

From the Rochester-Stockbridge Unified District Board: About the Tax Discrepancy

Last week the RSUD board was made aware of a discrepancy in the education tax rate. While preparing the property tax mailing, the Town Clerks noticed that the tax rate printed on our bills did not match the rate calculated from the budget we passed at our Annual School meeting.

The Board immediately reached out to our Supervisory Union Business Office, and together with the Vermont Agency of Education they began investigating the problem. Right now, it seems that the issue involves a drop in Equalized Pupil count - the figure the state is using now does not match the figure the state provided at the beginning of the year. The figure also does not match the figure calculated by our Business Office. Less students on our rosters means the overall cost per pupil rises, resulting in the higher tax rate shown on our bills. Additionally, this new figure causes the "penalty" for exceeding the state-determined Spending Cap to be added to the assessed tax rate.

As the Board stated at our Special meeting last night, we are committed to addressing the discrepancies and establishing an accurate count of our student population. We are working with the state to confirm our student population, going name-by-name to ensure that we are being properly credited for each child we educate. Equipped with that information, we can properly calculate our tax rate and move forward from there.

As the Board gathers further information, we will work to pass that along to the community - posting notices at our town offices and schools, sending information to our papers, and discussing directly at board meetings. The Board is also keeping the Selectboards of each town apprised of any changes as well as our local legislators.