



Contact:

Sally McConnaughey,
Communications Generalist
(651)463-5079
smcconnaughey@farmington.k12.mn.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 21, 2015

Farmington School Board puts two school funding questions on the Nov 3 ballot

FARMINGTON, MINN., July 21, 2015 – For more than a decade, state education funding has not kept up with inflation. The district just cut nearly \$1 million for 2015-16 and, even with the additional state funding just received, a budget deficit is projected as soon as the 2016-17 school year. Additional funding is needed to maintain or lower class sizes, maintain buildings and maintain educational programs. Farmington currently has one of the lowest per pupil operating levies among its peers and class sizes higher than the metro average.

The Farmington School Board and district leadership spent the past several months reviewing district finances, facilities maintenance needs, community surveys and funding options before unanimously deciding to put two school funding questions on the November 3 ballot:

- Question 1 is a request to increase the operating levy by \$433 to lower class sizes and maintain educational programs. (The actual ballot language will revoke the existing levy of \$326.93/pupil and replace it with a new levy of \$759.93, which is a \$433 increase.)
- Question 2 is a request for a \$45,320,000 bond for deferred maintenance districtwide, school safety and security improvements, and additional kindergarten classrooms in all elementary schools.

If both questions are approved by voters, the average homeowner (\$225,000 value home) would see a monthly tax increase of approximately \$24 (Q1: \$15.25; Q2: \$8.67).

If voters do not approve question 1, the district will cut elementary band, cut Kindergarten aides and increase average class sizes in grades 1-12 by eliminating teachers and academic programs.

If voters do not approve question 2, the district will need to take money from the operating fund to complete the necessary projects, addressing health and safety concerns first. This will result in increasing class sizes by eliminating teachers and programs, and not adding any K classrooms.

In finalizing the school funding requests, the school board worked hard to balance what the school district needs to fund its educational program with what the community will support for our schools and our children. More information is available at www.farmington.k12.mn.us/referendum.

Farmington Area Public Schools serve more than 7,000 students and 30,000 residents with K-12, Community Education and Special Education programs. The mission of Farmington Area Public Schools is to ensure each student reaches his or her highest aspirations while embracing responsibility to community. For more information please visit www.farmington.k12.mn.us or contact Sally McConnaughey at (651)463-5079, smcconnaughey@farmington.k12.mn.us.

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