

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Responsible GOVERNMENT

## Pottstown moves yet higher in taxation

Pottstown Borough Council will conduct a special meeting tonight to discuss a report by Management Partners, a consultant, concerning the borough's long-range finances.

Management Partners forecasts that unless Pottstown Borough reduces spending, it faces an accumulated \$5 million deficit in five years, which would require increasing taxes 75 percent.

Management Partners has suggested numerous economies for Pottstown Council to consider.

That's vitally important. But the lion's share of local taxation comes from the Pottstown School District, which levies 75 percent of the real estate taxes in Pottstown.

Each year, the state Department of Education compares the taxation rates of the state's 500 districts.

The most recent figures show

the Pottstown School District now has the 11th highest taxes of 500 school districts in Pennsylvania. Last year, the district ranked 15th in taxation.

Pottstown's high taxes stem from a combination of two factors. First, we spend more money, per pupil, than the majority of school districts in the state. Second, Pottstown's tax base is below the state average. About 60 percent of the school districts in Pennsylvania are wealthier than Pottstown.

Because the legislature has not yet passed a budget, Pottstown doesn't even know how much money it will receive from the state this year.

One thing is clear. The school district cannot wait any longer to start cutting costs.

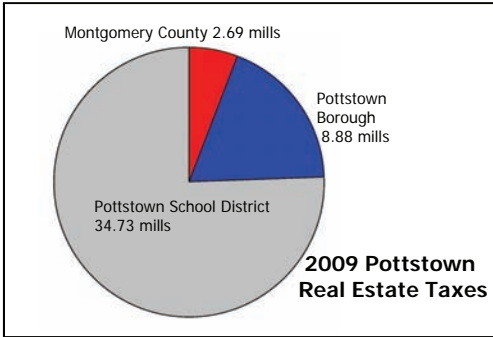
*Thomas Hylton is Web site editor of Pottstown Citizens for Responsible Government.*



Commentary by  
Thomas Hylton

### Summary

- **Pottstown Borough Council will hold a special meeting tonight in an effort to cut long-term costs.**
- **That's vitally important. But most of our local real estate taxes — 75% — are levied by the school district.**
- **The latest figures show Pottstown has the 11th highest taxes of 500 school districts in the state. This is an unsustainable level of taxation.**



Local tax rate in "equalized mills" / Per pupil spending for 2007-2008 school year  
Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education

School District	Equalized mills	Local taxes: State rank of 500 school districts	Per pupil spending	Per pupil spending: State rank of 500 districts	Percentage of low-income students*
Pottstown	33.3	11	\$14,340	85	50.4%
Pottsgrove	32	18	\$14,855	65	18.3%
Norristown Area	26.6	69	\$15,451	55	56.5%
Reading	25.5	89**	\$9,572	492	83.4%
Lebanon	25.5	89**	\$11,154	383	63%
Allentown	24.8	105	\$9,999	477	73.5%
Owen J. Roberts	22.8	154	\$15,544	54	7.4%
Boyertown Area	20	251	\$11,402	352	8.6%

\* Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education for 2004-2005, the most recent year available. \*\* Tied