

LEBANON SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY: 604
SECTION: FINANCES
TITLE: BUDGET ADOPTION
ADOPTED: July 18, 1994
LAST REVISED: November 18, 2019

604. BUDGET ADOPTION

Purpose

It is the philosophy of the Board that the annual budget represents the position of the Board, and all reasonable means shall be employed to present and explain the preliminary and final budgets to district residents. Board members and district administrators shall be knowledgeable about, and understand the need for, proposed expenditures.

Definition

Index - the tax rate limit that restricts the school district from increasing the rate of any tax for the support of district schools without seeking voter approval through referendum or an exception granted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) or the Court of Common Pleas with jurisdiction.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Board directs the Superintendent or designee to prepare both the preliminary and final budgets on the required forms; comply with advertising requirements; and make the budget documents and supporting information available in printed form for public inspection in the district administrative offices, in accordance with the timelines specified in law and Board policy.¹

Authority

The Board shall annually, but not later than the first business meeting of January, decide the budget option to be used for the following fiscal year. The Board shall approve either the Accelerated Budget Process Option or the Board Resolution Option.

Accelerated Budget Process Option

¹ 24 P.S. 687; 53 P.S.6926.311-.312.

The preliminary budget shall be made available in printed form for public inspection at least 110 days prior to the primary election. Public inspection shall be available for at least twenty (20) days prior to planned adoption. The Board shall give public notice of its intent to adopt at least ten (10) days prior to adoption of the preliminary budget.²

The Board may hold an advertised public hearing prior to adoption of the preliminary budget.³

The Board shall annually adopt the preliminary budget at least ninety (90) days prior to the primary election.⁴

If the preliminary budget exceeds the increase authorized by the Index, an application for an exception may be filed with either a Court of Common Pleas with jurisdiction or PDE and made available for public inspection, consistent with the requirements of law. The application for an exception shall be submitted by the Superintendent.⁵

However, the Board may substitute the filing of an application for an exception to the Index limit by submitting a referendum question seeking voter approval for a tax increase, in accordance with law.⁶

In the event that a court or PDE denies an application for an exception to the Index limit adopted as part of the preliminary budget, the Board may approve immediate filing of a referendum question, as authorized by law, seeking voter approval for a tax rate that exceeds the Index. This filing shall be performed by the Superintendent.⁷

Any referendum question shall include an accompanying nonlegal, interpretative statement referencing the expenditure items for which a tax increase is being sought and the consequences that will result if the referendum question fails. Such information shall be made available to the public through the district web site and other media resources.⁸

² 53 P.S. 6926.311.

³ 53 P.S. 6926.311.

⁴ 53 P.S. 6926.311.

⁵ 53 P.S. 6926.333.

⁶ 53 P.S. 6926.333.

⁷ 53 P.S. 6926.333.

⁸ 53 P.S. 6926.333.

Prior to adoption, the final budget shall be presented to the Board on the required form and supplemented with information deemed necessary by the Board.

The final budget shall be made available in print for public inspection at least twenty (20) days prior to final adoption. The Board shall give notice of its intent to adopt at least ten (10) days prior to adoption of the final budget.⁹

The Board shall annually adopt the final budget by a majority vote of all members of the Board prior to June 30.¹⁰

Board Resolution Option

The Board shall adopt a resolution that it will not raise the rate of any tax for the following fiscal year by more than the Index. Such resolution shall be adopted no later than 110 days prior to the primary election and must contain the following unconditional certifications that:¹¹

1. The Board will not increase any tax at a rate that exceeds the school district Index.
2. The Board will comply with Section 687 of the School Code for budget adoption.
3. The increase of any tax at a rate less than or equal to the Index will be sufficient to balance its final budget.

At least thirty (30) days prior to adoption of the final budget, the Board shall prepare and present a proposed budget on the required form. The proposed budget shall be made available in print for public inspection and duplication at the district administrative offices at least twenty (20) days prior to adoption of the budget. The Board shall give public notice of its intent to adopt at least ten (10) days prior to adoption of the proposed budget.¹²

Final Budget

The Board shall annually adopt the final budget by a majority vote of all members of the Board by June 30.¹³

⁹ 53 P.S. 6926.312.

¹⁰ 24 P.S. 508, 687.

¹¹ 53 P.S. 6926.311.

¹² 24 P.S. 687.

¹³ 24 P.S. 508, 687.