

## The Details

### Indian River School District Current Expense Referendum

**Date:**

March 2, 2017

*In the event of inclement weather, the referendum will be rescheduled for March 16, 2017*

**Time:**

10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

**Polling Places:**

East Millsboro Elementary School

Georgetown Elementary School

Indian River High School

Long Neck Elementary School

Lord Baltimore Elementary School

Selbyville Middle School

**Voter Eligibility:**

District residents who are U.S. citizens and at least 18 years of age are eligible to vote.

Residents **DO NOT** have to be property owners in order to vote. Registration is not required, but residents must provide proof of identification or residency at each polling place. Absentee ballots are available by mail until noon on

February 24 and in person until noon on March 1. For more information, contact the Department of Elections at (302) 856-5367.

**Questions? Contact the Referendum Hotline at**

**(302) 436-1079**

**or visit**

**[irsd.net/referendum](http://irsd.net/referendum)**



# Indian River District News

## "A Model of Excellence"

Special Referendum Edition

Winter 2017

## IRSD Referendum to be Held on March 2, 2017

***District to seek additional funding for growth issues, school security and student support***

The Indian River School District will host a current expense referendum on **Thursday, March 2, 2017** to seek additional local funding for school safety programs, measures related to enrollment growth and student services and support including technology, textbooks, student organizations and transportation.

Voting on March 2 will be from 10:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. Residents of the Indian River School District who are U.S. citizens and at least 18 years of age are eligible to vote at any one of the following polling places: East Millsboro Elementary, Georgetown Elementary, Indian River High School, Long Neck Elementary, Lord Baltimore Elementary and Selbyville Middle School. Proof of identification or residency is required at each polling place. Residents **DO NOT** have to be property owners in order to vote.

If the referendum is postponed due to inclement weather, it will be rescheduled for Thursday, March 16, 2017.

The district is proposing a



tax increase of 49 cents per \$100 of assessed property value. The measure will raise \$7,350,000 in additional local revenue. The average district taxpayer will see an increase of \$95.41 in his or her annual property tax bill.

"The district's unprecedented growth rate during the past six years has made it impossible for revenues to keep up with the needs of our students," IRSD Interim Superintendent Mark Steele said. "In 2016-2017, our total enrollment rose to 10,467 students, which

is an increase of nearly 300 students from last year. Since 2010, our enrollment has grown an average of 3 to 4 percent every year, thus creating a need for additional teachers and paraprofessionals, classroom supplies and materials, technology, textbooks and school safety initiatives. Growth is expected to continue into the future with district enrollment projected to be at or near 12,000 by 2022.

"This growth has put a strain on district budgets and

*Continued on Page 2*

# Why is the Referendum Needed?

## Unprecedented Enrollment Growth Strains Budgets

District enrollment has increased by 1,681 students since 2010 and now totals 10,467 students in Grades PreK-12. This represents an average growth rate of 3 to 4 percent per year. Such growth has created a need for additional teachers and paraprofessionals, classroom supplies and materials, technology, textbooks and school safety initiatives. Meeting these needs has put a strain on district budgets and made it impossible for revenues to keep up with the needs of students. Enrollment increases are expected to continue for at least the next decade. (See chart at right.) →

## Total District Enrollment

<u>Year</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
2005	7,885
2010	8,786
2016	10,467
2019	11,147*
2022	11,937*
2024	12,464*
2026	12,991*

\* - Projected

Figures based on annual Sept. 30 unit count

## Referendum on March 2

From Page 1

made it difficult to meet the educational needs of our students. We are committed to providing the best possible instructional services to our students and hope residents will be supportive of the March 2 referendum, which will strongly influence our schools' future."

The breakdown of the tax increase and the amount of revenue to be generated is as follows: Student Enrollment Growth, 33 cents (\$4,950,000); School Safety, 8 cents (\$1,200,000); and Student Services and Support 8 cents (\$1,200,000).

**Student enrollment growth** – Funding will be used to hire additional teachers and paraprofessionals authorized through the annual unit count. The tax increase will also fund the purchase of additional supplies, materials and furniture to accommodate student enrollment growth.

**School safety** – This expenditure includes the continued funding of the district's 15 armed school safety monitors,

five School Resource Officers and its district investigators. Additionally, it will fund improvements to doors and windows and the purchase of radios, school and bus cameras, card readers and other security devices.

**Student services and support** – Increased tax dollars will be invested in technology upgrades, textbook adoptions, student organizations and other support services for students. Funding will be used for computer/tablet purchase and replacement; SMART board replacements; switch expansions/replacements; software license upgrades; textbook adoptions during the next three years in English language arts, math, social studies, science, art, music, dance and theater; and support for student clubs such as Odyssey of the Mind, Business Professionals of America (BPA), Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA), FFA, EXCEL, robotics teams and Math League. Funds may also be used for additional services that directly benefit students, including

## Additional Students and Teaching Units

<u>Year</u>	<u>Additional Students</u>	<u>Additional Teaching Units</u>
2011-12	85	22
2012-13	276	22
2013-14	288	48
2014-15	407	34
2015-16	329	33
<u>2016-17</u>	<u>296</u>	<u>35</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,681</b>	<b>194</b>

Figures based on annual Sept. 30 unit count

transportation.

"Additional funding for these measures is needed if our district is to continue providing students the top-quality education they've received in the past," Steele said. "The Board of Education showed tremendous foresight four years ago by placing armed security monitors in all of our schools. This program has been a rousing success and we want to maintain the quality of these services in the future. The district has expended \$1.2 million in local funds each year since 2013

to place these valuable security personnel in our schools. This amounts to a total investment of \$3.6 million since the program's inception. The peace of mind our security monitors have given students, staff and parents is invaluable. We hope our community will partner with us to ensure the safety of every IRSD student for years to come."

The Indian River School District currently has the lowest school property tax rate in Sussex County and will

*Continued on Page 3*

The Indian River School District is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate or deny services on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, domicile, marital status or disability in its programs and activities.

# How Much Will These Initiatives Cost?

## Tax Impact and Revenue

The Indian River School District is proposing a property tax increase of 49 cents per \$100 of assessed value. This will generate \$7,350,000 in local funding and result in an estimated tax increase of **\$95.41** for the average district taxpayer.\*

<u>Proposed Expenditure</u>	<u>Tax Increase</u>	<u>Revenue</u>
Student Enrollment Growth	33 cents	\$4,950,000
School Safety	8 cents	\$1,200,000
Student Services and Support	8 cents	\$1,200,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49 cents</b>	<b>\$7,350,000</b>

\* - Estimates based on the average district property assessment of \$19,472. (Market value of \$199,00-\$225,000.)

## Tax Rate for IRSD is Lowest in Sussex

Indian River currently has the lowest school property tax rate in Sussex County.

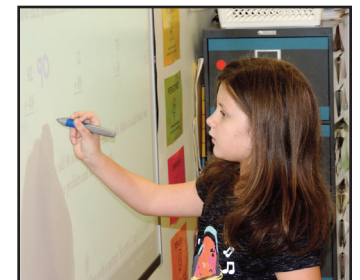
The chart below shows the current tax rate for every Sussex County School District. Figures represent the rate per \$100 of assessed value.

<u>District</u>	<u>Tax Rate</u>
Milford	\$5.3913
Laurel	\$4.989
Delmar	\$4.1417
Woodbridge	\$3.609
Seaford	\$3.36
Cape Henlopen	\$3.213
<b>Indian River</b>	<b>\$2.578</b>

With passage of the referendum, IRSD would continue to have the lowest tax rate in the county. The chart below shows the tax rate for every district if the Indian River referendum is approved.

<u>District</u>	<u>Tax Rate</u>
Milford	\$5.3913
Laurel	\$4.989
Delmar	\$4.1417
Woodbridge	\$3.609
Seaford	\$3.36
Cape Henlopen	\$3.213
<b>Indian River</b>	<b>\$3.068</b>

**Questions? Call the Referendum Hotline at (302) 436-1079**



## Computing Your Tax Increase

To calculate the increase in your tax bill for the referendum, use a rate of **.49** (49 cents).

Divide your property assessment by 100. Multiply that number by the tax rate above to determine the overall increase in your bill.

### Example

Assessment: **\$19,472**

Divide assessment by 100 = **194.72**

Multiply 194.72 by tax rate of **.49** = **\$95.41**

Your overall tax bill will increase by **\$95.41**

## Assessment Information

For information about your property tax assessment, visit [www.sussexcountyde.gov](http://www.sussexcountyde.gov) and click on the "Tax Information" link at the bottom right.

## Enrollment Growth Strains Budgets

From Page 2

continue to have the lowest rate with passage of the referendum. In addition, the Board of Education has reduced the tuition, debt service and minor cap tax rates each of the past three years. This represents a total decrease of 16.5 cents and a savings to the average district taxpayer of \$32.13. However, these funds could not have been used for the current expense initiatives described above.

Property tax assistance is available to senior citizens and disabled residents. For information, they should contact the Sussex County Exemption Coordinator at (302) 855-7762.

The district recently implemented a series of cost-cutting measures, including reducing school, curriculum and Board of Education discretionary budgets by 30 percent. The budgets for district office and the personnel department, not including salaries, have been reduced by 50 percent. The Outdoor Education Center at Ingram Pond has been temporarily closed to save on salaries, transportation, energy and supplies. Through administrative restructuring, the district has also saved money by allowing a director, an assistant superintendent, a principal and two assistant principal positions to remain vacant. District-

sponsored travel for staff has also been curtailed for 2016-2017.

If the referendum is not approved by voters, the district could face up to \$13 million in budget cuts (one-third of total budget), cuts to school safety, a significant reduction in staff due to an inability to meet payroll, larger class sizes, the loss of staff to other school districts and inadequate instructional supplies and materials. The district could potentially lose 90 teachers, 20 paraprofessionals, 12 food service staff, 10 custodians and 7.5 secretaries. Five administrative contracts were not renewed for 2017-2018 in

*Continued on Page 4*

# Ballot and Voting Information

## Official Ballot

To increase the current expense tax rate by \$0.49/\$100 of assessed value (49 cents/\$100 of assessed value). Such tax increase is to be used in the following manner:

Proposed Expenditures	Increase in Local Tax
Student Enrollment Growth	\$0.33
School Safety	\$0.08
Student Services and Support (Textbooks, technology, student organizations and other support services)	\$0.08
<b>TOTAL TAX INCREASE:</b>	<b>\$0.49</b>

**FOR THE ADDITIONAL TAX**

**AGAINST THE ADDITIONAL TAX**

## Polling Places

East Millsboro Elementary School  
Georgetown Elementary School  
Indian River High School  
Long Neck Elementary School  
Lord Baltimore Elementary School  
Selbyville Middle School

*Polls Open*

*10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.*

## Voter eligibility information

Indian River School District residents who are U.S. citizens at least 18 years of age are eligible to vote in the referendum. Residents DO NOT have to be property owners in order to vote. Voter registration is not required but residents must provide proof of identification or residency at each polling place. Absentee ballots are available by mail until noon on February 24 and in person until noon on March 1. Contact the Department of Elections at 856-5367.



## IRSD Hosts Referendum

From Page 3

addition to the five administrative positions that are currently being left unfilled.

Anyone with questions about the referendum is encouraged to visit [irsd.net/referendum](http://irsd.net/referendum) or call the district's Referendum Hotline at (302) 436-1079.

Voters on March 2 must reside within the boundaries of the Indian River School District, be U.S. citizens at least 18 years of age, and provide identification at the polling place. Residents DO NOT have to be property owners in order to vote. Acceptable proofs of identity, name and address include, but are not limited to, State of Delaware driver's license; State of Delaware automobile registration card; State

of Delaware ID card; work ID with photo and address; credit card with photograph and signature; document identifying person by photograph or signature; recent utility bill, rent receipt, business letter setting forth the person's address or telephone directory listing in the current issue of the phone book; or any other reasonable document that identifies the person's address.

Absentee voting is handled by the Sussex County Department of Elections at 119 North Race Street in Georgetown. Absentee ballots are available by mail until noon on February 24 and in person until noon on March 1. For more information, contact the Department of Elections at (302) 856-5367.

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**Vote FOR the current expense referendum!**

**March 2, 2017**