

Williamsville-Sherman CUSD #15 District Dispatch - September 2018



A Publication for Community Members

From the Superintendent's Desk

WCUSD #15 Financial and Budget Update 2018-2019

We are off to a great start this school year. I am excited for the learning opportunities the District continues to provide to our students and staff. We have an excellent staff and community who truly care about doing what is best for kids. It takes the two Villages of Sherman and Williamsville to educate a child.

September is the month the Board of Education approves the fiscal year 2019 budget. The budget is a financial plan to accomplish the Board of Education's financial goals. The working budget satisfies the financial program information for the state, local, and federal governments. It provides both expending and taxing authority. The annual budget is an estimate of potential revenues and expenditures. The budget is a flexible working document that can be amended during the year based on actual revenues and expenses.

The Superintendent and the Board of Education are charged with being fiscally responsible yet still supplying the high-quality educational opportunities our students deserve. The WCUSD#15 Board of Education have been very good financial stewards to the tax payer. For the FY2019 WCUSD#15 Budget, the Education Fund comprises of 68% of our annual expenses. This is the cost to educate students. The FY19 Education Fund Budget shows a negative estimated (\$206,510) fund balance as of June 30, 2019, and the overall FY19 budget shows an estimated negative (\$173,232) ALL FUND balance as of June 30, 2019. The District has continued to do more with less revenue.

WCUSD #15 faces financial challenges we will need to continue to navigate. We face PTELL, TIF's, and Zero Debt Service Extension Base obstacles. Continuing to be fiscally responsible, I am confident the BOE will be able to steer the District ship in a positive financial direction.

With our limited options to increase district revenue, we will need to continue conversations about reducing expenses, possible limiting rate referendums, possible debt service extension referendums, and the county sales tax options. These options would need voter approval to increase WCUSD #15 revenues.

One of the most important aspects of my job as your Superintendent is to make school finance transparent to the BOE and community. The school board depends on the Superintendent to communicate information that is accurate, understandable, and realistic for them to make sound decisions for the betterment of our school district. The responsibility of communicating essential financial information for this process falls directly on my shoulders as your Superintendent, even when it relates to facts that are difficult to hear. The same holds true in the Superintendent's ability to communicate correct information to the community to assist them in their decision-making process. The school District's success depends on the community's support in providing the financial resources required to maintain the expectations of a high-quality educational system.

As taxpayers, it is important to be informed on how schools are funded in Illinois and understand how the school district's tax rate is applied to property. Due to PTELL, our school district property values can only generate a little over half of what it costs to educate our students. Consequently, the state then supplements the other half of our money in the form of state aid. The only other revenue we receive is about 2% through local student fees and 1% of our money through federal funds. Our school district receives no sales tax or any other form of tax other than property tax. As a result, our School District depends heavily on the state to fully fund us because we rely on almost half of our revenue from them. When the state cuts or pro-rates funding, it has devastating consequences on our School District.

The District's tax rate has never exceeded the rate applied almost 16 years ago in 2001. If you see an increase in your overall tax bill, the reason is simple. The value of your property (assessment) has increased due to the fact we are living in an area that is in demand (location, services, quality of living, the School District, and so forth). The rate which the School District charges, has dropped over time because the district is growing. Under PTELL "Tax Caps" the School District's tax rate can only increase with voter approval, or if the value of the land decreases. Even if you see an increase of cost on your tax bill, our tax rate should remain stable or continue to decline as our EAV grows. It is important to note there are other taxing bodies included on your tax bill (40%) which added together with the School's tax rate (60%) produces your overall property tax bill.

To share factual and understandable information with the community, I have included a chart indicating our overall tax rate for the past sixteen years and a comparison of school tax rates in our area. **The 2017 WCUSD#15 Tax Rate ranks 13 out of 18 schools in the Sangamon County area.**

SCHOOL	Total Rate	Limiting Rate	WCUSD #15 Tax Rates	
AC Central	\$5.46	\$3.95	2001	4.78
North Mac	\$5.23	NA	2002	4.77
Springfield Dist 186	\$5.23	\$4.84	2003	4.74
Waverly	\$5.22	\$4.66	2004	4.75
Sangamon Valley	\$5.17	NA	2005	4.71
Porta	\$5.10	NA	2006	4.66
Pleasant Plains	\$5.09	\$4.74	2007	4.54
Athens	\$4.86	\$3.75	2008	4.66
Mt. Pulaski	\$4.76	NA	2009	4.56
New Berlin	\$4.69	\$3.83	2010	4.68
Tri-City	\$4.64	\$3.90	2011	4.57
Rochester	\$4.49	\$3.53	2012	4.66
Williamsville	\$4.47	\$3.54	2013	4.68
Riverton	\$4.44	\$3.68	2014	4.64
Chatham	\$4.40	\$3.74	2015	4.56
Auburn	\$4.28	\$3.73	2016	4.51
Edinburg	\$4.03	\$3.90	2017	4.47
Pawnee	\$3.96	NA		

Information from Sangamon County Clerk Website - 2017
<https://www.sangamoncountyclerk.com/Taxes/Extension-Levy-Rate.aspx#schools>

WCUSD#15 has not had the revenue over the past several years to maintain our facilities and buildings. The 1-cent Sangamon County School Facility Sales Tax would allow the district to begin the much-needed improvements and ensure our facilities provide a safe, secure, and comfortable learning environment for generations to come.

November 6, 2018, Sangamon County Voters will have the opportunity to vote for the 1% Sangamon County Schools Facility Sales Tax. The Board of Education publicly approved a resolution with priority to utilize the Sangamon County Schools Facility Sales Tax revenue to enhance and improve WCUSD#15 school security, facilities, and maintenance.

The WCUSD#15 Board of Education wants each of you to have accurate information about the Sangamon County School Facility Sales Tax and how it will impact our schools. Please remember to exercise your right to vote on Tuesday, November 6th. If you have questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact Tip Reedy WCUSD#15 Superintendent (217)566-2014 or visit our website www.wcusd15.org.

For up to date district information, I encourage you to follow me on twitter @wcusd15supt, check our website www.wcusd15.org, and like our district Facebook page Williamsville-Sherman CUSD #15. If you have any questions, please contact me.

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