

Woodbridge School District Current Expense Referendum – May 29, 2019 Fact Sheet

On May 29th, the Woodbridge School District will be conducting a Current Expense Referendum to raise approximately \$950,000 for operating funding for the district. The referendum is the same referendum that was defeated on March 12, 2019 by 113 votes. State law allows districts to hold two referendums within a 12-month period.

What is current expense?

- Current expense funding is used by school districts to cover the operating costs such as teaching materials, textbooks, insurance and local salary expenditures.
- The current expense tax rate can only be increased through a referendum.
- The last time the Woodbridge School District passed a current expense increase was April 25, 2006.

Why is the district asking to raise the current expense rate?

- The district has seen enrollment growth of 30% since our 2006 referendum. As enrollment has increased so has the cost of staffing our schools. Since 2012, the district has seen a 20.73% increase in salary expenses.
- Utility costs for the district have risen 76.21% since 2012. The majority of this is due to the building of the new Woodbridge High School, but all buildings have seen their rates increase during this time.
- Starting in 2012, school districts in Delaware are required to pay 10% of all transportation costs for their students. This has been over a \$200,000 increase to our budget annually with no additional revenue.
- The district has increased their security costs in the district by contracting with police agencies to provide School Resource Officers (SRO's). This cost has risen to over \$100,000 annually.

Has the district made budget cuts before asking for this rate increase?

- Since 2012, the District has cut operating budgets by the following percentages:
 - School building budgets – 15%
 - Technology – 57%
 - School building maintenance – 21%
 - Athletics 16%
 - Textbooks/Classroom supplies – 75%
- Additionally, staff in the Woodbridge School District have not received a local pay raise in two years.

How much money will the proposed increase provide the district?

- The district expects to collect approximately \$950,000 from this tax rate increase.

How will this affect the average tax payer in the district?

- Sussex County residents will see an average annual increase of around \$70.
- Kent County residents will see an average annual increase of around \$85.
- Tax rates will be raised \$0.655 in Sussex and \$0.271 in Kent.
- The average assessed property in Sussex for the Woodbridge School District is \$10,664. Kent County's average is \$31,200.

Are there any other factors that are influencing the district decision to hold a referendum?

- The district is currently utilizing \$400,000 of reserve funding to balance our current budget.
- The State of Delaware continues to require school districts to refund \$26 million annually to the state due to budget shortfalls in 2017. The Woodbridge portion of this giveback is approximately \$450,000.

How will the District utilize the increase in funding?

- A good portion of the increase will be dedicated to stop using reserve funding to make the budget work.
- The district will be able to negotiate conservative increases for our employees.
- The district will slowly restore cuts in the operating budget with the full intent of making sure that this funding lasts for as long as possible.

What will happen if the referendum doesn't pass?

- The Woodbridge School District will be forced to leave 17-20 staff positions vacant starting in the 2019-20 school year.
- School Resource Officer services that are provided at Woodbridge High School, Woodbridge Middle School and Phillis Wheatley Elementary School will most likely be cut.

Where can I vote?

- Polls will be open on **May 29, 2019 from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.** at the following schools:
 - Woodbridge Middle School, 307 Laws Street, Bridgeville
 - Woodbridge Early Childhood Education Center, 400 Governors Avenue, Greenwood

Who can vote?

- All Woodbridge residents over the age of 18 are eligible to vote.
- You do NOT need to be a property owner and you do NOT need to be a registered voter for the general election.

What if I will be out of town on May 29th?

- You can vote in person at the Sussex County Department of Elections Office located at 119 N. Race Street in Georgetown by Tuesday, May 28, 2019, at noon.
- Affidavits for absentee ballots can be mailed to you if requested by Friday, May 24, 2019 at noon. Ballots must be returned no later than May 29th at 8:00 p.m. by mail.
- Additional information regarding absentee voting can be found at:
<https://elections.delaware.gov/services/voter/absentee/school.shtml>

Where can I find additional information?

- There is a Power Point presentation on the Woodbridge School District website that provides additional information (<https://www.woodbridgeraiders.net>)
- The Woodbridge School District Facebook page will be utilized to provide updates.
- Superintendent Heath Chasanov's email address is heath.chasanov@wsd.k12.de.us. Please email him with any specific questions.

How will a failed referendum effect our students?

This is the main reason that we are asking for the additional funding. All of the answers that have been provided previously address the factual, financial questions that we anticipated. But the negative impact that a second failed referendum will have on our students is why we need your support.

- A negative vote will lead to increases in our class sizes which WILL impact student achievement and performance.
- A negative vote will lead to decrease in staff morale which most likely will lead to higher staff turnover rates which WILL impact student achievement and performance.
- A negative vote will lead to a decrease in our student safety budget at a time when most districts are increasing safety efforts which WILL impact student achievement and performance.

PLEASE VOTE "YES" ON MAY 29TH!