

Frequently Asked Questions

Fox Lake SD 114's **Zero Tax Rate**

Change March 17, 2020 Ballot Proposal



DISTRICT NEEDS

Facility Improvement Priorities: Building Security, Safety, and Maintenance Issues

Q: What issues will be addressed through this funding?

A: Based on recommendations from a recently completed facilities study, the following top priorities will be addressed:

- Safety and security upgrades at Lotus and Stanton including secured entrances
- New roofs at Lotus and Stanton
- Replace electrical service at Stanton
- Install fire sprinkler system at Stanton
- Install safe exits for all Stanton students, including those who may be wheelchair-bound
- Install up to date, energy efficient mechanical controls
- Replace necessary components of Lotus air conditioning system
- Install air conditioning at Stanton

APPROXIMATE FUNDING LEVEL TO ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS WITHIN 5 YEARS=\$9 MILLION

Staffing Priorities: Locally Competitive Salaries and Benefits to Attract and Retain Teachers

Q: What were the starting new teacher salaries for Fox Lake and other local school districts for the 2019-2020 school year?

A:	Fox Lake 114 Elementary District 114	\$32,431
	Gavin Elementary District 37	\$35,041
	Lake Villa Elementary District 41	\$35,041
	Emmons Elementary District 33	\$36,720
	Antioch Elementary District 34	\$39,098
	Big Hollow Elementary District 38	\$41,449

Q: How do Fox Lake teacher salaries compare to other school districts in Lake County?

A: Fox Lake School District had the lowest starting teacher salary of all 96 school districts in Lake County in the 2019-2020 school year.

Q: What are Illinois' minimum salary expectations for beginning teachers?

A: Illinois state law now requires the minimum beginning teacher salary for all school districts be at least \$40,000 by the 2023-2024 school year.

Q: How many teachers left Fox Lake after the 2018-2019 school year?

A: Teachers leaving our district for better compensation in other close-by districts is a significant challenge. Retaining excellent teachers is a characteristic of all strong school districts--that requires competitive salaries and benefits. Thirteen (13) teachers, or **24% of the certified staff**, resigned at the end of the 2018-2019 school year.

Purchase Updated and Rigorous Instructional Materials

Q: How will funding be used to improve student learning?

A: In all other content areas but mathematics, student materials are out of date or not consistently used in all classrooms. With this funding, the District will, over time, purchase research-based, updated materials in all content areas so students have access to up-to-date learning experiences. While our teachers make do the best they can with old materials, it is essential for our district to have up-to-date curricular material so District 114 students are as well prepared for high school as are students from other area grade school districts.

IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITY

Q: How will this referendum impact our families and community?

A: If successful, this referendum will allow District 114 to:

- Improve and protect taxpayers' investment in their homes.
- Maintain our school facilities for our children and community.
- Provide students with opportunities equal to neighboring schools
- Recruit and retain high quality, experienced teachers
- Maintain best practices in keeping our schools safe and secure

COST INFORMATION

Q: **How is a ZERO TAX RATE CHANGE going to create funds to address the needs?**

A: The bonds taken out to build Lotus Elementary are soon to be paid in full. The portion of our total rate that goes for debt retirement will be eliminated. That gives our District the opportunity to repurpose, or reuse, that portion of our overall tax rate to pay for improvements to our buildings, provide more competitive salaries and benefits for our teachers, and provide up-to-date instruction and curriculum material for our students — **ALL WITH ZERO CHANGE IN THE OVERALL TAX RATE**. This will also create long term financial stability for the District's operating funds.

Q: What exactly will voters see on the March 17, 2020 ballot?

A: The ballot language is:

FOX LAKE GRADE SCHOOL DISTRICT #114
Lake County, Illinois
Proposition To Increase The Limiting Rate

Shall the limiting rate under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law for Fox Lake Grade School District Number 114, Lake County, Illinois, be increased by an additional amount equal to 0.59% above the limiting rate for school purposes for levy year 2018 and be equal to 3.638978% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property therein for levy year 2020?

- (1) The approximate amount of taxes extendable at the most recently extended limiting rate is \$6,761,657, and the approximate amount of taxes extendable if the proposition is approved is \$8,070,088.
- (2) For the 2020 levy year the approximate amount of the additional tax extendable against property containing a single family residence and having a fair market value at the time of the referendum of \$100,000 is estimated to be \$197.
- (3) If the proposition is approved, the aggregate extension for 2020 will be determined by the limiting rate set forth in the proposition, rather than the otherwise applicable limiting rate calculated under the provisions of the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (commonly known as the Property Tax Cap Law).

Q: What does this ballot language mean?

A: The ballot language is confusing! Put simply, by paying off our debt on Lotus, our rate in the Debt Fund drops by 59 cents/\$100 of assessed home value. The ballot asks taxpayers to repurpose this drop to increase the rate in our operating funds by 59 cents/\$100 of assessed home value. This creates a **ZERO TAX RATE CHANGE**, and generates approximately \$1.3 million annually to address the identified needs.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact:

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