

## **MASD Board of Education Approves 2011-12 Final Budget**

Moon Area School District school directors approved a proposed final budget tonight totaling \$57.6 million that contains no property tax increase, while still continuing to provide quality educational programs and facilities for district students. The budget increased from the originally proposed \$57.1 million due to additional backing from local taxes and State funding.

Real estate tax bills in Moon Area will stay the same as school directors opted to not levy a .34-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 14th lowest of 42 county school districts in 2010-11.

School directors passed the budget with a 7-2 vote.

The 2011-12 budget marks a 3.6 percent decrease from this year's spending plan, which totaled \$59.8 million and represented a 0.1 percent increase over the 2009-10 budget. Employee salary and benefits remain the largest budgetary expenditure totaling nearly \$25.0 million and \$10.4 million – a decrease of 3.6 percent or \$1.3 million less than the budget for this year. This reduction in salary and benefit costs was accomplished by making numerous staff revisions throughout the school district. Many of these staffing revisions are still to be implemented. However, employee retirement benefit costs were raised 53.4 percent due to increased district contributions to the Pennsylvania School Employees Retirement System (PSERS). This is a statewide problem that will affect all Pennsylvania public schools for years to come.

Moon Area's spending plan for the next school year includes a Microsoft Windows update, new computer science and business education classes, and minimal spending in building repairs and costs for the energy-efficient Moon Area High School.

More than \$1.58 million was cut from initial budget requests. These budget cuts were comprised of salaries, benefits, equipment, supplies and services throughout virtually all areas of the budget.

For taxpayers owning a median-value \$131,500 Moon Township home, a property tax bill will hold at \$2,800.95. A total of 7,194 Moon and Crescent property owners, who have filed Act 1 homestead exception forms, will see a \$132.89 reduction on their tax bill due to the distribution of state gambling revenues for the fourth year.

The proposed budget does not include a .34 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 in light of the reductions in State funding. Currently, Moon Area is slated to have its State funding reduced by as much as \$1.2 million in the upcoming year.

Each Moon Area mill is estimated to be worth \$1,770,850.

To view Moon Area's budget, please visit [www.moonarea.net](http://www.moonarea.net).