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PRESS RELEASE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Nancy J. Neuzil, Frankfort School District 157-C, Public Relations Coordinator, 815-469-9235, njneuzil@aol.com

District 157-C To Keep 2014 Tax Levy Stable and Abate Taxes

For the past four years, the Frankfort School District 157-C Board of Education has held the line on the school district's tax levy and is pleased to report that it plans to do so again this year. Using a combination of debt service fund abatements from existing reserves and ongoing cost containment strategies, the district will be able to ask taxpayers for about the same amount as the tax levies in 2010 - 2013, with only nominal growth of about \$400,000 related to new construction that was added to the tax rolls in 2014.

Board President Christopher McFadden stated, "Since 2011, the budget is almost the same amount. This year's levy is a slight increase but will be paid for in the growth in the tax base and our existing taxpayers shouldn't have to pay more. I'm proud of the work this Board has done in the past four years."

The Board has had a goal of flattening out the district's overall levy to provide tax relief to the community during these challenging economic times. This year, the Board directed the administration to again review the district's debt structure, abatement options and cost containment strategies in relation to how the current projected equalized assessed valuation (EAV) for 2014 might impact the district's tax levy and tax rate.

The Board approved the 2014 tentative tax levy on November 17th and set December 15th for the public hearing and final levy approval. The total levy for all tax capped funds is estimated to be approximately \$26.155M. When factoring in the additional obligated debt services fund needs of about \$4.115M, and a \$500,000 abatement of those debt services fund needs from existing reserves, the total levy request is expected to be about \$29.77M. This is a few hundred thousand dollars greater than the total levy requests and extensions from the past four years (about \$29.25M to \$29.50M during that time) and represents only growth in the overall levy from taxes generated by new property added to the tax rolls in 2014. Existing taxpayers are not being asked to pay more for the operations of the school district.

District 157-C again received notice that it has maintained its prestigious "AAA" bond rating from Standard and Poor's Rating Services, showing the ongoing financial strength and stability of the school district. Only a few dozen districts in Illinois, and less than 100 school districts in the United States, have achieved/maintained this rating in 2014. District 157-C has earned the "AAA" bond rating for the past eleven consecutive years. The district's thoughtful strategic planning and meticulous financial records provided Standard & Poor's assurance of their evaluation and contributed to District 157-C again earning the top rating with a stable outlook. The district maintains fund balance reserves that typically cover six to twelve months of expenditures in most funds, and it has again been placed in the financial recognition category by the Illinois State Board of Education for its sound finances and stable accounting practices.

District 157-C Board members have made a commitment to work towards keeping the levy stable and only allowing for natural new construction growth. Per Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, Curt Saindon, "The Board has sent a clear message to the administration and the community over the past four years that it is prepared to use a combination of resources and strategies to do whatever it can to keep the overall tax

levy stable for the benefit of the taxpayers in this school district. The school district will abate taxes by using existing reserves this year, so that it does not have to ask for any more tax dollars than is absolutely necessary.”

The Board and administration continue to look for ways to reduce costs throughout the district without affecting the quality of educational programming. Mr. Saindon additionally stated, “We are extremely proud of the responsible and thoughtful approach our Board and Administration have taken toward both financial management and strategic planning, and with an “AAA” bond rating and placement on the State’s Financial Recognition list we believe that our efforts have not gone unnoticed.” The district’s financial information and a listing of its cost-cutting strategies can be found under “finance” on the “reporting” tab of the district’s website at www.fsd157c.org.