

News Release
Evansville Community School District
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For Immediate Release

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Evansville Community School District Board of Education Approves April 2, 2024 Referendum Question

At its January 10 meeting, the Evansville Community School District Board of Education voted to place an operational referendum question on the April 2, 2024 ballot. Approval of the referendum will allow the District to address the significant budget shortfall.

The proposed operational referendum is critical to maintain class sizes; provide high quality resources to support all students thriving, contributing and belonging; continue offering courses to prepare students for college and careers; maintain salaries and benefits to recruit and retain high quality staff; address building maintenance and rising operating costs such as utilities, transportation, and insurance.

In October-November 2023, the District conducted a community and staff survey to determine support for an operational referendum. The District received 698 completed surveys which represents 18% of the eligible respondents. Of the respondents, 54.25% stated they would support an operational referendum.

Operational Referendum

The District's current operational referendum, approved by voters in 2018, expires June 30, 2024. Over the last decade, state aid has not kept up with increasing costs. Therefore, the Evansville Community School District Board of Education is asking voters to consider approving a five-year stepped operational referendum at a rate of \$2,700,000 in 2024-25, \$3,900,000 in 2025-26, \$4,600,000 in 2026-27, \$5,200,000 in 2027-28 and \$5,900,000 in 2028-29.

Why is the operational referendum necessary?

The operational referendum is necessary because...

- The current ECSD operational referendum expires on June 30, 2024; the proposed referendum will replace the expiring referendum.
- Without a successful referendum, ECSD faces a \$2,400,000 budget deficit in 2024-25 and it increases each subsequent year

- The Wisconsin Legislature did not provide any additional revenue to ECSD or any school district in 2021-22 or 2022-23 (\$0.00 increase in both years) which limited the District's ability to cover expenses.
- The Federal ESSER funds provided to help address COVID-19 related expenses expire on June 30, 2024 creating a larger District deficit.
- The Wisconsin Legislature has set the annual budget increase for 2024 and beyond at \$325 per student which does not address the multiple years with low or no increase and does not address inflationary increases.

Tax Impact

Approval of the operational referendum would result in an annual estimated tax increase of \$147 (\$12.25 per month) for every \$100,000 of a taxpayer's property value over the current tax rate for 2024-25. The tax impact per \$100,000 for the final four years would be an additional \$81 in 2025-26, an additional \$67 in 2026-27, an additional \$58 in 2027-28 and an additional \$55 in 2028-29.

How will a Successful Operational Referendum Address ECSD's Budget Shortfall?

The District worked to create a plan that would address prioritized needs and continue the strong educational program offered by the District – an investment in today and the future. Passage of the operational referendum will allow the District to continue to support all learners.

The District will be providing information on the referenda in a variety of ways including the District website, social media, mailings, and community member meetings. For more information, please contact Dr. Steve Lutzke, Interim District Administrator, lutzkes@evansville.k12.wi.us or 608-882-3386 or visit the [ECSD Referendum website](https://www.ecsdnet.org/2024-referendum/) <https://www.ecsdnet.org/2024-referendum/>.