



A PERIODIC REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

# Education Today

OCTOBER 2009 ISSUE



## Voters Guide

**November 3, 2009  
Levy for Learning  
Vote and School  
Board Election**

**BLAINE**

**High Expectations,  
High Achievement,  
For All.**

**SPRING LAKE PARK**

**FRIDLEY**

**No Excuses.**

- Answers to Your Questions on two important Levy for Learning Questions
- School Board Election
- When and Where to Vote

**[SpringLakeParkSchools.org](http://SpringLakeParkSchools.org)**

---



## Two Ballot Questions on Two Existing Levies

### Why are district voters going to the polls on November 3?

On Tuesday, November 3, there are two School District 16 Levy for Learning ballot questions and a School Board election on the General Election ballot. The School Board passed a resolution authorizing the Levy questions on September 8.

Levy for Learning Question 1 would RENEW the 1999 Levy for Learning (\$1.5 million/year) that would otherwise expire in 2009.

State law requires this Levy to be renewed every ten years. This will not raise your taxes – it will extend an already existing Levy. If this existing funding source is not renewed it will be lost, necessitating \$1.5 million in annual reductions.

Levy for Learning Question 2 would REVOKE the current Levy for Learning approved in 2002 (\$156.44 in taxes for the average district homeowner) and REPLACE it with a Levy for Learning with a tax impact of \$253.35 for the average district homeowner.

This would result in a net tax increase of \$8.08 per month for this homeowner. (This existing 2002 Levy for Learning would otherwise have to be renewed within the next few years.) Replacing it now, with an increase, would help to close our current \$1.5 million funding gap (an amount we cut last spring) and minimize annual cuts.

Each levy question would directly benefit teaching and learning, help to retain class sizes, and reduce the need for significant annual reductions. Without a "yes,yes" outcome, significant cuts will be necessary.

Property market value	Question 1	Question 2	
	Estimated Net Change in taxes	Estimated Net Change in Taxes Year	or Month
100,000	\$ 0.00	\$48.46	\$4.04
120,000	0.00	58.15	4.84
140,000	0.00	67.84	5.65
160,000	0.00	77.53	6.46
180,000	0.00	87.23	7.27
200,000	\$ 0.00	96.92/year	or \$8.08/mc
220,000	0.00	106.61	8.88
250,000	0.00	121.15	10.09
300,000	0.00	145.38	12.11
350,000	0.00	169.61	14.13
400,000	0.00	193.84	16.15
450,000	0.00	218.07	18.17
500,000	0.00	242.30	20.19
750,000	0.00	363.44	30.28
1,000,000	0.00	484.59	40.38

*The average property market value in School District 16 is \$200,000. Taxable market value is the basis from which the net tax capacity is calculated. This value is not necessarily the price the property would bring if sold.*

### What happens if both Questions pass?

Renewal of Question 1 and the passage of Question 2 would keep funding in place that we have had for the past ten years, and do much to eliminate the existing gap between revenues and expenditures.

It would not enrich us, but would instead keep our head above water and avoid serious reductions to our educational programs.

### If Question 1 passes, but Question 2 fails, what happens?

Renewal of Question 1 would keep funding in place that the school district has had for the past ten years. However, because the district's fixed costs increase annually, the renewal of only Question 1 would still not allow us to keep all of our existing staff and programs in place.

Consequently, if Question 1 passes and Question 2 fails, significant cuts (\$1.5 million dollars) will likely be made for the 2010-11 school year.

### If both Questions fail, what happens?

In this worst-case scenario, the district would lose funding that's been in place since 1999. An additional \$1.5 million dollars (a total of \$3 million) would likely need to be cut from the budget for the 2010-11 school year.

Including the \$1.5 million that the district already cut for the 2009-10 school year, the district would risk having to consider a total of \$4.5 million in cuts in a very short time period.

Yes, cuts would have a significant effect on the classroom.

■ The teaching staff would be reduced. This would result in larger class sizes, fewer class choices, and a reduction of the number of non-classroom teachers(specialists).

■ Additionally, it would mean further bus transportation modifications, including number of routes, distances, and length of time on buses.

■ Increases in athletic/activity fees, which haven't been increased since 2002, would be affected. (The high school athletic fee for the first child is currently \$200 for the first sport, \$150 for a second, \$125 for a third).

The district would have to return to voters, as early as 2010, with a new Levy question.

### There has been no increase in voter-approved Levy for Learning funding for our students since 2003

#### Voter-Approved Levy for Learning Funding Per Student

Year	Amount	Increase
2003-04	\$855	0 percent
2004-05	855	0 percent
2005-06	855	0 percent
2006-07	855	0 percent
2007-08	855	0 percent
2008-09	855	0 percent

## When was the last time voters approved a Levy Referendum?

The district has not come to voters with a Levy for Learning since 2002.

## Didn't voters just approve a Levy in 2006?

In 2006, voters approved a Bond Referendum which funded major repairs, renovation, and expansion projects in our schools. These funds are for construction projects only and cannot be used for funding classrooms.

## Then what is the difference between a Levy and a Bond?

### Bond is for Building

Bond referendum levies are used by districts to renovate or build facilities.

### Levy is for Learning

Operating levies are used by districts to support class sizes and classroom learning.

In 2006, we needed a Bond referendum to support our much-needed (Bond is for Building) Long-Range Facilities Improvement Program.

This fall, we need to renew (at no increase in taxes) our expiring ten-year Levy approved in 1999 (Levy is for Learning) and expiring in 2009 to support our class sizes and ongoing programs.

In a separate ballot question, we are asking to revoke, replace, and increase a ten-year Levy for Learning, approved in 2002, that would need to be renewed prior to 2012.

## What will be the financial impact on my home or business?

If Question 1 passes, your taxes will not increase. If Question 2 passes, taxes would increase by \$8 per month on the average home in the district (\$200,000).

There is a Property Tax Calculator on the website if you would like to check on your own home.

## If both Questions pass, will you come back with another Levy in the near future?

Unfortunately, education funding by the state is neither adequate or stable. It is not possible to make a predication or a promise. Without adequate support from the state, it is possible that we would need to seek another levy in the near future.

Even a few months ago, we thought these Levy for Learning ballot questions would significantly reduce—or even eliminate—the need to go to the public for years to come.

The present economic conditions, and the State's inability to provide adequate, consistent funding have caused us to revise that outlook.

## Does the district realize that the economy is just now beginning to rebound?

Yes, that's why we surveyed our residents in July 2008, and surveyed them again in May 2009. Each time, they indicated support for a referendum to renew, and to increase, our Levy for Learning rather than to see reductions in services or increases in class sizes.

So yes, we fully recognize the economic climate and uncertainty, but we also recognize the needs of our students, which means seeking adequate resources for the challenges of preparing them for college and the work world.

To wait another year would derail our goals and vision for our students and their achievements; to do so would force us to cut teachers and staff and increase class sizes; to do so would require us to raise fees and consider the elimination of programs, activities, and services.

Out of 48 metro school districts, 30 receive more general fund levy funding for their students than the Spring Lake Park Schools

If Question 1 does not pass, 40 of 48 districts would have more levy authority

If Questions 1 and 2 both pass, we would be close to the middle

School District	Existing Voter-Approved General Fund Levies
1. St. Anthony-NewBrighton	\$2,480
2. Minnetonka	2, 445
3. St. Louis Park	2,171
4. Wayzata	2,061
5. Edina	1,916
6. Hopkins	1,870
7. Orono	1,799
8. Eden Prairie	1,791
9. Bloomington	1,770
10. Westonka	1,737
11. White Bear Lake	1,583
12. Roseville	1,575
13. Mounds View	1, 522
14. Robbinsdale	1,479
15. Burnsville	1,476
16. Richfield	1,397
17. Fridley	1,313
18. Mahtomedi	1,305
19. Hastings	1,300
20. West St. Paul	1,268
21. Minneapolis	1,200
22. Osseo	1,154
23. Anoka-Hennepin	1,121
24. Rosemount-Apple Valley	1,089
25. Chaska	1,058
26. South St. Paul	1,056
27. Prior Lake	1,051
28. South Washington County	979
29. Stillwater	931
30. Columbia Heights	879
31. Spring Lake Park	855
32. Inver Grove Heights	844
33. No. St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale	833
34. Lakeville	823
35. New Prague	757
36. Forest Lake	725
37. Centennial	689
38. Waconia	626
39. St. Paul	603
40. Farmington	602
41. Randolph	580
42. Shakopee	545
43. Norwood-Young America	500
44. Brooklyn Center	337
45. Belle-Plaine	301
46. Watertown-Mayer	242
47. St. Francis	21
48. Jordan	1

## NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION

### INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 16 (SPRING LAKE PARK) STATE OF MINNESOTA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a special election has been called and will be held in and for Independent School District No. 16 (Spring Lake Park), State of Minnesota, on November 3, 2009, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. to vote on the following questions:

#### SCHOOL DISTRICT BALLOT QUESTION 1 RENEWAL OF EXPIRING REFERENDUM REVENUE AUTHORIZATION

The board of Independent School District No. 16 (Spring Lake Park), Minnesota has proposed to renew the existing property tax referendum (\$330.67 per pupil) that is scheduled to expire after taxes payable in 2009. The proposed referendum revenue authorization would be applicable for ten (10) years unless otherwise revoked or reduced as provided by law.

8

YES  
NO

Shall the renewal of the expiring property tax referendum proposed by the board of Independent School District No. 16 (Spring Lake Park) be approved?

**BY VOTING "YES" ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING TO EXTEND AN EXISTING PROPERTY TAX REFERENDUM THAT IS SCHEDULED TO EXPIRE**

#### SCHOOL DISTRICT BALLOT QUESTION 2 REVOKING EXISTING REFERENDUM REVENUE AUTHORIZATION; APPROVING NEW AUTHORIZATION

The board of Independent School District No. 16 (Spring Lake Park), Minnesota has also proposed to revoke the existing referendum revenue authorization of \$524.58 per pupil that is scheduled to expire after taxes payable in 2012 and to replace that authorization with a new authorization of \$849.58 per pupil. The proposed referendum revenue authorization would be applicable for ten (10) years unless otherwise revoked or reduced as provided by law.

8

YES  
NO

Shall the existing referendum revenue authorization be revoked and the increase in the revenue proposed by the board of Independent School District No. 16 (Spring Lake Park) be approved?

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

For the ballot questions, the property tax portion of the revenue authorized will require estimated referendum tax rates of 0.0493047% for Question 1 and 0.1283797% for Question 2 of the referendum market value of all classes of taxable property in the School District, as defined by Minnesota Statutes, Section 126C.01, Subdivision 3, which excludes certain agricultural property, seasonal property and post-secondary student housing.

The projected annual dollar increases for typical residential homesteads, apartments, commercial-industrial properties, and most other classes of property within the School District are as shown in the table below.

For agricultural property (both homestead and non-homestead), the taxes for the proposed referendum will be based on the value of the house, garage and one acre of land. There will be no referendum taxes paid on the value of agricultural land and buildings. For seasonal recreational residential property (e.g., cabins), there will be no taxes paid for the proposed referendum.

The figures in the table below are based on taxes for the voter approved referendum levy only, and do not include taxes for other purposes.

<u>Market Value</u>	<u>Expiring Authority</u>	<u>Proposed Levy Question 1</u>	<u>Revoked Authority</u>	<u>Proposed Levy Question 2</u>	<u>Net Increase Over Revoked Authority</u>
\$ 50,000	\$ -24.65	\$ 24.65	\$ -39.11	\$ 63.34	\$ 24.23
75,000	-36.98	36.98	-58.66	95.01	36.34
100,000	-49.30	49.30	-78.22	126.68	48.46
120,000	-59.17	59.17	-93.86	152.01	58.15
140,000	-69.03	69.03	-109.50	177.35	67.84
160,000	-78.89	78.89	-125.15	202.68	77.53
180,000	-88.75	88.75	-140.79	228.02	87.23
200,000	-98.61	98.61	-156.44	253.35	96.92
220,000	-108.47	108.47	-172.08	278.69	106.61
250,000	-123.26	123.26	-195.54	316.69	121.15
300,000	-147.91	147.91	-234.65	380.03	145.38
350,000	-172.57	172.57	-273.76	443.37	169.61
400,000	-197.22	197.22	-312.87	506.71	193.84
450,000	-221.87	221.87	-351.98	570.05	218.07
500,000	-246.52	246.52	-391.09	633.38	242.30
750,000	-369.78	369.78	-586.63	950.08	363.44
1,000,000	-493.05	493.05	-782.18	1,266.77	484.59

The precincts and combined polling places for the special election will be:

Precinct 1  
(for School District 16 residents who reside in Spring Lake Park and Fridley)

Polling Place  
Woodcrest Elementary School, 880 Osborne Road NE, Fridley, MN 5543

Precinct 2  
(for School District 16 residents who reside in Blaine)

Westwood Intermediate School, 701 – 91st Avenue NE, Blaine, MN 55434

All qualified electors residing in said School District may cast their ballot at the polling place for the precincts in which they reside during the polling hours specified above. A voter must be registered to vote to be eligible to vote in the election. An unregistered individual may register to vote at the polling place on election day.

Dated: September 8, 2009

BY ORDER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_, Clerk

## We receive \$3 million less each year than costs incurred to provide state and federally-mandated Special Education programs

Year	Special Education Revenues	Expenditures	Deficit	Total General Fund	Deficit as a percentage of the total budget
2003-04	2,926,115	4,558,805	(\$1,632,690)	33,991,917	4.8 percent
2004-05	3,205,624	5,227,268	(\$2,021,644)	35,044,284	5.8 percent
2005-06	3,412,419	5,766,365	(\$2,353,946)	38,752,889	6.1 percent
2006-07	3,118,868	6,269,750	(\$3,150,882)	45,685,845	6.9 percent
2007-08	3,532,015	6,338,228	(\$2,806,213)	44,554,485	6.3 percent

The annual Special Education deficit is now greater than \$3,000,000. An audited figure for 2008-09 has not yet been reported by the Minnesota Department of Education.

■ There has been no increase in the Levy for Learning revenue per student since the last Levy for Learning was approved in the fall of 2002. As recent and current funding remains flat, state and federally-mandated needs—and costs—increase.

### Can't you run things more efficiently?

We believe we are extremely efficient. To illustrate, for \$9.16 per hour per student, we provide teachers, counselors, special education, transportation, utilities, meals, textbooks, principals and secretaries, specialists, nurses, custodians, and more.

### What have you done to curb costs and reduce expenditures?

Last spring, as we do every year, we modified our required services to be as efficient, effective, and as safe as possible while still retaining our parent support and public satisfaction. In doing so, we made cuts and modifications totaling \$1.5 million.

In making these cuts, we made every effort to be sure that our quest for efficiency didn't negatively affect our need for effectiveness in educating students.

This would no longer be the case if there are further cuts. Another round of cuts of this size will most definitely affect classrooms.

The district and school board analyzed most operations of the school district, utilized a participatory citizen-staff process, and made cuts and modifications that included reducing the traditional average increase in salary and benefits packages, reducing district administration, reducing the transportation budget, and implementing energy efficiency improvements in all of our schools.

A full list of reductions and modifications made to the 2009-10 Budget can be found on the website.

### Why do you need to ask voters for funding? Doesn't the state provide enough?

There are many ways to answer this question. A few key points are listed:

■ We have been conservative in our requests for funding from residents, continuing to be one of only several metro-area school districts to not seek a levy increase since 2002.

■ Out of 48 metro school districts, 30 receive more voter-approved referendum funding for their students than Spring Lake Park receives.

■ State funding is inconsistent and increases have now disappeared. In a three-year span that includes last year, this year, and next, the average annual increase per student has been only 0.33%. This year and next it is 0%.

■ The District's fixed costs increase by about 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 % each year due to inflation, yet the State's funding allowance per student has increased annually at a rate of only 1.45% since 2001-02.

■ Our District receives over \$3 million less each year than the actual costs incurred to provide state and federally mandated programs for Special Education and English Language Learners.

**1.45 percent**  
Average annual increase in State per-student funding allowance since 2001-02

**0.33 percent**  
Average annual increase in State per-student funding allowance since 2007-08

School Year	Formula Allowance	Percent Increase
2002-03	\$ 4,601	2.6%
2003-04	\$ 4,601	0.0%
2004-05	\$ 4,601	0.0%
2005-06	\$4,783	4.0%
2006-07	\$4,974	4.0%
2007-08	\$ 5,074	2.0%
<b>2008-09</b>	<b>\$ 5,124</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>2009-10</b>	<b>\$ 5,124</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>2010-11</b>	<b>\$ 5,124</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

Source: Annual Financing Education in Minnesota Report MN House of Representatives



Spring Lake Park School District  
1415 81st Avenue NE  
Spring Lake Park, MN 55432

## School Board Election

Eight school district residents filed for four seats on the Spring Lake Park School Districts School Board. Four of seven at-large positions are up for election on November 3, 2009. The term of each position is four years, beginning January 2010.

The eight candidates include all four incumbents:

**Kelly L. Delfs**

8172 Polk Street NE, Spring Lake Park

**Marilynn Forsberg**

8015 Benjamin Street NE, Spring Lake Park

**Jodi Ruch**

2318 119th Avenue NE, Blaine

**John Stroebel**

911 92nd Avenue NE, Blaine

*Also running are:*

**Chuck Gooder**

11030 Amen Circle, Blaine

**Dan Lambert**

7892 Tyler Street NE, Spring Lake Park

**Traci Payne**

1896 116th Court NE, Blaine

**Douglas Thompson**

9524 Van Buren Street, Blaine

### Learn more, ask a question, share a comment

There have been numerous meetings and information sessions held throughout the community since the School Board authorized this election at its September meeting. View the list of meetings on the website: [www.SpringLakeParkSchools.org](http://www.SpringLakeParkSchools.org).

In addition, if you'd like the superintendent, school board member, or someone else from the district to come to a neighborhood gathering, or a civic group meeting, call 763-785-5513.

If you have question you want answered, or a comment to share, call the Levy Hotline, 763-795-5195, or email the school district at [Supt@district16.org](mailto:Supt@district16.org). Someone from the school district will try to respond to you within 24 hours.

Additional information is available on the home page of the Spring Lake Park School District website: [SpringLakeParkSchools.org](http://SpringLakeParkSchools.org).

### Date, time, and place for voting on November 3

The Levy for Learning questions and school board election will be on the ballot for the Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2009 General Election.

Polls are open from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm.

*There are only two polling locations:*

- School District 16 residents who live in Fridley and Spring Lake Park  
*vote at Woodcrest Elementary School, 880 Osborne Rd, Fridley*
- School District 16 residents who live in Blaine  
*vote at Westwood Intermediate School, 701 91st Avenue NE, Blaine*

*Prepared and paid for by Independent School District No. 16 (Spring Lake Park),  
1415 81st Avenue NE, Spring Lake Park, MN 55432. This publication is not  
circulated on behalf of any candidate or ballot question.*