



TROJAN TODAY

YOUR SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SOURCE FOR NEWS AND EVENTS | MARCH 2023

WHY A REFERENDUM?

When he talks about the need for the School Town’s first-ever referendum, School Board President Victor Garcia said residents aren’t opposing the effort: They simply want to know why.

“Projections show – without new revenues – the school town will not have enough money by 2025 to operate as we do now,” Asst. Superintendent Ryan Erdelac said.

The factors leading to an operating deficit, include:

- » Decline in enrollment that has led to an aggregate loss of \$2.4 million in state support.
- » The loss of an additional \$3.2 million because of the property tax circuit breaker.

There are three options to make up for the shortfall:

- » Cut academic programs and staff
- » Open Highland borders to out-of-district students to compensate for enrollment declines
- » Pass a referendum May 2.

“I believe our students deserve to continue with the quality education we are providing,” Garcia said. “It has been shown that quality schools are also a big positive when it comes to maintaining and growing home values. What’s good for our schools is good for our community.”

WITH A REFERENDUM ...

- » Home values continue to rise.
- » Quality of life improves.
- » Educational program funding continues.
- » Teachers and staff remain on the job.
- » Safety for students, teachers and staff is maintained.

WITHOUT A REFERENDUM ...

- » Property values decline.
- » Young families choose other communities to invest in their family’s home and future.
- » Deep budget cuts are on the table, including staff layoffs, closing a school building, cutting educational and fine-arts programming.
- » Highland continues to lose quality teachers and staff to districts that offer better pay and benefits.
- » The School Town of Highland is unable to attract new teachers and staff.

WHY THE SCHOOL BOARD SUPPORTS THE REFERENDUM



VICTOR GARCIA



PAT KRULL



ALLENCIA BALLARD



BOB KUVA



ERICA SMITH-GOMEZ

As a land-locked community, Highland has limited options when it comes to adding housing units as a way to grow its student population. Few vacant lots remain. People who move here stay for all the town has to offer.

“We have a responsibility to the students whose parents have entrusted the education of their children to us and to the community that benefits from great schools to fight for them and for this referendum,” School Board President Victor Garcia said. “We trust that residents will cast their ballot for the referendum on May 2.”

COMMUNITY MEETINGS: Learn more at one of our upcoming referendum meetings at 6 p.m. **March 22** and 11 a.m. **March 23** at Lincoln Community Center.

Summary of Estimated Maximum Taxpayer Impact

Proposed Operating Referendum (2024 – 2031)			
Proposed Operating Referendum Tax Rate (1):		\$0.3204	
Estimated Average Annual Operating Referendum Revenue (2):		\$6,286,695	
Estimated Taxpayer Impact – Monthly & Annual Basis			
Market Value of Home (Gross Assessed Value)	Net Assessed Value (3)	Monthly Basis	Annual Basis
\$150,000	\$66,300	\$17.70	\$212.43
187,896 (4)	90,932	24.28	291.35
200,000	98,800	26.38	316.56
250,000	131,300	35.06	420.69
300,000	163,800	43.74	524.82
350,000	196,300	52.41	628.95
100,000 Commercial/Rental Property		26.70	320.40

- (1) Tax rate per \$100 of assessed valuation.
- (2) Based upon the 2023 certified net assessed valuation, including TIF assessed valuation, per the Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF), with 4.21% assumed growth in 2024, per Policy Analytics, LLC.
- (3) Tax impact based upon the net assessed valuation of home, which includes the standard deduction and supplemental homestead deduction. Tax impact based upon the net assessed valuation of home, which includes the standard deduction and supplemental homestead deduction. Pursuant to HEA 1260, for taxes payable in 2024 and thereafter, the homestead deduction will increase to a maximum of \$48,000 and the standard mortgage deduction will no longer be available.
- (4) Median value of homestead within the Town of Highland, Indiana, as certified by the Lake County Auditor.

Online portal features interactive property tax calculator

In addition to public meetings, the School Town of Highland has created a referendum tab on the home page of each of the school websites.

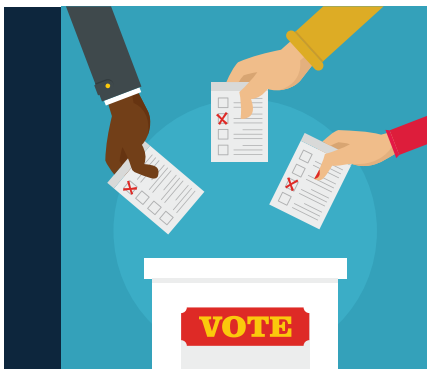
The tabs contain an interactive property tax calculator that allows home and business owners to insert their current property tax information to determine how much more an individual will pay beginning in 2024.

To access the calculator: Type www.highland.k12.in.us/

page/referendum into your browser window. Click on Investment Calculator, which provides directions for accessing your most recent property tax information. On the bottom right, click on the Investment Calculator button.

Superintendent Brian Smith said his door is always open for those who would like more information on the referendum as well as help navigating the calculator.

INFO: (219) 924-7400 or bsmith@highland.k12.in.us



YOUR VOICE. YOUR VOTE.

The Indiana Voter Portal helps Highland residents to register to vote, check your voting status, secure an absentee ballot, learn who's on the ballot, find your voting location and voting hours.

INFO: Visit indianavoters.in.gov.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

APRIL 3: Last day to register to vote

APRIL 4: Early voting starts

APRIL 20: Absentee ballots due

MAY 2: Primary Election in-person voting