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Lackawanna Trail's finance committee recommends board stay within Act 1 index in terms of raising taxes for 2017-18 school year

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FACTORYVILLE — Lackawanna Trail Board of Education President David Thorne announced Nov. 14 the district's finance committee is recommending members of the board adopt a resolution in January to keep any potential tax increase within the Act 1 index of 3.2 percent for the 2017-18 school year.

The Act 1 index is the maximum number allowed without the state Department of Education exceptions or voter approval.

School property taxes were raised 13.9 percent in Wyoming County and 8.6 percent in Lackawanna County in the 2016-17 budget.

"There was a large tax increase last year and we're trying to avoid that," Thorne said.

The finance committee is also recommending members of the board keep the district's per capita tax in the budget.

According to Lackawanna Trail Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas, the tax is \$10 per adult in the district and generates approximately \$34,000 per year.

Rakauskas added technology upgrades would cost between \$35,000 to \$40,000.

"We need to start upgrading some of our technology and we've thought about using the money coming in from the per capita tax as our budget for upgrades and replacements," Thorne said.

Board member Michael Mould voiced his concerns regarding the amount of district funding dedicated to cyber charter schools.

"In regard to our bills payable totaling \$340,341.52, approximately \$131,000 was expended for cyber charter school costs," Mould said. "The amount we spent on special costs related to the direct education of the students (in the district) pales in relation."

Lackawanna Trail's Wellness Committee, consisting of members of administration, teachers, parents, food service manager and a student delegate, created a survey which can be accessed on the district website, <http://www.ltsd.org>.

"We're asking every parent in the district to fill out the survey," Rakauskas said. "Our goal is to get as much data as we can about how parents perceive Lackawanna Trail is doing in encouraging their students overall wellness."

The survey is broken up into three different categories: food and nutrition, physical education and activity, and social and emotional wellness.

According to Rakauskas, about 87 people completed the survey during the first week its been available.

"I'd like to get a few hundred participants before we start looking at the data," he said. "It will help guide us in confirming what we think we're doing well and make us rethink some things we can probably do better."

Director of Special Education Amie Talarico announced five students qualified to apply for an Autism Speaks iPad grant.

"It's a great way to get some technology into our students hands," Talarico said.

Members of the Lackawanna Trail Board of Education will hold a reorganization meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 5 at the elementary center, 179 College Ave., Factoryville.

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