



Francis Howell School District

Proposition Learn

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is a tax levy?

A tax levy is the rate used to calculate the amount of property tax revenue the school district receives. The rate is applied against every \$100 of assessed property value. The primary source of operating income for public school districts in Missouri is typically property taxes. FHSD receives approximately 56% of its operating revenue from property taxes. The current operating levy is \$4.18 per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation.

What percent of the vote is required to pass a tax levy?

Prop Learn will require a simple majority (50 percent plus one vote) to pass.

How will the ballot language read? What will voters be voting on?

“Shall the Board of Education of the Francis Howell School District be authorized to increase the operating tax levy for the purpose of providing funds to address the District’s strategic initiatives, including increasing student access to technology; providing additional staff positions necessary to meet student needs; introducing new programming and innovative course work; providing updated class materials; improving and maintaining the District’s facilities; providing salary increases for staff; and funding ongoing operating expenses by \$0.48 per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation? If this proposition is approved, the adjusted operating levy of the school district is estimated to be \$4.6614 per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation.”

Why is FHSD asking for a 48 cent tax increase now?

The Board of Education placed the levy on the ballot because they believe the District needs additional funds to provide the programs, services and staffing necessary to remain a top performing school district. Approval of Proposition Learn will allow the addition of new technology and curriculum to better prepare our students for college or career. The costs of goods and services associated with operating the District continue to increase, including utilities, transportation, insurance, and special education. Prop Learn funds will help offset these rising costs and allow the District to reinstate some of the staffing, programs, and services previously cut.

What will Proposition Learn cost the average homeowner?

If approved, the owner of a \$200,000 home would pay approximately \$15 more per month in property taxes. A [tax calculator](#) is available on the District website to determine the impact based upon the value of your property.

What percentage of property taxes pays for schools?

School districts are often the single largest portion of an individual's tax bill. Many city services are funded through sales taxes, not property taxes. Approximately 68% of an individual homeowner's tax bill is allocated to supporting schools. The remaining portion of the taxes collected are used for fire, ambulance and park services.

What will happen if the tax levy increase is not approved?

If the community fails to support the tax increase, it will be difficult for the District to add new programs and additional staffing. New technology for students will not be replaced on schedule, and supports for struggling learners will not be restored to previous levels. Additional program reductions may be necessary, but the Board and District administration will always work to minimize the impact on classroom instruction as much as possible.

What steps has FHSD taken to reduce expenses?

The Board of Education and District administration have worked diligently to make significant reductions to programs and services over the past several years to balance the budget and maintain sufficient operating reserves to avoid borrowing funds to meet cash flow needs.

When was FHSD's last tax increase?

The last tax increase approved by District voters was 14 years ago, in 2004.

Have FHSD teachers and staff received raises in recent years?

The salaries of District employees are frozen again for the 2017-18 school year, the second year salaries have been frozen. Employees hired in 2016 have yet to receive a pay raise. The approval of Proposition Learn would allow the District to fairly and adequately compensate teachers and support staff. Teacher quality has consistently been identified as the most important school-based factor in student achievement. FHSD has made a commitment to our students and our community to attract and retain the best teachers and support staff possible.

How does student achievement in FHSD compare to the rest of St. Charles County?

Over multiple years and using a variety of benchmarks, FHSD has had the highest student achievement in St. Charles County and one of the highest in the St. Louis metro area and the state.

How important is high student achievement to our community?

In 2015, a random phone survey of hundreds of District patrons indicated that 99% felt that it was "very important" or "somewhat important" that Francis Howell remain the highest achieving school district in the County.

How will our community benefit from passing this tax levy?

The school district in each community is an important part of maintaining high property values, by providing well prepared future employees and keeping the community attractive to outside businesses. High quality schools is one of the key components people look for when moving into a new community.

What happened to the casino and lottery tax revenue that was supposed to help the schools?

The District does receive funds from gaming and the lottery. However, the amount of General Revenue from the state has decreased, so school districts have not received any significant additional new revenue as a result of casinos or the lottery.

Will senior citizens get a tax break?

The Missouri Property Tax Credit Claim program provides credit to certain senior citizens as well as 100% of disabled individuals for a portion of their tax bill. More information can be found at <http://dor.mo.gov/personal/ptc/>.

What does the tax levy mean to homeowners without children in FHSD schools?

The tax levy increase will apply to all homeowners within the Francis Howell School District boundaries, including those without school-aged children. Studies have confirmed the link between strong school districts and strong communities. A strong public school system protects property values, provides a qualified workforce, lowers crime rates, creates a better sense of community, and enhances public services with less demand for social programs.

What if my question was not addressed in the FAQ?

District residents can email communications@fhdschools.org to submit any additional questions. More information about Proposition Learn can also be found on the [District website](#).



This informational material was paid for by the Francis Howell School District | Dr. Mary Hendricks-Harris, Superintendent | 4545 Central School Road, St. Charles, MO 63304