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Questions and Answers about Local Property Taxes

Cass School District 63

8502 Bailey Road
Darien, Illinois 60561
331-481-4004
www.cassd63.org

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Section I

Overview of the Tax Levy and Extension Process

What are property taxes?

- ✔ In the state of Illinois, local real estate property taxes are based on a property's equalized assessed value and the total local tax rate applied to that value, after any exemptions are subtracted.
- ✔ Property taxes are levied by local governing bodies, including but not limited to counties, municipalities, townships, park districts, community colleges, and school districts.
- ✔ Assessed values are not determined by the tax district, but through the DuPage County Supervisor of Assessment's office.
- ✔ As with most school districts, property taxes in Cass School District 63 are the largest source of revenue to fund and operate educational programs, maintain buildings and grounds, provide student transportation, finance debt and pay for social security and retirement contributions.

What is the tax levy process?

- ✔ The tax levy is based on what the local taxing bodies determine to be necessary based on estimated budgetary needs for the following fiscal year, and as limited by the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL).
- ✔ Local governing bodies approve levies for specific dollar amounts, not tax rates. Tax rates are calculated by the DuPage County Clerk's office during the tax extension process.
- ✔ School districts levy a separate amount for each fund for which local tax revenue is necessary for the following year.
- ✔ Each taxing body must then file its levy with the County Clerk by the last Tuesday in December and must also follow any applicable provisions of the Truth in Taxation Law.

What is Truth in Taxation?

- ✔ The Truth in Taxation law requires that if a local governing body proposes an aggregate levy that is more than 105 percent of the total amount of taxes extended in the previous year (excluding necessary payments for bonded debt), it must publish a required legal notice in a newspaper of local circulation and hold a public hearing in a specified timeframe.
- ✔ At the public hearing, the taxing body must explain the reasons for its levy and proposed increase, as well as hear from anyone who wishes to provide testimony.
- ✔ If the levy is less than 105 percent, public notice and a Truth in Taxation hearing is not required.
- ✔ The Board must then adopt the final tax levy and file with the county in the required timeframe.

What is PTELL?

- ✔ DuPage County taxing bodies fall under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL), sometimes called tax caps.
- ✔ PTELL does not cap either individual property tax bills or individual property assessments.
- ✔ Rather, PTELL limits the increase in property tax extensions to the lesser of 5 percent or the Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers (CPI-U) from the previous year.
- ✔ This is in addition to any amount for taxable new construction, newly annexed areas, and recovered tax increment financing (TIF) district valuations.
- ✔ In Cass 63, new construction is the only potential source of growth outside of the CPI-U.
- ✔ If a school district needs to increase tax revenues above the CPI-U, they generally must take that request directly to the voters for approval via referendum.

What happens next?

- ✔ After the tax levy is approved and filed in December, the County Clerk begins the tax extension process by applying the state equalization factor and calculating the tax rate needed to produce the amount of revenues allowed for each taxing body, subject to PTELL and maximum allowable rates.
- ✔ The County Clerk then apportions the levy among the properties in the taxing district according to its equalized assessed value (EAV) so that tax bills can be computed.
- ✔ The County Treasurer applies any exemptions and prepares and distributes tax bills to receive tax payments from property owners. The Treasurer then collects and distributes payments to the local units of government.

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Section II

Calculating Property Taxes and Understanding Your Bill

How are taxes calculated?

- ✔ The calculation for a particular parcel of property is the equalized assessed value (EAV or one-third of the fair cash value) after any exemptions are subtracted, multiplied by the total tax rate and divided by 100.
- ✔ This is expressed as EAV x Tax Rate / 100.
- ✔ For example, a home with no exemptions and a fair cash value of $300,000 (equalized valuation of $100,000) with an aggregate tax rate of $6.30 per $100 of EAV will have a property tax bill of $6,300.
- ✔ Individuals who own their home and occupy it as a primary residence also qualify for the general residential owner-occupied exemption of $6,000.
- ✔ This is expressed as (EAV - 6,000) x Tax Rate / 100.
- ✔ Applied to the example above, that same home would only be taxed on $94,000, resulting in a tax bill of $5,922.

Ho do I check my tax bill?

- ✔ Assuming the property is assessed correctly, and the tax rates shown on the real estate tax bill are accurate, then a property owner can check the taxable value by taking the "fair cash value" of the home (usually shown in the upper right corner of the tax bill) and dividing by three.
- ✔ This will lead to the assessed value, which is then multiplied by the "state multiplier", which is usually 1.0000 but could be higher or lower. This leads to the equalized value on which that parcel of property is taxed.
- ✔ The next step is to subtract from the equalized value any real estate tax exemptions (click for more information on local property tax exemptions, amounts and qualifications).
- ✔ This leads to the "net taxable value" of the property, which is multiplied by the local tax rate and divided by 100 to get the total tax bill.

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Section III

Property Tax Information Specific to District 63

What is the tax levy for 2026?

- ✔ The recommended 2026 tax levy for Cass School District 63 is $12,180,530 excluding debt service, compared to last year's actual extension of $11,608,418, an increase of 4.93 percent.
- ✔ It is estimated that the total tax extension with debt service included will be around $13,315,621, compared to last year's total extension of $12,974,141, an increase of 2.63 percent.
- ✔ However, this does not mean a homeowner's taxes will go up this amount. The overall amount could be higher or lower and will depend on any changes in assessment of the individual property, as well as what other taxing bodies levy for taxes.

Why a Truth in Taxation hearing?

- ✔ The District 63 Board of Education held Truth in Taxation hearings for the first time in many years in 2022 and 2023.
- ✔ A Truth in Taxation hearing had not been necessary for a number of years due to the CPI remaining well below 5 percent during that time.
- ✔ At 4.93 percent, the proposed 2026 levy is under the 105 percent threshold that requires a hearing. As a result, there will be no Truth in Taxation hearing for the 2026 levy.
- ✔ This information is presented and discussed at two public Board of Education meetings, including October 20 and November 17, 2026. Even in the absence of a hearing, public comment is always welcome prior to formal adoption of the tax levy in November.

What is the history on taxes?

Following are District 63's total property values, tax revenues collected, and tax rates over the previous 15 years.

Levy Year	District EAV	Collected	Tax Rate
2025	498,515,866	12,974,141	2.7692
2024	429,502,648	12,550,927	2.9222
2023	394,168,601	12,170,350	3.0876
2022	381,742,640	11,668,346	3.0566
2021	375,891,461	10,192,297	2.7115
2020	368,778,025	10,009,742	2.7143
2019	353,326,094	9,726,007	2.7527
2018	346,910,291	9,536,217	2.7489
2017	333,558,161	9,322,283	2.7948
2016	319,478,027	9,079,566	2.8420
2015	306,094,953	9,003,783	2.9415
2014	302,328,582	8,926,554	2.9526
2013	313,133,860	8,785,910	2.8058
2012	331,922,378	8,632,637	2.6008
2011	358,569,220	8,355,738	2.3303

Cash Reserve Balance Disclosure

In compliance with 105 ILCS 5/17-1.3, following are the unaudited fiscal year 2026 ending fund balances for Cass School District 63:

Fund	**Balance**
Education (10)	$7,117,571
Operations & Maintenance (20)	$1,851,007
Debt Service (30)	$793,384
Transportation (40)	$431,887
IMRF & Social Security (5)	$534,571
Capital Projects (60)	$1,101,765
Total Ending FY26 Fund Balance	**$11,830,185**

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Section IV

Property Tax Terminology

What do these terms mean?

- ✔ **Levy** - The amount of the school district's need (what the district "asks for") for property tax revenue for each fund as certified in the Board's annual levy resolution in December.
- ✔ **Extension** – The process by which the county clerk calculates a government agency's tax rate. The total extension is the product of the agency's EAV multiplied by its calculated tax rate and is equal to the total property tax billing on the agency's behalf.
- ✔ **Collection** - Receipt of property owners' payments by the County Treasurer.
- ✔ **Distribution** - Payments of tax receipts by the County Treasurer to schools and other units of local government.
- ✔ **Tax Year** – The calendar year in which property is assessed and the levy is made. Taxes are billed, collected and distributed in the following calendar year.

What do these terms mean?

- ✔ **Assessment** – Process of valuing real property for tax purposes.
- ✔ **Assessed Valuation** – The taxable value placed on the property by the local assessor.
- ✔ **Equalization** – Adjustments to local assessed valuations to bring about an overall assessment for a township or county equal to one-third of fair market value.
- ✔ **Multiplier** – The factor applied to a township or county's total assessed valuation to equalize it to one-third of fair market value, the rate specified in law.
- ✔ **Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV)** – The total value of the real property after the county and state's equalization formula is applied. The term is applied to both individual properties and the total property within a local taxing body.
- ✔ **Tax Base** – The total EAV of a school district or taxing body.

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Still Have Questions?

Contact Cass School District 63 Superintendent Travis McGuire with any questions regarding local property taxes or other issues related to school district funding or finances.

Cass School District 63
8502 Bailey Road
Darien, Illinois 60561
331-481-4000
tmcguire@cassd63.org

Disclaimer: None of the information contained in this document is intended to be advisory or legal in nature. Every effort was made to ensure accuracy in presentation, but anyone with specific tax questions should contact the local taxing body, the County Supervisor of Assessments or Treasurer's Office or a tax professional as appropriate for any specific information.