefit costs raised 20.9 percent due to increased district contributions to the Pennsylvania School Employees Retirement System (PSERS) and employee health insurance. Statewide, all school districts are grappling with increased PSERS contribution, which will total 2.14-mills or a 602 percent increase by 2014. For more information on the statewide PSERS funding crisis, [click here](#).

More than \$2.92 million was cut from initial budget requests and as a cost-saving measure a net of three professional staff positions will be eliminated due to attrition.

For taxpayers owning a median-value \$130,700 Moon Township home, a property tax bill will hold at \$2,783.91. A total of 7,060 Moon and Crescent property owners, who have filed Act 1 exception forms, will see a \$135.55 reimbursement on their tax bill due to state gambling revenues for the third year.

The proposed budget does not include a .61 maximum millage rate increase allowed by the Act 1 index limitation and an additional .26-mill exception allowed due to increased PSERS costs. It is anticipated that many school districts across the state will strongly consider increasing their real estate tax millage rate by the maximum Act 1 index amount as the state act prevents school districts from levying taxes beyond their index.

Each Moon Area mill is estimated to be worth \$1,738,350.

To view Moon Area's budget, [click here](#).

For more information on the Pennsylvania Taxpayer Relief Act or Act 1, [click here](#).