

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Foundation helps local education

Next week, the Pottstown School Board will pass a \$64 million budget for 2019-2020, of which more than \$27 million will come from local property taxes.

Taxation is involuntary. If you don't pay your real estate taxes, eventually the government will seize your property.

Exorbitant taxes are a major impediment to economic development in Pottstown and its quality of life, and many people struggle to pay them.

But not everyone.

As the chart, below right, demonstrates, there are plenty of people in Pottstown with ample income to pay taxes and more besides.

Pennsylvania's conservative legislature allocates tax credits to businesses that provide scholarships for students to attend private schools.

This government subsidy allows private schools to cherry pick students from public schools, undermining the concept of equal educational opportunity for all.

A much better way for private donors to increase the quality of public education in Pottstown is through the non-profit Foundation for Pottstown Education.

Operating out of a rent-free office in the Pottstown School District administration building, the Foundation is otherwise self-sustaining, with donated funds.

Full-time Director Joe Rusiewicz, a part-time assistant, and a board of 18 raised nearly

\$400,000 last year, of which \$180,000 went for scholarships and other programs, \$130,000 for administration, and \$110,000 to build up an endowment of about \$1 million.

On Tuesday, we pointed out the Foundation has provided scholarship money to 54 students in Pottstown High School's dual enrollment program with Montgomery County Community College.

But that's just one of several programs operated by the Founda-

tion.

The Foundation funds more than 80 individual scholarships totaling more than \$30,000.

It helps defray registration fees for students taking Advanced Placement tests.

It donates funds to PEAK, Pottstown's pre-school program.

It provides funding for the Girls Today, Leaders Tomorrow program.

It pays for field trips, such as sending Middle School students to the Pocono Environmental Education Center.

The Foundation provides supplies and pays for teacher training and participation in student competitions for Pottstown's STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) program.

The Foundation is a great way for public education advocates to boost Pottstown school programs without constantly going to the taxpayers.



Commentary by
Tom Hylton



Pottstown household income	
Total households	9,734
\$100,000 to \$149,999	958
\$150,000 to \$199,999	174
\$200,000 or more	148
Total households above \$100,000 in income	1,248 (13%)