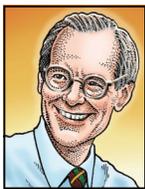


POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Hill School: untapped resource

Last week, we discussed efforts by the Pottstown School District to receive more state aid. It's been demonstrated time and again that high poverty urban districts with significant minority populations receive inequitable funding from the state.



Commentary by
Thomas Hylton

But until the legislature becomes more enlightened, Pottstown must work with the resources at hand.

Pottstown has the third highest local tax effort of 500 school districts in the state — a killer when it comes to attracting productive citizens and businesses.

For a third year in a row, the Pottstown School District is not raising taxes. Still, as the chart below demonstrates, spending by the borough and school district continues to increase well beyond the rate of inflation, while the assessed value of our real estate has steadily declined.

Local government needs to become more efficient.

But Pottstown has other resources

it could tap, one of which has been much in the news this year.

For more than a century, The Hill School has been among the most prestigious college preparatory schools in the nation.

The Hill is a member of the Ten Schools Admissions Organization, which includes some of the most venerable names in boarding school education, such as Exeter, Andover, Hotchkiss, and Lawrenceville.



The school is valued at \$255 million, and it is the largest property owner in the borough. Most of its property is exempt from real estate taxes.

In April, Gov. Tom Wolf, a Hill School graduate, was keynote speaker at a dinner for local leaders organized by The Hill School at Sunnybrook Ballroom. He pointed out that Pottstown and The Hill School need each other more than ever before, something the school is beginning to recognize.

Tomorrow: The Hill School expands

Tom Hylton is a member of the Pottstown School Board. However, the views expressed are his alone and not the board's.

Year	School District Budget	Borough General Fund	Combined Borough/School district millage	Real estate Total Assessed Valuation
2008-9	\$50,407,795	\$11,030,280	40.9	\$829,017,802
2009-10	\$53,401,543	\$9,454,266	43.6	\$826,475,792
2010-11	\$54,553,223	\$11,087,903	45.8	\$817,728,017
2011-12	\$51,108,049	\$11,281,525	46.8	\$817,767,813
2012-13	\$52,034,797	\$10,866,858	47.4	\$812,279,226
2013-14	\$52,947,845	\$11,535,878	48.3	\$813,227,426
2014-15	\$55,929,737	\$12,172,548	49.6	\$813,390,719
2015-16	\$57,136,928	\$14,520,039	49.6	\$810,387,119
2016-17	\$59,553,150	\$14,169,984	49.6	\$805,577,279
2017-18	\$62,021,819	\$13,410,764	49.6	\$802,795,399
10-year change	+23%	+23%	+23%	-3.2%
10-year inflation	15%			