

December 21, 2016

PRESS RELEASE

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District 157-C To Abate \$1 Million in Property Taxes To Minimize Levy

For the past six years, the Frankfort School District 157-C Board of Education has held the line on the school district's tax levy and is pleased to report that it plans to do so again this year. Using a combination of debt service fund abatements from existing reserves and ongoing cost containment strategies, the district will actually be able to ask current taxpayers for a little less in tax levy dollars than in 2015, with only nominal growth in the levy of about \$800,000 related to new construction that was added to the tax rolls in 2016.

The Board has maintained a goal of keeping flat the district's overall levy and only allowing for new construction growth to provide tax relief to the community during these challenging economic times. This year, the Board directed the Administration to again review the district's debt structure, abatement options and cost containment strategies in relation to how the current, projected equalized assessed valuation (EAV) for 2016 might impact the district's levy extension and tax rate. The Board is happy to be able to abate (not collect) from taxpayers \$1 million to ease the tax burden on all. Board President Gina Briese stated, "The abatement will allow the district to maintain high quality education while keeping the amount taxpayers contribute to operating the school district the same as last year. We are very pleased with the fiscal responsibility of this administration and with the financial stability of the district."

The Board approved the 2016 tentative tax levy on November 16th and held the public hearing and final levy approval on December 21st. The total levy for all tax capped funds is estimated to be approximately \$28.040M. When factoring in the additional obligated debt services fund needs of about \$4.138M, and a \$1M abatement of those debt services fund needs from existing reserves, the total levy request is expected to be about \$31.178M, compared to \$30.355M in 2015. This is a 2.7% increase over the prior year and is related to new construction growth. During the past five years the levy has ranged from \$29.225M to \$30.355M and represents only growth in the overall levy from taxes generated by new property added to the tax rolls since 2011. Existing taxpayers are not being asked to pay more for the operations of the school district, and as a matter of fact they are being asked to pay a little less.

District 157-C again received notice that it has maintained its prestigious "AAA" bond rating from Standard & Poor's Rating Services, showing the ongoing financial strength and stability of the school district. Only a few dozen districts in Illinois, and approximately 100 school districts in the United States, have achieved/maintained this exclusive bond rating in 2016. District 157-C has earned the "AAA" bond rating for the past thirteen consecutive years. The district's thoughtful strategic planning and meticulous financial records provided Standard & Poor's assurance of their evaluation and contributed to District 157-C again earning the top rating with a stable outlook. The district maintains fund balance reserves that typically cover six to twelve months of expenditures in most funds, and it has again been placed in the financial recognition category by the Illinois State Board of Education for its sound finances and stable accounting practices.

District 157-C Board members have made a commitment to work towards keeping the levy stable and only allowing for new construction growth. Per Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, Curt Saindon, "The Board has sent a clear message to the administration and the community over the past six years that it is prepared to use a combination of resources and strategies to do whatever it can to keep the overall tax levy stable for the benefit of the taxpayers in this school district. The school district will abate taxes by using existing reserves again this year, so it does not have to ask for any more money than is absolutely necessary."

The Board and Administration continue to look for ways to reduce costs throughout the district without affecting the quality of educational programming. Mr. Saindon additionally stated, "We are extremely proud of the responsible and thoughtful approach our Board and Administration have taken toward both financial management and strategic planning, and with an "AAA" bond rating and placement on the State's Financial Recognition list, we believe that our efforts have not gone unnoticed."