

December 4, 2020

Seneca High School Community,

The purpose of this letter is to share some important news related to the 2020 tax levy. I am excited to share that **the district's tax rate for the 2020 levy is decreasing to 1.74838**. For reference purposes, over the past seven years, the district held its tax rate constant at 1.79838. I am also pleased to inform you that SHS is paying off the last of its bond debt this school year, thereby eliminating the need to levy taxes for debt services. Arriving at the new tax rate, however, is a bit confusing because Seneca High School uses an extra step in the levy process to manage its property tax agreement with Exelon relative to the taxes paid by LaSalle Station.

In early December, you may read in one of the local newspapers that our 2020 levy (requested tax dollars) is more than 6% greater than last year's extension (actual dollars received). The advertisement will appear enclosed in a black border (rectangular box). While this increase request is technically true, it is very important to know before your final tax bill is mailed to you, Seneca High School will engage in a process of abatement (reducing the levy). The abatement occurs in the spring after the district receives a "first draft" of the extension from the County Clerk. It is the reduced or abated levy on which your tax bill is calculated. The District has engaged in the process of abatement each year for the past 7 years and will utilize it again this year and next as a part of the property tax agreement extension with Exelon.

So why not just levy less to begin with? Approximately eight years ago, the SHS Board of Education made the determination that it wanted all taxpayers to pay the same tax rate as was outline in the tax agreement with Exelon. To ensure we landed on the targeted tax rate, we must levy an amount greater than what we truly are seeking to ensure the "draft" tax rate will be greater than the target. We then can abate (reduce) the tax rate to the precise tax rate in the agreement for all taxpayers in the district, including Exelon.

This year, the process is no different, except that **the new targeted tax rate actually decreased to 1.74838**. That is correct, **the tax rate from SHS is going down**. I encourage you to look back at the last seven years of your tax bill and review the tax rate from Seneca High School as evidence of the process of abatement for a consistent tax rate. If you have any questions regarding the proposed tax rate for SHS, the process of abatement, or any other financial issue involving the District, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [jcarlson@senecahs.org](mailto:jcarlson@senecahs.org) or by telephone at 815-357-5000 x 6104.

Yours in education,

Dr. Jim Carlson  
Superintendent