

Trenton Times (November 20, 2007)

School board members, we're watching you

The article "Property-tax hikes smallest in 6 years" (Nov. 18) verified that Washington Township's property taxes have almost doubled in the past seven years. And the major reason for the hefty increase is the school tax levy, which constitutes roughly 60 percent of the property taxes. The municipal government scaled down its expenses this past year, while the school district increased its expenses by 12 percent. This is why we have the highest average increase in taxes -- 8.5 percent -- in the county for 2007.

What's worse is that taxpayers never got an explanation for this whopping increase, which was triple the 4 percent spending limit urged by Gov. Jon Corzine. The lack of explanation created a credibility gap with the school board and the administration.

It is imperative that future school budgets be brought down to a reasonable level. Reliance on state aid is an illusion. Although it was stated at the November board meeting that all budget questions would be answered and there would be transparency this year, the board members' actions must match their words. The ball is in the school district's court and taxpayers will watch to see if the administration's words are genuine.

- WALTER DABROWSKI
Washington Township