

School District of New Berlin Administration, School Board Balances 2018-19 Budget; Property Owners Will See Decrease in School Taxes

New Berlin, Wis. – On Oct. 22, the School District of New Berlin’s Board of Education approved the final budget for the 2018-19 school year that includes a 1.8 percent decrease in the tax levy.

This year’s \$50,791,524 tax levy is \$953,925 less than the 2017-18 levy. As a result, a homeowner with a home valued at \$250,000 within the district’s boundaries will see a decrease in the school district’s portion of their tax bill by approximately \$155.

The 2018-19 budget marks the fifth consecutive year the property tax rate per \$1,000 of value will decrease. This year’s rate of \$10.21 per \$1,000 is the lowest it has been since the 2009-10 budget, when it was \$9.88.

“We are extremely pleased that we can once again keep taxes in check for the taxpayers,” Superintendent Joe Garza said. “We have benefited from – and, we believe, contributed to – a continued rise in property values, and we continue to work hard to make sure all the revenues we receive, including those from the taxpayers, are stretched as far as they can in order to provide the best educational opportunities, services and facilities to our students.

“We’ve done so much over the last 12 to 18 months to continue to address our structural deficit and projected shortfalls. While we still have significant unfunded needs that we believe will need to be addressed in the near future, we are proud that the adjustments we have made have resulted in a balanced budget for this year.”

Since the Annual Meeting in August alone, the district learned it had a budget surplus from the 2017-18 school year, largely because of better-than-expected healthcare costs and frozen or decreased budgets across all departments. In total, the district had approximately \$3 million less in expenditures than it had budgeted, which will help the district both erase the structural deficits over the next few years – largely the result of debt within the operating budget – and keep its fund balance at a rate considered acceptable by creditors.

Additionally, since the Annual Meeting, the district:

- Made healthcare benefit offerings changes;
- Refinanced debt to save \$244,000 in 2018-19 and \$187,000 in each of the next three years;
- Approved lower-than-budgeted staff raises;
- Eliminated two additional instructional coaching positions;
- Saw its enrollment and membership numbers decline at slower rate than expected;
- Saw property values increase at a rate higher than expected;
- Sold a property for \$185,000;
- Received \$120,000 in school safety grants.

To view the entire 2018-19 budget, visit www.nbexcellence.org/district/budgets.cfm.