



ST. MICHAEL - ALBERTVILLE SCHOOLS

EXCELLENCE IS OUR TRADITION

Dear Parents,

We hope you are well and your children enjoyed the first six weeks of the school year.

We want to take a moment to provide you with some information regarding our upcoming operating levy. This is a very important topic and one that will impact each and every child in our district, preschool through age 21.

We face pressing financial challenges due to forces largely out of our control. Low state funding and stabilizing enrollment, exacerbated by the pandemic (not caused by the pandemic), have wreaked havoc on our budget. The last couple of years we did everything we could to “nickel and dime” our budget to not negatively impact our students. We put our students first. But, now we are at a tipping point. We cut \$7.3 million (78 staff from all job classifications) and there’s not much left to cut.

OPERATING LEVY SPECIFICS

Over the last few months, we listened to stakeholders and significantly adjusted our ask of taxpayers. However, our needs remain and we are asking for considerably less than requested in November 2021.

To address our challenges, the STMA School Board has placed two operating levy questions on the ballot. Below are the details on each question. Please review them carefully.

Two levy questions give taxpayers a choice in how our schools are funded and what they can afford.

Question 1: \$756 per student, which would generate approximately \$5.2 million per year.

- Maintains current programming**
- Restores the walk zone**



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- Adds 8 staff to decrease class sizes**

Question 2:* An additional \$102 per student for a total of \$858, which would generate approximately \$5.9 million per year.

- Includes all items in Question 1
- Restores high potential programming**
- Reduces middle and high school activity fees**
- Adds 7 staff to decrease class sizes (15 total FTE)**

*Q2 is contingent on Q1 passing; taxpayers must vote for both questions for Q2 to pass.

**These are options and are pursuant to school board approval.

4 years: We are asking taxpayers to commit to a relatively short period of time so we can reassess student needs in the future when the economy is more stable. This will also place future potential ballot questions on a general election year.

No Inflationary Factor: Since inflation is at very high levels, it will not be included.

If the levy fails, we will continue with budget cuts that will negatively impact students and damage the reputation of the district. We currently project a deficit of \$2.7 million in 2023-2024. With budget reductions of \$7.3 million and cutting 78 staff over the last three budget cycles, there is not much else left to cut other than more staff and student opportunities. Potential budget reductions* may include:

- Increase class sizes
- Reduce 30-35 full-time staff positions
- Eliminate middle school athletics and activities
- Reduce high school athletics and activities



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*These are potential cuts. Actual cuts will be determined by the school board at the time of budgeting in the spring. No formal determinations have been made by the STMA School Board at this time.

The tax impact on a \$350,000 home, the average STMA home value, is \$46 per month for question one and an additional \$8 for question two. If both questions pass, the tax impact is \$54 per month. A [tax impact calculator](#) can be found on the [levy webpage](#). Be sure to use your estimated market value rather than your appraised value.

Question	Monthly Tax Impact*
1	\$46
2	\$8
Total per Month	\$54

*On an average home value of \$350,000

The state would contribute approximately \$1 million per year in state equalization revenue aid.

BE INFORMED: GET THE FACTS

There is an abundance of information available for taxpayers to review and many ways to be informed.

- Review the [parent email](#) sent to all families on September 10, 2022
- Review the [parent email](#) sent to all families on September 23, 2022
- Review this [fact sheet](#)
- Review this [presentation](#)
- Attend a Public Informational Meeting





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- Tuesday, September 20 7:00 p.m. MS West Auditorium
- Friday, October 7 1:00 p.m. MS West Auditorium *Coffee & Conversation*
- Wednesday, October 12 7:00 a.m. MS West Auditorium
- Thursday, October 13 7:00 p.m. HS PAC
- Monday, October 17 9:00 a.m. MS West Auditorium *Coffee & Conversation*
- View the [ballot questions](#)
- Visit the [STMA Operating Levy Webpage](#)
 - [Tax Calculator](#) (be sure to use the estimated market value, not appraised value)
 - [FAQ](#)
 - [Myths and Facts](#)
- Email STMAlevy@mystma.org with questions or concerns

VOTE!

Early Voting: In Minnesota, you don't have to wait until election day to cast your ballot. You can vote early for any reason.

- **Vote Early by Mail:** Early voting applications are available online by clicking [here](#). In addition, paper applications can be found in the front office at any school in the district, St. Michael and Albertville city halls, and the Wright County Government Center.
- **Vote Early In-Person:** STMA residents can vote in person by identifying their [early voting polling place](#).

Election Day: Voters can cast their ballots on election day, November 8, at their respective polling places. Hours are 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. You can identify your polling location [here](#).



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In closing, please remember to vote. Thank you for your continued support of STMA students and staff. We are grateful for the trust and partnership we have with our families and community.

Respectfully,

Dr. Ann-Marie Foucault
STMA Superintendent