

Northfield Public Schools Levy Referendum Fact Sheet (8/24/06)

The following information about the proposed operating levy and capital projects levy is provided by the Northfield School District. For information, see the district website at www.nlfd.k12.mn.us or contact Superintendent Dr. Chris Richardson at 663-0629.

Ballot Question #1: Operating Levy

1. For the past three years, the School District currently has had in place an operating levy that generates \$685 per student per year. This levy is scheduled to expire in the 2007-2008 school year.
2. The School Board is seeking voter approval to revoke the current operating levy of \$685 and to replace it with an operating levy that would generate \$1,180 per student each year for seven years.
3. The proposed new operating levy would increase annually by the rate of inflation, as calculated by the State of Minnesota. This would ensure that the levy amount available each year would have the same “buying power” as the amount from the previous year.
4. The proposed new operating levy would be in place for seven (7) years.
5. The school district has used all of the budget reserves and briefly entered statutory operating debt in the face of insufficient increases in school funding to maintain the quality educational opportunities that the community has come to expect.
6. The school district has already reduced expenditures for the 2005-06 and 2006-07 school years by \$3.3 million. While the proposed levy will allow us to maintain programs and services for four to six years, further reductions will be necessary beyond that time even if the levy passes.
7. If the levy does not pass, additional significant cuts would be made. In the 2007-08 school year, an estimated \$400,000 in cuts would be made; in the 2008-09 school year, estimated cuts could exceed \$3.9 million.
8. As of 2005, 90% of Minnesota’s 343 school districts have operating levies in place. Northfield is no exception.
9. Northfield School District has the 212th lowest out of 343 districts in Minnesota in referendum revenue per pupil unit. (source: Minnesota Department of Education)
10. In the most recent poll conducted by Decision Resources, 87% of those polled reported that they were “proud of the Northfield Public Schools and would recommend them to their friends.” Eighty-six percent (86%) said that they “trusted the school district to do what is right for the children of the district.”
11. In 2004-05, the Minnesota Department of Education awarded Bridgewater, Sibley and Greenvale Park Elementary Schools a “five star” rating in reading performance, the highest possible recognition for academic achievement in this area.
12. In 2005-06, the Minnesota Department of Education awarded Northfield High School with a double “five star” rating in reading and mathematics performance, one of only 10 high schools in the state to be so honored.
13. In 2005-06, the Minnesota Department of Education awarded Northfield Middle School a “five star” rating in mathematics performance, the highest possible recognition for academic achievement in this area.

14. Standard and Poors recognized Northfield Middle School as one of only 45 schools in the state to narrow the gap between students in poverty and their higher performing classmates while simultaneously raising the average proficiency rates of the student groups being compared.
15. Northfield High School students ranked in the top 3% in performance on the Minnesota Department of Education's comprehensive achievement test in writing.
16. Northfield School District spends its money where it matters—the students. Northfield spends a larger percentage of the district's budget on student instruction than 82% of the school districts in the state.
17. If the levy passes and a resident owns a home with a taxable market value of \$150,000, the estimated cost would be \$159 in 2007. For a home with a taxable market value of \$200,000, the estimated new cost would be \$212 in 2007. For a home with a taxable market value of \$250,000, the estimated new cost would be \$265 in 2007. For a home with a taxable market value of \$300,000, the estimated new cost would be \$319 in 2007.
18. Property owners whose land is designated as agricultural will only pay operating levy property tax increases on their home and one acre of land.

Ballot Question #2: The Capital Projects Levy

1. A capital projects levy is a mechanism provided by the state to allow school districts to maintain buildings and grounds, and to support instructional technology and to provide updated textbooks to every child.
2. The new proposed capital projects levy will provide \$750,000 each year to be used exclusively to maintain buildings and grounds, and to replace instructional technology and textbooks.
3. If the levy passes and a resident owns a home with a taxable market value of \$150,000, the estimated new cost would be \$45 in 2007. For a home with a taxable market value of \$200,000, the estimated new cost would be \$60 in 2007. For a home with an estimated market value of \$250,000, the estimated new cost would be \$75 in 2007. For a home with an estimated market value of \$300,000, the estimated new cost would be \$91 in 2007. For an agricultural homestead with an estimated value of \$400,000 (home and garage and agricultural land, the new cost would be \$94. The estimated new cost for non-homestead agricultural land would be between \$0.75 and \$1.21 depending on the value of the land.
4. Property owners whose land is designated as agricultural will pay capital projects levy property tax increases on their total property.
5. Passage of the ballot question #2 for capital projects levy is contingent on the successful passage of the ballot question #1 for the operating levy. If the operating levy does not pass, the capital projects levy will not pass even if it has enough votes.