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Upper Darby schools unveil \$165M budget

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POSTED: Tuesday, April 30, 2013, 8:33 PM

The Upper Darby School District released a \$165 million budget that closes a \$9.7 million shortfall with staff reductions, transportation cuts, and other savings, many of them reflecting priorities suggested in a series of community forums.

Residents still face a 2.94 percent property-tax increase, much less than the 6.6 percent that could have been levied before going to a referendum, said Superintendent Louis DeVlieger.

"No school district programs will be cut, no employee will lose a job, and kindergarten, art, music, and sports will all remain intact while still reaching our goal of \$9.7 million," he said in presenting the budget to the board Tuesday night.

The tax hike would add \$96.50 a year to the bill of a house assessed at \$100,000.

Preserving programs was the chief priority of 480 residents who took part in four sessions held by the Penn Project for Civic Engagement, which sought input on how to deal with the budget deficit.

The superintendent said he could not support all of the recommendations of the Penn Project, such as eliminating 10 elementary and 10 high school teachers. His budget calls for cutting seven elementary and four high school teachers. To cut any more, he said, would jeopardize the "equity" and "efficiency" of class size.

The gap in the budget was primarily due to an increase in special education costs of \$3.2 million, net pension liability increase of \$1.7 million, and additional charter school costs of \$746,000, said business manager Ed Smith. - **Kathy Boccella**

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Seems like a balanced plan, but I am struck by some hypocrisy from the Penn people. They advocate for cutting teaching to prevent cost increases as Penn itself approaches \$60,000/per student per year with no real cuts in sight.
— Ben S

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0 like this / 0 don't • Posted 9:17 PM, 04/30/2013
Drexel Hill Middle School spends money on field trips to a minor league baseball game and Marple Sports Arena Rec Center or something like that for 7th graders. STOP WASTING MONEY AT THE SCHOOLS BEFORE YOU RAISE OUR TAXES!!!
— KingOfPhilly

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The wider topic, of course, remains that Upper Darby is already at the point that Springfield, Haverford and other Delco townships are rapidly approaching: blistering property taxes. Take Drexel Hill (just a part of U.D. township); lovely neighborhoods, lots of families with kids, but taxes often at least \$9,000 and as high as \$11,000 a year in more than few cases on homes as low as

\$300,000 or even lower. Very sad and very damaging to long-term stability of that area. Upper Darby must lead the way for finding property tax reform or reductions before it is too late. People act like Philly's take burden (wage tax, car insurance rates) is astronomical; it's not fun to pay such taxes, but add up the average middle class Philly couple's wage taxes, insurance, and property taxes (even with AVI) and it doesn't get near UD rates.

— 19151

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0 like this / 0 don't • Posted 9:42 PM, 04/30/2013

Just a matter of time before the pensions suck dry every last dollar from the UD taxpayers. You can't beat math.

— b,ill a,t,kins

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0 like this / 0 don't • Posted 9:34 AM, 05/01/2013

@Mr. a,t,kins,

You have a solution to the problem, we're all ears. Otherwise stop hating on a professional field that spends their entire lives teaching kids that, especially in that school district anymore, don't really want to be taught. Those people DESERVE their pensions.

— Cyber75sax

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