



**NSPRA GOLD MEDALLION SUBMISSION:
BOND/FINANCE CAMPAIGN**

EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOLS

STABILITY & EXCELLENCE FOR OUR FUTURE

EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOLS

8100 SCHOOL ROAD, EDEN PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA 55344

9,000+ STUDENTS PRE-K - 21

COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONALS AT TIME OF PROJECT: 2-3

**GRACE BECKER, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS,
AND DIRK TEDMON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS**

WITH BRANDON MITCHELL, MULTIMEDIA STORYTELLER

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ONE MISSION. ONE TEAM. ONE EAGLE NATION.

Eden Prairie is a southwestern suburb of Minneapolis, Minnesota with a population of around 65,000. Eden Prairie Schools serves nearly 9,000 students in five neighborhood pre-K-5 elementary schools, a Spanish immersion elementary school, a middle school, a high school, a fully-online K-12 school, an early childhood campus, and a transition program for adults with disabilities ages 18 to 21. The mission of Eden Prairie Schools is to **inspire each student to learn continuously so they are empowered to reach personal fulfillment and contribute purposefully to our ever-changing world.**

As the district anticipated the expiration of capital project and operating levies in 2024 and 2025, uncertain economic outlooks and inadequate school funding in Minnesota prompted the School Board and district leaders to ask voters to increase their commitment to Eden Prairie Schools in the November 2022 election. Through a coordinated campaign, the district asked taxpayers to consider renewing the capital project levy and revoking and replacing the operating levy, which would guarantee five years of financial stability at a tax increase of under \$8 per month for the average Eden Prairie home.

Many internal and external factors influenced the course of the campaign, including changing Communications Department leadership and steeply rising inflation. Nevertheless, a commitment to ongoing evaluation and innovation led the project to overwhelming success, promising ongoing stability and excellence in Eden Prairie Schools for years to come.

Inspiring
each student
EVERY DAY



RESEARCH

Before deciding to propose a two-question referendum in November of 2022, the Eden Prairie School Board discussed the possibility of conducting a referendum election as part of its ongoing stewardship of district finances. The district's **capital project levy was set to expire in 2024**, and its **operating levy in 2025**. In 2021, the Board launched an in-depth process to engage the community and explore options, including by holding School Board Listening Sessions with a diverse group of stakeholders and conducting a third-party survey to determine the tax climate.

A 2021 random-sample survey asked residents to agree or disagree with the statement: "Our community receives a good value from its investment in local public schools." 93% of all residents and 95% of parents surveyed agreed. **In response to a second question, "The Eden Prairie Public Schools are a good investment, and I would support a property tax increase to protect that investment," 70% of all residents and 83% of parents expressed agreement.** 78% of all residents and 83% of all current families rated the fiscal management of Eden Prairie Schools positively, levels of perceived financial credibility that were above the Greater Metropolitan Area suburban norm.

Eden Prairie Schools also stood apart in another important way: Its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic was not a genuine issue for most caregivers or even most residents, who ranked EP much higher than stakeholders in other districts in terms of "education quality," "in-person learning," "learning in EP Online," and "hybrid learning." If the Board decided to move forward with a referendum, **the district would not need to overcome the lack of trust** experienced by many of its neighbors.

Though a large plurality of all residents saw their total property and school taxes as "high" compared to neighboring areas and school districts, the survey found the district's tax climate to be borderline benign.

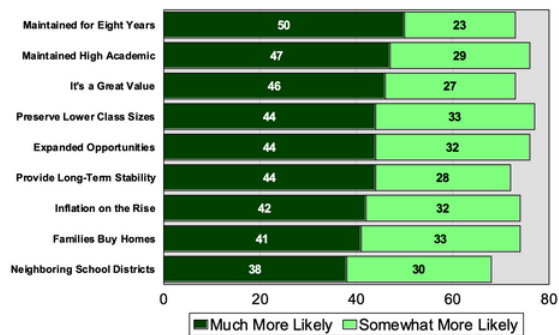


The acting Eden Prairie School Board: (starting left) Superintendent Dr. Josh Swanson, Aaron Casper, Debjyoti "DD" Dwivedy, Francesca Pagan-Umar, Adam Seidel, Kim Ross, Charles "C.J." Strehl and Steve Bartz.

A second third-party survey in March 2022 **again indicated broad community support for referendum proposals**. Importantly, this survey also indicated a 17% decrease from 2021 in the community's belief that the district was adequately funded. Of those who would be willing to pay more in order to support an operating levy increase, most favored an increase at or under \$6.00/month, with a close number comfortable with \$9.00/month or less.

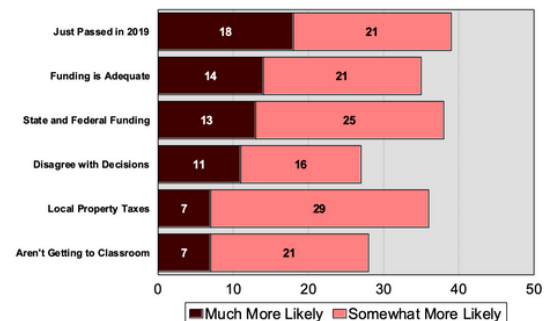
Arguments in Favor

2022 Eden Prairie Public Schools



Arguments in Opposition

2022 Eden Prairie Public Schools



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN TARGET AUDIENCES:

- PRIMARY: FAMILIES LIVING IN EDEN PRAIRIE, STAFF LIVING IN EDEN PRAIRIE, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, EDEN PRAIRIE HOMEOWNERS, ALL EDEN PRAIRIE RESIDENTS
- SECONDARY: ALL DISTRICT FAMILIES, ALL DISTRICT STAFF, EP STUDENTS 18+, LOCAL MEDIA, COMMUNITY PARTNERS/ORGANIZATIONS



PLANNING

With this knowledge, in July 2022 the Board chose to place a **two-question referendum** on the November ballot:

1. Revoke the current operating levy of \$1,815.27 per student and replace it with a levy of \$2,075.27 per student
2. Renew the previously-approved capital project levy

An increased operating levy would result in a **tax impact of under \$8 per month** for the average Eden Prairie home valued at \$430,000. The capital project levy renewal would have no additional tax impact.

Despite high academic outcomes and broad community support of Eden Prairie Schools, **past district referendums had had mixed outcomes.**

- 2019: Passage of a \$39.9 million bond; 70% yes
- 2014: Passage of operating levy increases, 64% & 56%
- 2013: Passage of capital project levy renewal, 55% yes; Failure of operating levy increase, 44% yes
- 2004: Passage of bond and capital project levy, 53% yes; Passage of increase to operating levy, 54% yes
- 2002: Passage of operating levy increase, 58% yes
- 2001: Failure of two bonds (36% and 44% yes), failure of capital project levy and increase (39% and 46% yes)

The Marketing & Communications Department developed a **referendum communications plan in May 2022**—including referendum history, a list of tactics/deadlines, and voter projections—and evolved the plan throughout the campaign. Estimated turnout based on previous participation rates was 65%, resulting in 27,732 voters and a required approval of about 14,000 voters for each question to pass. With estimated positive parent votes (5 yes:1 no) and resident votes (1 yes:4 no), the team **expected the referendum to pass** with around 59% of the vote on each question. To support passage, the district provided a healthy, flexible budget for the campaign.

The communications plan also utilized potential key messages tested in the March survey. Residents found several points to be particularly persuasive:

- The district promised to use 2014 referendum funds to avoid reductions to programs and services for five years, and has done so for eight
- Eden Prairie Schools is worth supporting because it has maintained high academic achievement for all students, even through the pandemic
- Eden Prairie Schools is a great value: School taxes are low compared to neighbors, and graduates can be prepared for every opportunity (including highly selective colleges and universities) without the expense of private school

Messages about low elementary school class sizes, expanded opportunities like career-focused courses, and long-term financial stability in the face of inflation and low state funding were also impactful.

Respondents also rated the persuasiveness of potential arguments against the referendum. Ranked most likely to reduce support were:

- The district just passed a referendum in 2019, it should not need additional money right now
- Funding for local schools is adequate, it just needs to be spent better
- The State of Minnesota and the Federal Government have provided adequate funding increases for education

Each of the highly rated key messages was utilized extensively in the communications campaign. Reactions to opposition arguments also **informed communications strategies** such as stressing the difference between a bond and a levy, repeatedly showing a visual of the gap between state funding and its equivalent if adjusted for inflation, and sharing the budget percentage allocated to administrative salaries.

IN THIS ELECTION, THE DISTRICT FACED THE ADDED CHALLENGE OF APPROACHING THE COMMUNITY JUST THREE YEARS AFTER PASSAGE OF A \$39.9 MILLION BOND, AS WELL AS THE DIFFICULTY OF CUTTING THROUGH THE CLUTTER OF A CONTENTIOUS GOVERNOR'S RACE.



PLANNING

Turnover in the Marketing & Communications Department significantly impacted planning for this campaign. The Senior Director of Marketing and Communications left the district in June, closely preceded by the district's communications specialist. Grace Becker, then Marketing and Communications Coordinator, carried the campaign forward until Executive Director of Marketing & Communications Dirk Tedmon joined the district in August, bringing a wealth of referendum expertise. As such, **the campaign strategically evolved as it proceeded**, shaped both by leadership perspectives and external pressures, such as rising inflation.

Campaign Goal: Pass both referendum questions

Campaign Objectives:

- Earn at least 59% of the vote on each referendum question
- Maintain current community satisfaction rates in the district
- Ensure exceptional turnout (greater than 50%) among eligible staff and families

Campaign Strategies:

- Empower schools and departments to become referendum ambassadors with their key stakeholders
- Maximize parent and resident staff voter participation by emphasizing early and absentee voting
- Ensure consistency of messages, including translation, via use of a referendum toolkit for district leaders
- Ensure all employees understand the referendum proposal and can answer commonly asked questions or direct them appropriately
- Ensure cultural and linguistic access by reviewing all communication with cultural liaisons prior to launch
- Provide timely responses to all questions
- Maintain and increase community pride in Eden Prairie Schools, particularly with use of data and positive storytelling
- Prioritize the Superintendent's personal outreach to established city groups
- Reinforce effective management of 2014 referendum funds
- Reiterate pandemic leadership thanks to technology levy
- Comply with all legal requirements on holding and communicating about a school district referendum
- Phase 2: Create a general "Inspired to Vote" campaign to run alongside referendum-specific information; use annually to encourage voting regardless of district need

In June, the Communications team developed the referendum's unique visual identity (P. 9) and selected key messages.

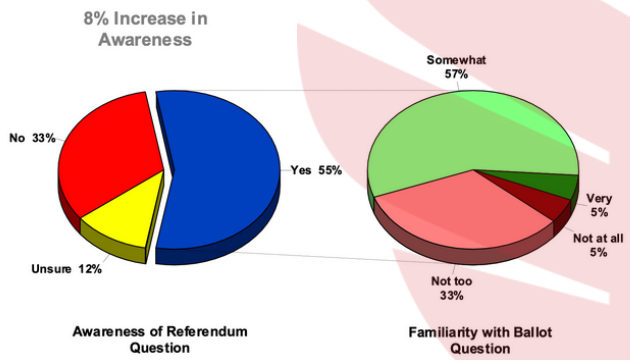
Continuous evaluation and planning were key to the success of this campaign. While early publications such as the Inspiring News Express postcard (P. 13) and Referendum Special Edition (P. 14) served mainly to inform and avoided "walking the line" of persuasion, later print materials reduced text, utilized the associative effects of the color green for financials, placed important information "above the fold," and made calls to action more explicit. **Voting information was always visible**, even when a piece was folded in half in the mailbox.

The decision to use more direct messaging ("Vote on two ballot questions that support student learning," "We are asking you to consider investing in our schools to continue educational excellence") was intentional, and largely due to a **loosely organized external Vote Yes group**. The Communications Department intentionally used messaging with an emotional appeal given the minimal presence of external referendum advocates.

After three months of the information campaign, rising concerns about steep inflation and minimal feedback (positive or negative) from the community led the district to **conduct additional research**. An October brushfire survey revealed only an 8% increase in awareness of the referendum questions since July. While overall support had remained stable, **strong support for the operating levy increase dropped from 21 to 15%**.

November Ballot I

2022 Eden Prairie SD Brushfire Study





IMPLEMENTATION

PHASE 1 TACTICS:

JULY-SEPTEMBER

DIGITAL

- Key messages, digital asset and reminder to vote each week in family and staff newsletters
- Development and launch of informational videos (P. 10)
- Referendum phone line and email launched and integrated with Let's Talk! 2-way communication tool
- Launch of referendum website, epvote.org (P. 12)
- Creation of [Staff Do's and Don'ts](#) document
- Referendum toolkit sent to leaders - includes fact sheet, publications, do's and don'ts, presentations, videos
- Virtual Community Town Hall: Sept. 28
- All staff asked to use referendum signature line with reminder to vote and link to www.epvote.org
- Development of social media calendar
- Four referendum-specific emails to all families and staff

IN PERSON/OUT OF HOME

- Superintendent informational presentation to people potentially interested in leading Vote Yes group
- Superintendent presentation to Administrative Leadership Team (principals, Cabinet, directors) to share information and expectations
- Superintendent presentation at All Staff Kickoff
- Superintendent presentations at each school site/dept
- Superintendent presentations to 18 community groups (Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, PTOs, Lion's Club, Senior Center, state and local legislators, etc.)
- Meetings with Vote Yes group to share information
- Site teams share information at Back to School Nights
- "Inspired to Vote" banners at every school (P. 22)

PRINT

- Inspiring News Express postcard to all residents (P. 13)
- Inspiring News Referendum Special Edition mailer sent to all residents (P. 14)
- One-pager for use in backpacks, at conferences, as flyer, etc. (P. 15-17)
- Referendum info in back-to-school messaging/mailers
- Translated one-pager (Spanish, Somali) sent to schools and distributed at mosques, restaurants and other gathering places by cultural liaisons

INTERNAL

- Principals asked to create Site Teams of 6-10 key influencers (staff and parents)
- Site Teams attend 1-hour training with Communications Department and Superintendent Swanson
- Site Teams create [site-specific communication plans](#)
- Launch of July third-party survey for updated information
- Meetings with Somali and Spanish cultural liaisons to determine how to best inform their communities
- Coordination with Community Education to ensure referendum information is shared with students
- Conservative School Board members connect with influential figures and groups to encourage support
- Messaging shared weekly with principals for inclusion in school newsletters
- "Inspired to Vote" annual campaign launched to run alongside referendum information

MID-CAMPAIGN REVIEW AND ADJUSTMENT:

The October brushfire research led to a [detailed evaluation of current efforts and additional planning](#) for Phase 2 of the campaign. Driven by this data, the Communications team decided to:

1. Raise awareness by sending an additional postcard to all residents and placing voting reminders in high-visibility areas, such as the Eden Prairie Local News website and the sides of all school buses in the district's fleet
2. Incorporate loss-frame messaging to promote a sense of urgency and individual responsibility
3. Create a video asset specifically focused on the benefit of strong schools for the whole community, including taxpayers without students in school.

"THE OPERATING AND CAPITAL PROJECT LEVIES ARE INTEGRAL TO OUR WORK TO INSPIRE EACH STUDENT, AND IF THEY ARE NOT APPROVED, REDUCTIONS TO PROGRAMS AND STAFFING WILL BE REQUIRED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN EIGHT YEARS."

-Eden Prairie Schools Staff and Parent Post newsletters, October 19, 2022

VOTE EARLY STARTING
SEPT. 23

Q1
Academic Excellence
for Each Student
Every Day

REVOKE AND REPLACE
OPERATING LEVY

Q2
Crucial
Technology for
Inspired Leaders

RENEW CAPITAL
PROJECT LEVY

Stability & Excellence 
for our future
EPVOTE.ORG



IMPLEMENTATION

PHASE 2 TACTICS: OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

DIGITAL

- Key messages, digital asset and reminder to vote each week in family and staff newsletters
- Creation & promotion of "Strong Schools = High Home Values" video (P. 10)
- "Strong Schools = High Home Values" video boosted on Facebook
- Digital ads placed on Eden Prairie Local News website
- Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce sends informational email to its subscriber list
- Four referendum-specific emails to all families and staff
- Third Community Town Hall: Oct. 26, via Zoom
- Voting reminders for seniors on Eagle News Network (high school morning announcements)
- Reminder phone call and text from Superintendent night before election (translated)
- Reminder text from principals day of election (translated)
- "Thank you, Eden Prairie!" video (P. 11) shared on social media and website

PRINT

- Oct. 4 Town Hall [recapped in Eden Prairie Local News](#); drove spike in referendum webpage views
- Required mailing to all property owners and residents (P. 19-20)
- Final postcard to all residents (P. 21)
- Site-specific handouts created at request of site teams
- President of Eden Prairie Education Association, Eden Lake Elementary principal Tim Beekmann, School Board Director Aaron Casper [interviewed in Eden Prairie Local News](#)
- Principals send one-pager home in backpacks; hand out in pickup/carpool lane
- Each teacher has a stack of one-pagers in each language to give to families at conferences



Eden Lake Elementary School principal Tim Beekmann (left) with attendees at the October 4, 2022 Community Town Hall.

IN PERSON/OUT-OF-HOME

- Community Town Hall: Oct. 4, Central Middle School (childcare, dinner and translation support provided)
- Continued superintendent presentations to 18 community groups (Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, PTOs, Lion's Club, Senior Center, state and local legislators, etc.)
- Administrative Leadership Team meeting, world café-style: Big ideas to cut through the clutter
- "Inspired to vote" magnets on every bus (P. 22)
- Brief overview video played at games in Aerie Stadium, including heavily-attended football games
- Calls made to churches to ask for voting reminders to be placed in bulletins or newsletters
- Somali cultural liaison shares information at local mosque
- Some school site teams door knock with handouts
- Principals address referendum and encourage families to vote at first kindergarten marketing events of the year
- Elementary school uses "Inspired to Vote" banner for school carnival raffle

INTERNAL

- Ongoing check-ins with school site teams
- Messaging shared weekly with principals for inclusion in school newsletters
- Personalized Learning team members offer election day coverage to principals so staff can leave to vote

EFFECTIVENESS HIGHLIGHTS: JULY 1-NOVEMBER 8

- 4,076 referendum webpage views (3,505 unique views, 2:47 average time on page)
- 8 referendum-specific emails: 65,000 recipients, 67% average open rate, 3% average clicks
- Social post reach across all channels: 462,375
- 6,485 Facebook page visits (51.5% increase); 15% like increase; 189% increase in 1-minute video views, with 4,700 watching at least 15 seconds and nearly 14,000 total video views

VOTE ON
NOV. 8

Q1

**Academic Excellence
for Each Student
Every Day**

REVOKE AND REPLACE
OPERATING LEVY

Q2

**Crucial
Technology for
Inspired Leaders**

RENEW CAPITAL
PROJECT LEVY



EVALUATION

Amid discouraging brushfire results and a worsening economic climate, the Communications team shifted its focus for Phase 2 of the campaign. The goal remained the same — to pass both referendum questions — but earning 59% of the vote became secondary to achieving passage.

Ultimately, however, passage was earned: The **operating levy increase passed with a resounding 63.3%** of the vote. The **technology levy renewal earned 67.7%**, and the district exceeded both its goal of passage and its objective of earning 59% of both votes.

These **passage rates spoke highly of Eden Prairie's support of its schools, and of the campaign.** Several Minnesota school referendums failed in the same election, and others narrowly succeeded: A nearby suburban district's technology levy passed with only 50.2% of the vote. **Earning such high passage rates proved the effectiveness of the "Stability and Excellence" and "Inspired to Vote" campaigns and reinforced residents' trust in Eden Prairie Schools.**

An April 2023 community satisfaction survey is expected to affirm the plan's second objective, and the data analytics team will also return final staff and family turnout percentages around this time.



Students share their thanks in a video published the day after the election.

"THANK YOU FOR MAKING THIS INCREDIBLE EDUCATION POSSIBLE."

-Superintendent Dr. Josh Swanson in video message to community, November 9, 2022



Days after the successful vote, the Communications Department facilitated a **comprehensive debrief** with the Associate Superintendent, Superintendent and Cabinet-level leaders. The team reviewed strategies that had been particularly effective, like empowering school site teams to engage their own communities, investing in communications assets including graphic design and video, and emphasizing the district's kept promises to the community. It also explored **ideas to consider in future referendums**, such as information included on back-to-school supply lists, increased connections with multilingual communities and ways to foster interest in advocacy groups.

Eden Prairie's tradition of support for its schools played a key role in the success of this campaign. Following the district's successful 2014 levy increase and 2019 bond proposal, the Communications team demonstrated how funds were used and **shared gratitude for community support.** That strategy paid off for the next generation of Eagles, who are promised stability and excellence in their schools until 2030. To achieve similar success in the future, the Communications team must continue to share the stories that demonstrate the value of taxpayers' investment to inspire each student every day.



DISTRICT LOGO



EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOLS
Inspiring each student every day

VISUAL IDENTITY

PRIMARY LOGO



SECONDARY FLAG



The secondary flag was used only when the primary logo had already appeared or could not fit in the available space. On slides and videos, it functioned as a reminder to vote on every slide and frame.

The red and black color palette and wing used in the Stability and Excellence logo immediately say "Eden Prairie Schools" to our community. The check mark was intentionally incorporated to subtly suggest that a vote in favor of this question was a vote for ongoing security and achievement in our schools.





APPENDIX

VIDEOS

CLICK TO VIEW

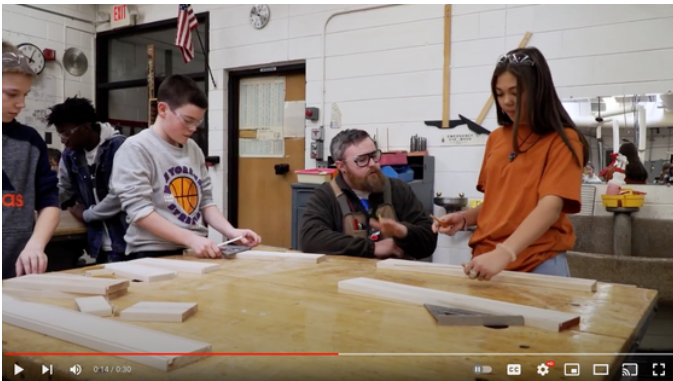
FULL-LENGTH OVERVIEW



BRIEF EXPLANATION



OPERATING LEVY OVERVIEW



CAPITAL PROJECT LEVY OVERVIEW



STRONG SCHOOLS = HIGH HOME VALUES



THANK YOU, EDEN PRAIRIE!





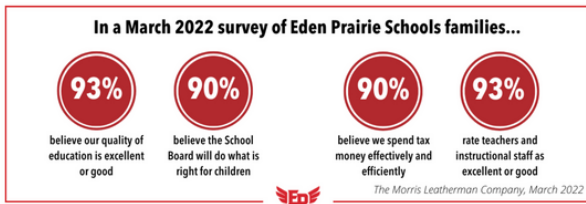
APPENDIX

PRESENTATIONS

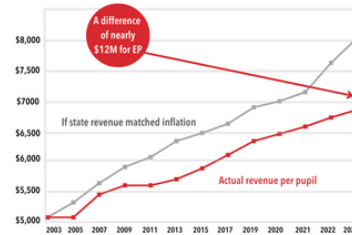
CLICK TO VIEW

SUPERINTENDENT'S EXTERNAL PRESENTATION

Meeting community expectations



A widening gap



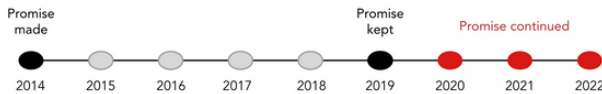
This gap is filled by funds raised through property tax levies.

Plus additional gaps from underfunding of special education and English learner services.

A promise extended

The 2014 operating levy promised to **avoid reductions** to programs and services for at least five years.

2022-23 is year eight.



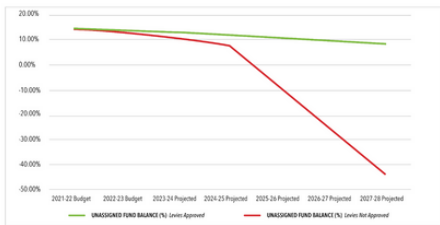
The new operating levy promises at least five more years.

SITE-SPECIFIC PRESENTATIONS ADDED:

What levies mean for Eden Lake

Eden Lake Site Team Members:
Kate Krogen, Julie Osborne, Fosia Ashour, Laura Casey, Karen Farris, & Tim Beekmann

What happens if these levies don't pass?



A reduction in staff and programming will be required for the first time in eight years.

The same template was used for both internal and external presentations, with slight adaptations for each audience. For example, a striking line graph accompanied the threat of program and staffing reductions in the external presentation, and site teams were invited to share the personal relevance of the levies during internal presentations at each school site.



WWW.EPVOTE.ORG



Thanks to you, we can ensure financial stability and academic excellence for the next five years.

These levies will help us to continue to give each student 1:1 attention by keeping class sizes small, maintaining our program offerings year over year, and attracting and retaining the area's very best teachers and staff to inspire our students.



What's on the ballot?

The Eden Prairie School Board has voted to ask residents to consider the following ballot questions:

Question 1

would revoke the current operating levy of \$1,815.27 per student and replace it with a levy of \$2,075.27 per student.

The tax impact of the approval of question #1 would be **less than \$8 per month** in property taxes for a home in Eden Prairie valued at \$430,000.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE OPERATING LEVY](#)

Question 2

would renew the previously-approved capital project levy, which provides technology infrastructure including student devices, classroom technologies, and teacher training across the district.

Approval of the capital project levy **would not result in an increase** in property taxes.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CAPITAL PROJECT LEVY](#)

www.epvote.org was designed with mobile friendliness and accessibility in mind. Important information — including a video overview, voting resources and contact information — were placed "above the fold," and the entire site could be translated. Frequently Asked Questions were searchable by category and integrated into the page to ensure accessibility. Voters could learn more about each levy proposal and the Board's decision process on dedicated pages.





INSPIRING NEWS EXPRESS POSTCARD

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT TO ALL EDEN PRAIRIE RESIDENTS: **AUGUST 2022**



INSPIRING NEWS EXPRESS

Stability & Excellence
for our future
EPVOTE.ORG

EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOLS
Inspiring each student every day

GET READY TO VOTE!

The Eden Prairie School Board has set a two-question referendum on the ballot for the **November 8, 2022 election.**

QUESTION 1

Revoke the current operating levy of \$1,815.27 per student and replace it with a levy of \$2,075.27, which will maintain **low class sizes** and **personalized learning**

QUESTION 2

Renew the previously-approved capital project levy, which provides **technology, security** and **infrastructure** to staff and students across the district

WHAT'S THE TAX IMPACT?

QUESTION 1

Would cost **under \$8 per month** for an Eden Prairie home valued at \$430,000

QUESTION 2

Would not increase property taxes

Learn more at epvote.org

YOUR VOTE COUNTS

By voting on or before November 8, you can have a voice in the future of our schools and the community they support.

Have a question? Want to schedule a presentation? Get in touch!
EPVote@edenpr.org • 952-230-0668

READY TO LEARN MORE?

Visit epvote.org for all the information you need to make an informed decision, including Frequently Asked Questions, a link to request an absentee ballot and a tool to find your polling place.



Early publications avoided any appearance of "walking the line" of advocacy for or against the referendums.



INSPIRING NEWS: REFERENDUM SPECIAL EDITION

FIRST DETAILED MESSAGE TO EDEN PRAIRIE RESIDENTS: **SEPTEMBER 2022**

WHAT'S ON THE BALLOT?

This fall, our community will be asked to invest in our schools to ensure financial stability and academic excellence for years to come. The referendum questions on the **Nov. 8, 2022 ballot** are:



Question 1: Revoke the current operating levy authority of \$1,815.27 per student and replace it with a levy of \$2,075.27 per student, which will maintain low class sizes and personalized learning.



Question 2: Renew the previously-approved capital project levy, which provides technology, security and infrastructure across the district.

WHAT'S THE TAX IMPACT?

If approved, Question 1 would cost under \$8 per month for an Eden Prairie home valued at \$430,000.



Since Question 2 asks to renew a levy already in place, approval will result in no property tax increase.

Learn more at epvote.org

OPERATING LEVY

Academic Excellence for Each Student Every Day

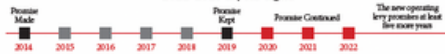
The operating levy question, Question 1, proposes to **revoke** the current levy authority of ~~\$1,815.27~~ per pupil and **replace** it with a levy of **\$2,075.27** per pupil. Voters are asked to "revoke," or end, the current levy and "replace" it with a new levy. This is different than the proposed renewal of the capital project levy, which simply renews the existing levy. The cost of the approval of Question #1 will be under \$8 per month - about \$95 per year - in property taxes for a home in Eden Prairie valued at \$430,000.

per pupil. Voters are asked to "revoke," or end, the current levy and "replace" it with a new levy. This is different than the proposed renewal of the capital project levy, which simply renews the existing levy. The cost of the approval of Question #1 will be under \$8 per month - about \$95 per year - in property taxes for a home in Eden Prairie valued at \$430,000.

Extending a Promise

The 2014 operating levy promised to avoid reductions to programs and services for at least five years.

2022-2023 is year eight.



A new operating levy will:

- Keep our K-5 class sizes among the lowest in the southwest metro, currently made possible by funds from the 2014 operating levy
- Provide financial stability for engaging, high-quality student programming
- Continue and expand college and career-focused academic options
- Continue to attract and keep the best teachers and other staff to inspire our students
- Maintain mental health support for students

If approved, the new operating levy will be in place for 10 years.

What happens if the operating levy is not approved?

If the operating levy is not approved in November 2022, the district will conduct another election prior to when the levy expires at the end of the 2024-25 school year. Budget reductions greater than \$1 million will likely be needed for the 2023-24 school year if the levy is not approved.

CAPITAL PROJECT LEVY



Crucial Technology for Inspired Leaders

The capital project levy question, Question 2, proposes to renew the same capital project levy (otherwise known as a technology levy) that was approved in 2013.

Because this proposal is renewing an existing levy, its approval would result in no increase in property taxes for district residents.

Why is our capital project levy important?

Our capital project levy, otherwise known as the "technology levy," supports the district's technology structure, including 1:1 student devices and technologies used by teachers. Because funds from the 2013 capital project levy were available, Eden Prairie Schools had the devices and infrastructure in place to respond immediately when the COVID-19 pandemic required schools to find new ways to keep students connected to their peers and their teachers. Renewal of this levy allows us to be prepared for future unforeseen changes in student learning.



A renewed capital project levy will continue to:

- Provide our students with a technological advantage in a modern and future-focused learning environment
- Keep our students safe by funding school security technologies
- Support the district's technology infrastructure, including student devices, classroom technologies, and teacher training
- Keep student and staff data safe by funding our work to reduce the likelihood of cyber security attacks
- Maintain and update critical technology infrastructure that is aging and nearing end of life, like fiber infrastructure and servers

If approved, the new capital project levy will be in place for 10 years.

What happens if the capital project levy is not renewed?

If the capital project levy is not renewed, budget reductions and adjustments will be needed to make up for the loss in revenue provided by the levy.

GET READY TO VOTE!

The district wants all residents to learn as much as possible about the two referendum proposals and then cast an informed vote. You can participate in early voting or cast your ballot on **Tuesday, November 8, 2022**.



Vote early starting **September 23, 2022**

There are two early voting options, both available beginning Friday, September 23:

Vote early by mail: Apply to the state of Minnesota to have an absentee ballot mailed to your address. Visit www.sos.state.mn.us to get started. Once you receive the ballot, complete your ballot choice and mail it back to the state following the instructions provided.

Vote early in person: From 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, or from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 5, visit the Eden Prairie City Center (8000 Mitchell Road, Eden Prairie) to receive and complete your ballot.

For more details about early voting, visit www.epvote.org.

Vote on Election Day, Tuesday, November 8

Be sure to confirm your election day polling place before November 8 by clicking on "find my polling place" at www.epvote.org.

Voting Requirements

Individuals must meet the following requirements to vote in this election:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Be a citizen of the United States
- Be a resident of the school district and maintain residence in the district for 20 days immediately preceding the election

You also must be registered to vote. If you are not yet registered to vote, visit www.epvote.org to get started.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Here are a few frequently asked questions about the district's operating levy, capital project levy and overall finances. Looking for more? Find additional detailed FAQs at www.epvote.org.

When are the existing levies set to expire?

Both levies are set to expire after the 2024-25 school year. Proposing these initiatives now, in advance of their expiration, provides the district with opportunities to engage the community and ensure financial stability for at least the next five years.

What is the status of the district's finances?

The district is in a very good financial condition. Thanks to strong financial stewardship, the district has not had to reduce program offerings or increase class sizes for the past eight years, and the new operating levy would continue this trend for at least another five years. The district also regularly takes actions to reduce costs and to operate as efficiently as possible.

What was the process to determine these referendum proposals?

Eden Prairie Schools has been reviewing options and engaging the community ahead of proposing referendum in the November 8, 2022 election. As part of its ongoing stewardship of district finances, the district began to discuss the possibility of conducting a referendum election in 2021 and launched an initiative to engage the community and explore options. The Board ultimately chose to put the two-question referendum during a November election in order to maximize participation in this important decision by the community.

What is the difference between an operating levy, capital project levy, and bond referred Levies for Learning? An operating levy generates revenue to be used for the day-to-day costs of providing and maintaining quality academic programming and low class sizes. A capital project levy (also known as a technology levy) generates revenue to pay for technology equipment, software, online security, infrastructure, staff and facilities. A bond referendum generates revenue to pay for facilities construction and renovation and to fund facilities and grounds projects. It cannot be used to pay for academic programming or technology.

Didn't we just approve a referendum in 2019?

In 2019, our community overwhelmingly approved a bond referendum that provided funds to renovate school and transition sixth grade students to the middle school. The bond also included funding for improvements at all school sites and the transition of 4-year-old preschool students to elementary from a bond referendum cannot be used to fund general operations of the district, so money generated from a bond referendum could only be used for renovations to buildings, not for operational costs.

Would Eden Prairie school property taxes remain among the lowest in the southwest metro area if these measures pass? Passage of Question 1 would keep the district's property taxes lower than the average for the metro area and the lowest in the southwest metro area.

REFERENDUM SPECIAL EDITION

Open this edition to learn more about the two referendum questions on the November 8, 2022 ballot.

These pieces centered on informational awareness and avoided emotional appeal, an approach that shifted as the campaign evolved.



APPENDIX

ONE-PAGER: ENGLISH (FRONT)

DISTRIBUTED TO ALL SCHOOL SITES FOR INCLUSION IN FOLDERS, HANDOUT AT PICKUP/DROPOFF, AND USE AT CONFERENCES

ALSO INCLUDED IN BACK-TO-SCHOOL INSPIRING NEWS, **SEPTEMBER 2022**

Stability & Excellence
for our future
EPVOTE.ORG

EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOLS

This fall, we are asking you to consider investing in our schools to continue educational excellence for years to come!

This one-pager was designed to reduce text, increase visuals, leverage the positive fiscal association of green, and place all important information "above the fold" of a take-home folder.

We have two questions on the November ballot:

- ▶ Revoke & replace our operating levy
- ▶ Renew our capital project levy

VOTE

on Nov. 8 or early starting Sept. 23!
Request an absentee ballot at www.sos.state.mn.us or vote early in person at the EP City Center.

Your investment in our schools helps us to:

- Give each student 1:1 attention by keeping class sizes low
- Attract and keep the area's best teachers and staff to inspire students
- Maintain our class and program offerings year after year

EP

TOTAL TAX IMPACT:
Under \$8 per month
for a \$430,000 EP home



Have a question? Want to schedule a presentation? Get in touch!
EPVote@edenpr.org or 952-230-0668

DID YOU KNOW? **93%** of families rate the quality of an Eden Prairie Schools education as **excellent or good.**

How do our taxes compare?
Our district's school property taxes are lower than many of our neighbors, including Wayzata, Edina and Minnetonka.



Total School Property Taxes, Payable 2021, on a Home with an Estimated Market Value of \$430,000

Source: Pay 2021 School Tax Report



APPENDIX

ONE-PAGER: ENGLISH (BACK)

DISTRIBUTED TO ALL SCHOOL SITES FOR INCLUSION IN FOLDERS, HANDOUT AT PICKUP/DROPOFF, AND USE AT CONFERENCES
ALSO SENT TO ALL RESIDENTS IN BACK-TO-SCHOOL INSPIRING NEWS SPREAD, **SEPTEMBER 2022**



Strong schools create strong communities!

Eden Prairie's excellent school system raises:



Property values



Community employment rates



Neighborhood safety

90%

of Eden Prairie Schools families believe the School Board **spends tax money effectively and efficiently.**

DID YOU KNOW?

The 2014 operating levy promised **5** years of financial stability. By using funds wisely, we have made those dollars last **8** years!
The new operating levy promises another 5 years of stability.

The back of the one-pager reiterates "strong schools create strong communities" messaging, as well as the district's extended fiscal promise. A clear call to action follows.

CAST YOUR BALLOT!

There are two early voting options, both available beginning Friday, September 23:



VOTE EARLY BY MAIL:

Visit www.sos.state.mn.us to have an absentee ballot mailed to your address.



VOTE EARLY IN PERSON:

September 23 - November 4
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Saturday, November 5
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Visit the Eden Prairie City Center to receive and complete your ballot.



VOTE ON ELECTION DAY:

Tuesday, November 8, 2022
Polls are open 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.



Scan the code to confirm your polling place before election day on November 8.



ONE-PAGER: SPANISH AND SOMALI

TRANSLATED LANGUAGE ON ONE SIDE; ENGLISH ON THE OTHER, **USED THROUGHOUT**



Stability & Excellence
for our future
EPVOTE.ORG



Stability & Excellence
for our future
EPVOTE.ORG

EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOLS

Si ay u sii socoto Waxba
codsanaynaa In aad tix



Waxaan qabnaa Laba su'aalood Dooras

- ▶ Kunoqosho iyo badalid qaabka Canshuuraadka loomaamulo
- ▶ Cusboonaysiin mashruuca Canshuu



EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOLS

¡Este otoño, le pedimos que considere invertir en nuestras escuelas para que continúe la excelencia educativa en los próximos años!

Maalgallinta Iskuuladu waa ay nacaawinaysaa



Sii arday kasta 1:1 Ahmiyad ah in Kalaasku yaraado



si ardaydu dhiirigalin u hesho, waa in la qurxiyo, goobta waxbarashada macalimiinta iyo shaqaalahaba.



Joogtee caawinta iskuulka iyo barnaamijyada si sanad ah

Nidaamka waxbarashada qilmaysan ee Edin Prairies Horum-mar ayuu samaynayaa



Qiimaha Hantida



Heerka shaqaalaynta Bulshada



En la boleta electoral de noviembre hay dos preguntas:

- ▶ Revocar y reemplazar nuestro gravamen operativo
- ▶ Renovar nuestro gravamen de proyectos de capital

Su inversión en nuestras escuelas nos ayuda a:



Brindar a cada estudiante atención personalizada manteniendo grupos pequeños
Atraer y mantener a los mejores maestros y personal del área para inspirar a los estudiantes



Mantener nuestras ofertas de clases y programas año tras año



EP
TOTAL DE IMPACTO FISCAL:
Menos de \$8 al mes para un hogar en EP de \$430,000

El excelente sistema escolar de Eden Prairie plantea:



Valores de propiedad



Tasas de empleo comunitario



Seguridad en el vecindario

CODEE

Nov 8 ama Kahor laga bilaabo Sept.23!

Codsi warqad doorasho habsan www.sos.state.mn.us ama codee kahor si qof ahaaneed EP City Center.



Su'aalo? La xiriir Ahmed Noor Telephone Lanbar 952-975-7069 ama

VOTE

el 8 de noviembre o para votar anticipadamente el 23 de septiembre!

Solicite una boleta electoral en ausencia en www.sos.state.mn.us o vote anticipadamente en persona en el Eden Prairie City Center.



¡VOTE!

Hay dos opciones de voto anticipado, ambas disponibles a partir del viernes 23 de septiembre:

VOTE ANTICIPADAMENTE POR CORREO:



Visite www.sos.state.mn.us para que reciba por correo una boleta electoral en ausencia a su dirección.

VOTE ANTICIPADAMENTE EN PERSONA:



23 de septiembre - 4 de noviembre
7:30 a. m. - 4:30 p. m. de lunes a viernes

Sábado, 5 de noviembre
10 a. m. - 3 p. m.

Visite el Eden Prairie City Center para recibir y completar su boleta electoral.



VOTE EL DÍA DE LAS ELECCIONES:

Martes, 8 de noviembre de 2022
¡Las urnas estarán abiertas de 7 a. m. a 8 p. m.!




Escanee el código para confirmar su lugar de votación antes del día de las elecciones el 8 de noviembre.



SITE TEAMS: SCHOOL-SPECIFIC HANDOUTS

SAME CONTENT ON FRONT, PHOTOS AND BACK-SIDE PANEL PERSONALIZED TO SCHOOL



How levies make a difference at our school:

- Among the lowest class sizes in the southwest metro for grades K-2
- Superb teachers & staff
- 1:1 technology for all students, K-5
- Kindergarten paraprofessionals in all four classrooms
- Three full-time staff members dedicated to student success in Title & Intervention programs



Strong schools create strong communities!

Eden Prairie's excellent school system raises:



Property values



Community employment rates



Neighborhood safety

90%

of Eden Prairie Schools families believe the School Board **spends tax money effectively and efficiently.**

DID YOU KNOW?

The 2014 operating levy promised five years of financial stability. By using funds wisely, we have made those dollars last eight years! **The new operating levy promises another five years of stability.**

CAST YOUR BALLOT!

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10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Visit the Eden Prairie City Center to receive and complete your ballot.



VOTE ON ELECTION DAY:

Tuesday, November 8, 2022
Polls are open 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.



Scan the code to confirm your polling place before election day on November 8.



REQUIRED MAILING (FRONT)

SECOND-TO-LAST MAILER TO ALL PROPERTY OWNERS AND RESIDENTS, **OCTOBER 2022**



8100 School Road
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

www.edenpr.org
952-975-7000

PRESORTED
NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
TWIN CITIES, MN
PERMIT #7164

ECRWSS
Residential Customer Local

Questions?

- www.epvote.org
- 952-230-0068
- Español: Heriberto Vargas, 952-975-7069
- Soomaali: Ahmed Noor, 952-975-7068
- EPVote@edenpr.org



This fall, we ask you to consider investing in our schools to continue educational excellence for years to come!



Voters will decide on two questions on the November 8 ballot:

- Question 1:** Revoke & replace our operating levy
- Question 2:** Renew our capital project levy (technology levy)

Vote on two ballot questions that support student learning!
Flip and open to learn more.

Cast your ballot!

VOTE EARLY BY MAIL:

Visit www.sos.state.mn.us to have an absentee ballot mailed to your address.

VOTE EARLY IN PERSON:

September 23 - November 4
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Saturday, November 5
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Visit the Eden Prairie City Center to receive and complete your ballot.

VOTE ON ELECTION DAY:

Tuesday, November 8, 2022
Polls are open 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.



Scan the code to confirm your polling place before election day on November 8.

Prepared and paid for by Eden Prairie Schools. This publication is not circulated on behalf of any candidate or ballot question.

These levies allow Eden Prairie Schools to:

- Give each student 1:1 attention by keeping class sizes small
- Attract and keep the area's best teachers and staff to inspire students
- Maintain our class and program offerings year over year



What's been done to save money?

- Budget efficiencies save between \$500,000 and \$1.5 million each year
- Solar panels installed on roofs reduce energy costs
- Lower costs negotiated with vendors

What happens without additional investment?

- In the 2023-24 school year, unplanned fund balance will be used
- Without action, fund balance will be completely depleted in 2024-25
- Staffing and programming will be reduced for the first time in 8 years

In addition to required tax charts and ballot language, this mailer introduced loss-framed arguments for the first time: A lack of additional investment would result in staff and programming cuts for the first time in eight years. This was an intentional attempt to create urgency and combat passivism.

APPENDIX



REQUIRED MAILING: (BACK)

SECOND-TO-LAST MAILER TO ALL PROPERTY OWNERS AND RESIDENTS, **OCTOBER 2022**

Strong schools create strong communities!

Eden Prairie's excellent school system raises:

- Property values
- Community employment rates
- Neighborhood safety

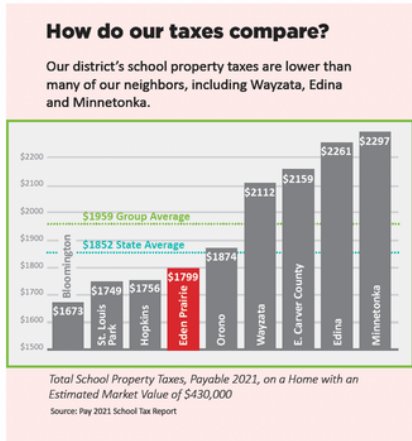
By the numbers

Estimated annual change in taxes

Estimated Market Value	Question #1: Operating Referendum Levy	Question #2: Capital Project Levy
\$100,000	\$22	\$0
\$200,000	\$44	\$0
\$300,000	\$66	\$0
\$400,000	\$88	\$0
\$430,000*	\$95	\$0
\$500,000	\$110	\$0
\$600,000	\$133	\$0
\$700,000	\$154	\$0
\$800,000	\$177	\$0
\$900,000	\$198	\$0
\$1,000,000	\$221	\$0

*Average EP home value

DID YOU KNOW?
90% of Eden Prairie Schools families believe the School Board spends tax money effectively and efficiently.



Sample ballot

Understand what you'll see on the November 8 ballot.

School District Question 1
Revoking Existing Referendum Revenue Authorization; Approving New Authorization

The board of Independent School District No. 272 (Eden Prairie Schools) has proposed to revoke the school district's existing referendum revenue authorization of \$1,815.27 per pupil, and to replace that authorization with a new authorization of \$2,075.27 per pupil. The proposed referendum revenue authorization would increase each year by the rate of inflation and be applicable for ten years beginning with taxes payable in 2023, unless otherwise revoked or reduced as provided by law.

Shall the school district's existing referendum revenue authorization be revoked and the increase in the revenue proposed by the board of Independent School District No. 272 be approved?

Yes No

BY VOTING "YES" ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE.

THIS SUPPORTS:

- low class sizes
- excellent academic programming
- staff to inspire students

School District Question 2
Renewal of Expiring Capital Project Levy Authorization

The board of Independent School District No. 272 (Eden Prairie Schools) has proposed to renew the school district's existing capital project levy authorization of 6.5285470% times the net tax capacity of the school district, which is scheduled to expire after taxes payable in 2024. The money raised by the capital project levy authorization will be used to cover costs related to school district technology, including the acquisition, installation, replacement, support and maintenance of software, software licenses, computers, improved technology equipment, and the acquisition of buses. The proposed capital project levy authorization will raise approximately \$9,357,728 for taxes payable in 2025, the first year it is to be levied, and would be authorized for ten years. The estimated total cost of the projects to be funded over that time period is approximately \$93,577,280. The projects to be funded have received a positive Review and Comment from the Commissioner of Education.

Shall the renewal of the capital project levy authorization proposed by the board of Independent School District No. 272 be approved?

Yes No

BY VOTING "YES" ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING TO RENEW AN EXISTING CAPITAL PROJECTS REFERENDUM THAT IS SCHEDULED TO EXPIRE.

THIS FUNDS:

- student devices
- school security
- classroom technologies

IN TOTAL, THE TAX IMPACT OF THESE TWO QUESTIONS WOULD BE: **UNDER \$8 PER MONTH** for a \$430,000 EP home

& IF APPROVED, BOTH LEVIES WILL BE IN PLACE FOR 10 YEARS.

While some districts choose to send their required tax and ballot information very simply, Eden Prairie chose to utilize the mailer as a marketing piece to emphasize steps the district already took to save money, the impact of strong schools on the community, and how school property taxes compared to neighboring districts.



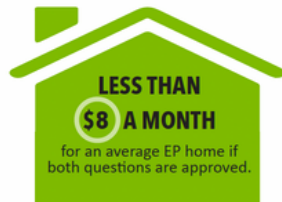
APPENDIX

FINAL POSTCARD

FINAL MAILER TO COMMUNITY, LATE OCTOBER 2022

Vote on two ballot questions that support student learning!


- ▶ **Question 1: Operating Levy**
low class sizes | staff to inspire students | excellent academic programming
- ▶ **Question 2: Capital Project Levy (Technology Levy)**
student devices | school security | classroom technologies




What happens if these levies expire?

Without continued investment, Eden Prairie Schools will face **extreme challenges and difficult decisions.**


Over the next three years, drastic cost-saving measures with an impact on a student's experience may include:



Class size increases



Staffing reductions



Program cuts



Without additional action, the district's savings account could be completely empty in the 2024-25 school year.



CAST YOUR VOTE!

EARLY BY MAIL
Visit www.sos.state.mn.us for an absentee ballot.

EARLY IN PERSON
Now - Nov. 4, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday
Saturday, Nov. 5, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Monday, Nov. 7, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Eden Prairie City Center

ON ELECTION DAY
Tuesday, Nov. 8
Polls open 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Find your polling location at www.pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us



Questions?
www.epvote.org
 952-230-0668
 Español: 952-975-7069
 Soomaali: 952-975-7068
EPVote@edenpr.org



EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOLS
Inspiring each student every day™

8100 School Road
 Eden Prairie, MN 55344

www.edenpr.org
 952-975-7000

This final postcard was crafted in response to the brushfire survey, which indicated a reduced amount of strong support for the referendum. It intentionally emphasized negative effects of a failed referendum in order to increase support and drive voters to the polls.



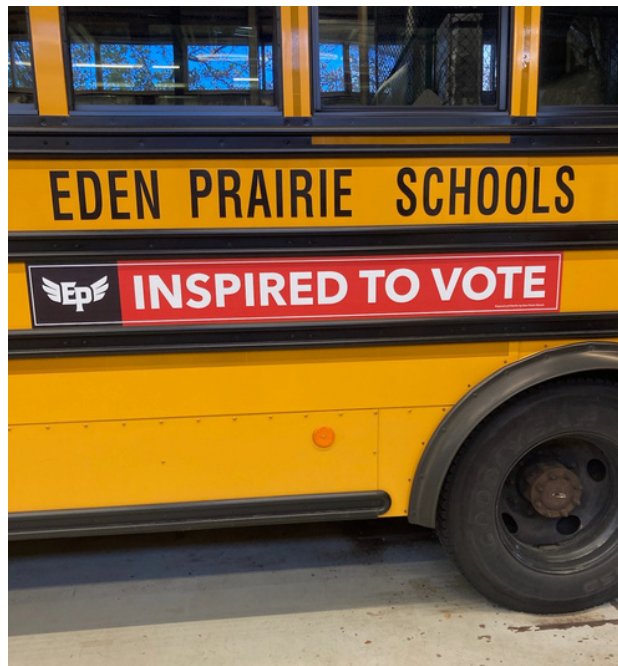


OUT-OF-HOME ADVERTISING

"INSPIRED TO VOTE" BANNERS AT EVERY SCHOOL SITE



"INSPIRED TO VOTE" MAGNETS ON EVERY BUS IN THE EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOLS FLEET



Banners were placed along high-traffic roads in front of each school and will be reused in future elections. One school used a second banner at a school carnival, encouraging caregivers to sign if they planned to participate in the election and giving a small prize to a randomly-selected signer.





SOCIAL MEDIA

ASSORTMENT OF 15+ GRAPHICS USED THROUGHOUT CAMPAIGN, IN TANDEM WITH VIDEO ASSETS AND KEY MESSAGES

EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOLS

VOTE ON OR BEFORE NOV. 8

Operating Levy
Low class sizes. Excellent programs.

Capital Project Levy
Modern technology. Secure schools.

Stability & Excellence
for our future
EPVOTE.ORG

AVOIDING PROGRAM REDUCTIONS

MAINTAINING SMALL CLASS SIZES

EXTENDING FINANCIAL PROMISES

VOTE ON OR BEFORE NOV. 8

Strong schools create strong communities

Stability & Excellence
for our future
EPVOTE.ORG

Sept. 23

Early voting begins today!

Stability & Excellence
for our future
EPVOTE.ORG

COMMUNITY TOWN HALLS

VIRTUAL: Sept. 28, 12 p.m.

IN PERSON: Oct. 4, 6 p.m.
Dinner and childcare provided

RSVP AT WWW.EPVOTE.ORG

Stability & Excellence
for our future
EPVOTE.ORG

Capital Project Levy

Investing in Technology. Improving Infrastructure.

In addition to still graphics, video clips and links to news articles were regularly utilized as a part of the social media strategy. In the final weeks before the campaign, a shortened version of the "Strong Schools = High Home Values" video was run as a Facebook ad, and a selfie-style message from Central Middle School principal Felicia Thames urged families to make an informed vote.

