



# Vision

*A special budget newsletter for residents of the Gettysburg Area School District*

*Spring 2016*

## **Our School District Budget: balanced & on time!**

**Dr. Larry R. Redding, Superintendent**

School District Budgets for the 2015-2016 school year had many challenges because the state legislature and the governor could not agree on how to balance actual expenses with actual revenue. On June 15, 2015, the Gettysburg Area School District met their legal and fiscal duties and passed a balanced budget with the understanding that the State's portion (30%) of our budget would be received in a timely manner. Ten months later, the State finally released funds to our District. Now, as we approach June 2016, the Gettysburg Area School District will again prepare a balanced budget for the 2016-2017 school year, anticipating state funding will be received on time. It certainly is best if our School Board knows what level of state funding is actually going to be received before they pass the District's budget. But what is best in this situation depends on timely action by our State elected leaders before June 30th.

Regardless of the legislative gridlock in Harrisburg, the programs and services required by the laws of the Commonwealth must be delivered to the students in the Gettysburg Area School District. Our budget will provide educational programs to nearly 3000 students in grades K-12. The Gettysburg Area School District budget provides our students with an environment and the resources to be a "Great Place to Learn." GASD provides art programs with regional and national Scholastic Art winners; elementary programs in a blended learning environment that received statewide recognition; a US News & World Report nationally ranked high school with Advanced Placement scores above the state and national averages in 12 different subjects; Career and Technical Vocational programs producing a 90% rate of advanced scores on the national certificate exams; opportunities for our students to gain district, regional, and state-level recognition for their musical talents; opportunities for students at all levels to be recognized for their outstanding community service and student leadership skills; and academic programs that help our students meet or exceed learning targets for science, mathematics, reading, writing and all other subjects, too. Our budget is designed to meet our mission "to provide a safe, caring, learning environment where students are expected to achieve and graduate ready to work, serve and succeed."

The majority of a school district's budget is personnel costs, so our challenge will continue to be to deliver quality educational programs and services to our children with fewer staff. The one staff related cost that keeps skyrocketing is the state-mandated Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) contribution rate. In 2007 the pension rate GASD was required to budget was 7.13% of payroll for CURRENT EMPLOYEES. (It is important to note the retirement benefits for retired employees – custodians, teachers and administrators, are NOT part of a current school district budget.) Furthermore, the pension rate is set by legislative action (and inaction), not by local school district action. If changes to pension rates are going to be made, the legislative body MUST provide the solution. Local school boards have no power to adjust the pension rates.

During the past four years, the MANDATED pension rate school districts need to budget has grown from 12.36% to 25.84% of current payroll. Our state legislature is directly responsible for the increase in property taxes to pay for this rate increase. The rate has continued to climb and for the 2016-2017 budget, the state legislature is requiring local school board members to budget for a 30% pension rate!

As you review the School District Budget and you follow the debate on the state level, please keep in mind our School Board members are following their legal and fiscal duties. They will meet the requirements enacted by our state government leaders, while still maintaining the quality educational programs our students require to be successful young men and women. The GASD Board of Education is doing what's best for the kids, balanced & on time!

# Expenses

The accompanying charts show two separate views of projected expenses for 2016-17. This helps identify both the costs incurred and where those investments are used.

Payroll and benefits account for 60.7% of the expense budget. Staffing levels and programming are continually reviewed to attempt optimum utilization for minimum cost. The teacher's contract, the District's continuing efforts to contain payroll expenses, a large number of retirees in 2015-16, and moving substitute teachers to contracted services have helped reduce the salary and wages by 1.1% or \$244,046 less than last year. The contracted substitute services moved \$396,000 from labor from last year so there is an effective net increase in labor of \$151,954 or 0.7%. Benefits are projected to be 8.6% more than last year, mainly due to increased retirement costs mandated by the Pennsylvania School Employees Retirement System (PSERS) of \$6,619,981, which is an increase of 14.9% or \$860,465 over last year. Medical benefits are also expected to increase 4.9% or \$272,889 over last year. All other benefit costs have a net increase of \$53,051 over last year.

Other increasing areas include special

education costs, which continue to increase each year. Special education services are projected to be \$6,784,426, which is an increase of 15.7% or \$918,077 over last year. Utility costs are not projected to have significant changes this year due to the District's ongoing efforts in energy management and active participation in joint purchasing programs. Charter school tuition continues to increase each year and is a very significant expense. The District is projecting VIDA, Montessori, and other charter school tuition costs for 2016-17 of about \$2,736,695, which is an 8.2% increase or \$207,888 over last year. For 2016-17 funding for on-going annual capital needs and the 5 year capital plans in the amount of \$583,750 has been included. Additionally, the start of funding for future facility improvement projects (FIP) has been included in the 2016-17 budget in the amount of \$300,000. The District, through Adams County Tech Prep, is implementing a new Network Communications program funded by the consortium, but it is included in the District's 2016-17 budget in the amount of \$128,629, not including labor and benefits.

The District continues to implement cost saving ideas through efficiency, new technology,

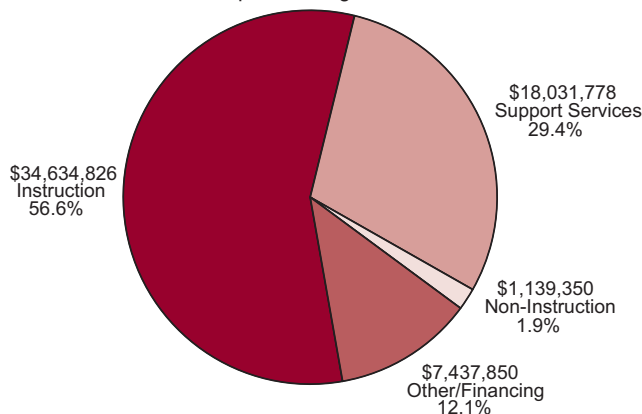
joint and bulk purchasing, personnel reductions, and more. Overall the budget is projected to increase \$3,925,553 or 6.8% over last year. The increase in PSERS, medical benefits, special education costs, charter schools' mandated costs, annual capital needs, future FIP, and new network communications program is \$3,271,698 or 83.3% of this increase. All other changes in expense net to an increase of \$653,855 over last year.

*For more information and updates on our projected costs and cost-saving efforts, please see our budget information at [www.gettysburg.k12.pa.us](http://www.gettysburg.k12.pa.us) or contact the Business Office at 334-6254, ext. 1226.*

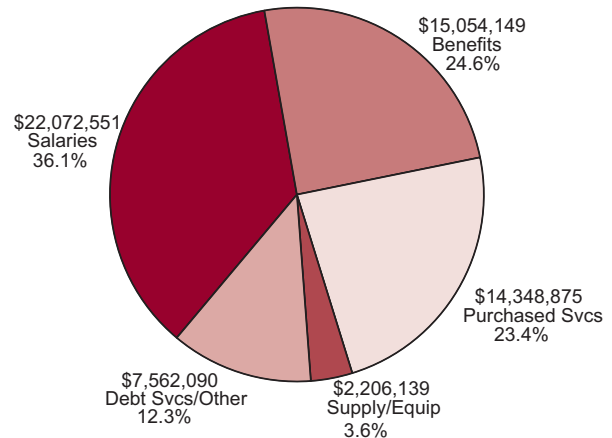
## Mission Statement

The Gettysburg Area School District, in partnership with the family and community, is dedicated to excellence and committed to maximizing every student's opportunity to reach their full potential for achievement. Our purpose is to provide a safe and healthy environment in which all students can learn. We embrace our responsibility in developing a caring school community that enables all students to become active and productive members of our diverse and ever-changing global society.

**2016-17 Expenses By Function**  
Total Expense Budget is \$61,243,804



**2016-17 Expenses By Object**  
Total Expense Budget is \$61,243,804



## Important Tax Payment Information

Please watch for your school tax bills, which should arrive around **July 1, 2016**. If you do not receive a bill, please contact your local tax collector immediately. The deadlines for payment of your real estate taxes are as follows:

**2% Discount Period** - July 1 - August 31

**Par Period** - September 1 - October 31

**10% Penalty Period** - November 1 - December 31

Payments made after August 31 will not qualify for the 2% discount. Please make a note of this important date. You may also wish to remind your mortgage holder, if it makes your real estate tax payment for you.

All taxpayers may elect the installment payment option to pay the real estate tax at par in three (3) equal installment payments of one-third (1/3) of the full tax amount. The installments are due on or before July 31, September 15, and November 15 of the year in which the tax is levied. Payment of the first installment in full by July 31 will constitute taxpayer election to pay tax in installments. Please see details on your tax bill.

*For more information call the GASD Business Office at 334-6254 ext. 1226 or visit our website [www.gettysburg.k12.pa.us](http://www.gettysburg.k12.pa.us)*

# Revenues

Projected local real estate taxes are expected to be \$27,971,036, which is \$753,581 or 2.8% more than last year. This is due to assessment change increases resulting in \$244,641, an increase in the projected collection percentage resulting in \$221,407, and \$287,533 from the 0.1048 mill rate increase, or 1.0%, which is significantly less than the 2.4% Act 1 index for 2016-17. Overall, local revenue sources are up \$1,415,613 or 3.7% over last year due to the local real estate tax estimate, increasing earned income tax revenues and increasing real estate transfer taxes.

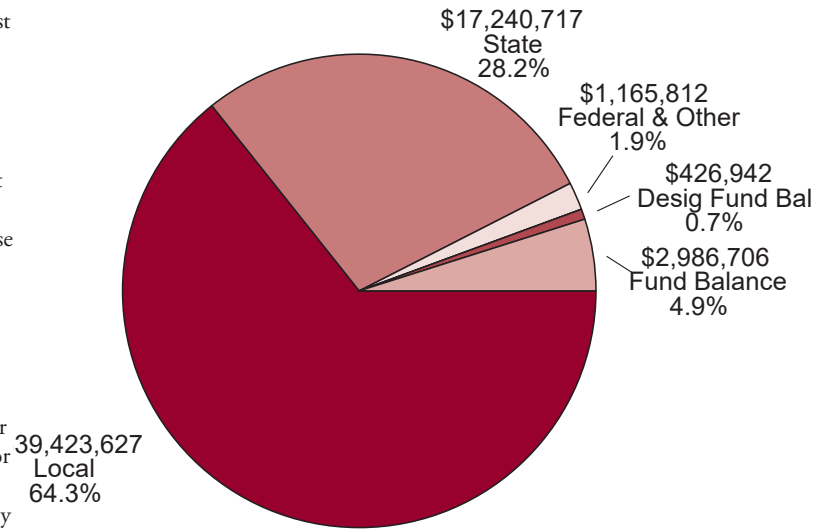
State revenues for the school district are expected to increase by 4.9% overall. This is primarily due to increased PSERS (retirement) subsidy of \$430,232 over last year, which covers only about one-half our increased cost for that required plan. The state budget has not yet been finalized and is subject to change by the legislature. Federal revenues are expected to increase by 7.5% or \$85,169 over last year due to projected increases in Title I.

Overall revenues and uses of fund balance are projected to increase 6.9% over last year. This includes a planned use of \$426,942 of the PSERS committed fund balance, which is a long term plan of putting funds aside for future use as the PSERS costs increase significantly over the next several years. Also included is \$2,986,706 of the unassigned general fund balance or the equivalent of 1.1302 mills of real estate taxes, which reduces our need for higher tax rates. This also avoids the need for the District to use the PSERS and Special Education exceptions to the Act 1 index which were approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and which, if used, would have resulted in additional taxes.

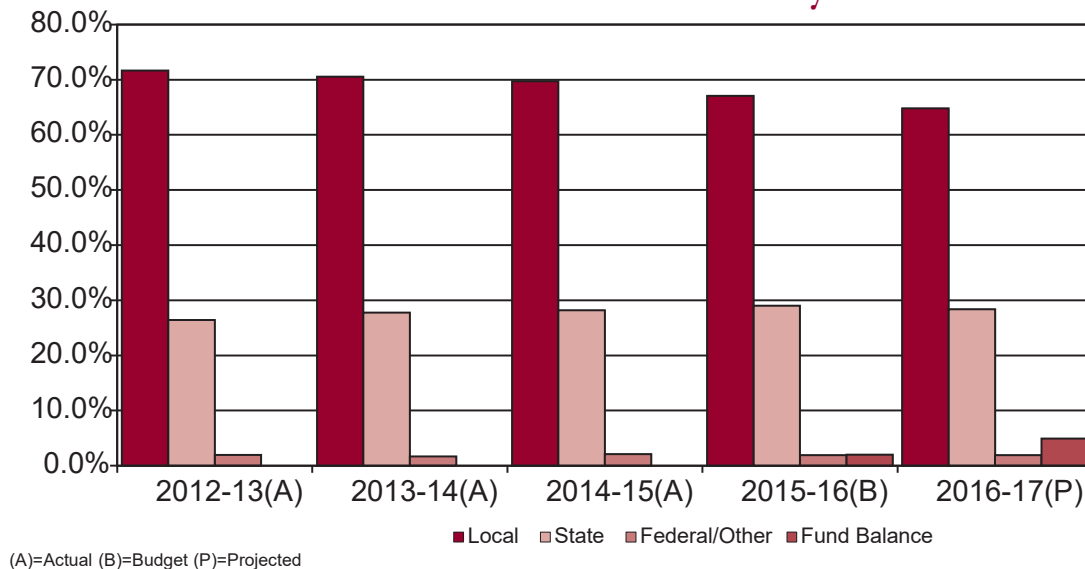
For more information and updates on school revenues, please visit our web site at [www.gettysburg.k12.pa.us](http://www.gettysburg.k12.pa.us).

## 2016-17 Revenue Sources

Total Revenue Budget & Use of Fund Balance is \$61,243,804



## Revenue Source History



## Figure Your School Taxes

You will need your most recent assessment notice or your March 1, 2016 County/Township tax bill.

**Real Estate:** Multiply the Assessed Value of your property by 0.0105901

**Assessed Value:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Millage Rate:** x 0.0105901 = **Your Tax \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Less: Homestead Exclusion of about \$169 (if applicable)

Less: Farmstead Exclusion of about \$169 (if applicable)

**Your Net Tax \$** \_\_\_\_\_



**HYBRID**  
LEARNING INSTITUTE

## **GASD award winners!**

We are proud to announce that the Gettysburg Area School District Hybrid Learning Institute teachers and administrators received the "Performance of the Year" Award for the best overall team performance of teachers and administrators working together on implementing a hybrid learning model. There are 109 Pennsylvania and New Jersey districts involved in the Hybrid Learning Institute and 17 elementary teachers from Franklin Township, James Gettys and Lincoln Elementary schools, plus their building principals are included in this recognition.

Hybrid learning is an effective approach to personalizing learning through the use of 3 stations: direct instruction, independent learning and collaborative learning. Students rotate through all 3 stations at least 3 days a week during Language Arts. Some buildings have also added mathematics to this approach.

Hybrid learning (also known as blended learning), has proven to be a highly effective method of instruction. It allows for smaller groups with the teacher, electronic learning on the computer specifically tailored to each student and the opportunity for students to learn how to collaborate. Beyond the academic rewards of this approach is the development of positive behaviors by the students. These behaviors can be seen in everyday actions such as teaming, cooperation, empathy and volunteerism.

Also awarded was GASD Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Christine Lay, who received "Producer of the Year" for the most outstanding administrator advocate for hybrid learning. Dr. Lay demonstrated first vision and then dedication in preparing the staff and administrators thoroughly before implementing this innovated program. Congratulations to the Hybrid Learning team at GASD.

## **Important Dates**

June 6, 2016

**Public Budget Hearing - 7p.m.**

*(Regular Board Meeting to immediately follow hearing)*

June 20, 2016

**Final vote on budget  
7p.m.**

**All meetings:**

**Administration Building**

**900 Biglerville Road, Gettysburg**



*Communicating our Vision of Learning*

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