

School District Referendum up for Renewal

Be Informed and **VOTE** on November 3

The Minnetonka School District last asked voters to approve local referendum levies for operations and technology in 2007. With 65 percent approval, voters took action to protect the educational excellence they had come to expect. That vote provided the District the financial stability to transform teaching and learning, innovate, hold the line on taxes through the recession, and reach an all-time high for student achievement at all levels in 2015.

26.9
MHS Class of 2015
Average ACT
Highest in school history

The levies approved in 2007 will expire in 2017. So, as responsible planners and stewards of District finances, the Minnetonka School Board has decided to place both referendum questions on the November 3, 2015 ballot.

The District relies on voter-approved referendum levies for **13 percent of its annual operating budget and 100% of its technology fund**. Local operating levies are an essential component of the way Minnesota funds public schools; in fact, 99 percent of Minnesota school districts have to rely on a local levy. The state has proven to be an unreliable partner in providing adequate funding support.



WHAT WILL BE ON THE BALLOT?

Question 1: Asks voters to renew and increase the District's annual operating levy by \$340 per pupil, from \$1,250 to \$1,590 per pupil for taxes payable in 2016, with a second increase to \$2,046 per pupil for taxes payable in 2019. Inflationary increases occur annually during the 10-year duration.

For a median-value home in the District (\$350,000), the additional cost will be \$15.24 per month starting in 2016.

Question 2: Asks voters to renew the existing capital projects technology levy **at its current rate** for ten years.

WHY IS AN INCREASE NEEDED?

State funding has not kept pace with inflation during the last decade. Minnetonka has strategically used innovation and enrollment growth strategies to better serve resident students and increase revenue to keep pace with inflation during the recession. However, as our schools reach capacity and enrollment growth ends, the revenue will plateau; more local funding is needed to support programs and staff and to avoid budget cuts, including staff layoffs in the future.

The two-part operating referendum question is focused on being respectful of taxpayers and keeping taxes as low as possible, while still securing the necessary funding to balance the budget over the next three years. By including the second stage of the increase in the 2015 ballot question, the District will not need to hold another referendum for many years and will have a more secure financial future for the next 10 years.

"Most districts would ask for the entire amount up front," stated Dr. Dennis Peterson, "but the District doesn't need the whole amount for a few years, so the Board has wisely structured the operating referendum to increase funding in two stages. The Board takes its responsibility for fiscal stewardship very seriously and only turns to taxpayers as a last resort and only asks for what is needed. Now, the question is in the hands of our community. Will we support the necessary funding for continued excellence in our schools?"
Learn more at www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us/referendum

Message

from the Superintendent

As we move forward with information regarding the referendum and answer all of the questions that will be forthcoming, my first thought is overwhelming gratitude for the supportive Minnetonka community that provides great financial support for their schools. An overwhelming 97% of residents believe Minnetonka Schools are excellent or good.

We have done many things to avoid going to the voters until now. We have used enrollment increases to bring in millions of dollars in revenue to support resident students, we have made the District more efficient and we have innovated to do a better job. However, all of those strategies cannot carry the financial load forever.

Although the additional \$19 million brought into the district through enrollment increases each year will remain in place for future years, we have to supplement that revenue. Since the State of Minnesota has fallen far short of adequately supporting schools over the past 15 years, we have to consider the option of generating adequate revenue through a levy increase.

We already spend \$451 per pupil below the state average and \$900 per pupil below the regional average, so cutting expenses is not a good option. In fact, many of our expenditures are connected to revenue-generators, and expenditure cuts would reduce our revenue further. The only option left is to ask voters to consider modest tax increases to sustain the excellence we have in the District.

Dennis L. Peterson

School District Election November 3

Four Candidates Running for Four Seats on the Minnetonka School Board

The Minnetonka School Board is a seven-member governing body of citizens elected by residents of the school district. At the November 3 election, four members will be elected to the School Board for terms of four years each.

Candidates on the ballot will be:

- Mark E. Ambrosen, Excelsior resident
- Katie Becker, Eden Prairie resident
- Lisa Sumner, incumbent
- Lisa Wagner, incumbent

The School Board's current Chairman, Charlie Kanan, and Director Karen Walkowski are not seeking re-election and will serve through December 2015.

For more information about the School Board, including meeting schedule and agendas, please visit <http://www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us/schoolboard>.

Where to Vote

On November 3, polls are open from 7 a.m.–8 p.m. School district polling locations are combined and may be different from where you voted in 2014. To find your polling location, visit <http://pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us/>

- Election Day:** Combined polling locations: City of Minnetonka residents vote at regular polling locations in conjunction with the city election
- Deephaven and Woodland residents vote at Deephaven City Hall
 - Excelsior and Greenwood residents vote at Excelsior Elementary
 - Shorewood, Precinct 4 residents vote at Excelsior Elementary
 - Shorewood, Precinct 1, 2, and 3 residents vote at Southshore Community Center
 - Tonka Bay residents vote at Southshore Community Center
 - Chanhassen, Precinct 1A, and Eden Prairie Precincts 1, 2, 5 vote at Minnetonka District Service Center, 5621 County Rd 101, Minnetonka
 - Chanhassen, Precincts 2A and 3, and Victoria residents vote at Minnetonka Middle School West

Early absentee voting is open Sept. 18 - Nov. 2.

Please Join Us



Saturday, September 19, 2015
 MHS Homecoming Weekend
 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
 at Minnetonka High School

For more information and to purchase tickets:
www.minnetonkaalumni.com

Minnetonka Schools Calendar

September

- 1 MME Open House & Curriculum Night, Gr 6, 4-7pm
- 1 MME New Families Welcome, 7-8pm
- 2 Clear Springs Back-to-School Open House, 3-5pm
- 2 Deephaven Classroom Open House, 8-9am
- 2 Excelsior Back-to-School Open House, 8-10am
- 2 MHS Gr 9 Retreat, East Gym, 8am-2:30pm
- 2 MHS Picture Day, Gr 10 & 11, Black Box, 12-5pm
- 2 MHS Gr 9 and New Student Orientation, 6:30pm
- 2 Minnewashta Back-to-School Open House, Gr 3, 4, 5: 8-9:15am; Gr K, 1, 2: 8:45-10am
- 2 Scenic Heights Back-to-School Open House, 8-9am
- 3 Groveland Open House, 8-9:30am
- 3 MMW Curriculum Night, 4:30-8:30pm
- 7 No School, Labor Day
- 8 School Begins, Full Day (1-12)
- 8-9 Kindergarten Assessments
- 10 School Begins, Kindergarten
- 10 MHS Curriculum Night
- 11 Tonka Pride Fall Store Open, DSC, 3-7pm
- 12 Minnewashta Back-to-School 5K, Check-in, 7:30am; Run/Walk, 8:30am; Social following
- 12 Tonka Pride Fall Store Open, DSC, 8am-1pm
- 14 Preschool Classes Begin
- 16 Preschool Curriculum Night, 6-7:30pm

- 17 ECCE Classes Begin
- 17 Scenic Heights Kindergarten Popsicle Picnic, 5:30-7pm
- 18 Homecoming Parade, 4pm
 Game vs. Eden Prairie, 7pm
- 19 Deephaven D4D Event (Fun Run/Walk), 9-11am
- 19 Alumni Awards Brunch & Annual Meeting, MHS 10am
- 19 MHS Homecoming Dance, 9pm
- 21 Clear Springs Curriculum Night, Gr 1, 3, 5, 6-8pm
- 21 Deephaven Curriculum Night, Gr K-2, 6-7pm
- 21 Excelsior Curriculum Night, Gr K, 2, 4, 5:30-8:30pm
- 21 Groveland Curriculum Night, Gr K, 2, 4, 6 - 8:15pm
- 21 MHS Senior Parent Night, Arts Center, 7pm
- 21 Minnewashta Curriculum Night, Gr. 3,4,5, 6 - 8:15pm
- 21 Scenic Heights Curriculum Night, Gr K, 2, 4, Nav 4/5, 5:30-8pm
- 24 Clear Springs Curriculum Night, Gr K, 2, 4, 6-8pm
- 24 Deephaven Curriculum Night, Gr 3-5, 6-7pm
- 24 Excelsior Curriculum Night, Gr 1, 3, 5, 5:30-8:30pm
- 24 Groveland Curriculum Night, Gr 1, 3, 5, 6 - 8:15pm
- 24 Minnewashta Curriculum Night, Gr. K,1,2, 6-8:15pm
- 24 Scenic Heights Curriculum Night, Gr 1, 3, 5, Nav 2/3, 5:30-8pm
- 26 Excelsior Dash for Cash & Dance Party, 7:30am-1pm
- 26 Groveland Tonka Trot Run/Walk, 8:30am
- 29 MME Curriculum Night, Gr 7 & 8, 6-8pm

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Minnetonka School District, ISD #276
 Dennis Peterson, PhD, Superintendent
 5621 County Road 101
 Minnetonka, MN 55345

School Board

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 Lisa Sumner, Clerk

Heidi Garcia, Director
 Lisa Wagner, Director
 Karen Walkowski, Director

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