

ARAPAHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #6

ARAPAHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER SIX ARAPAHOE COUNTY, COLORADO

ALL REGISTERED VOTERS

NOTICE OF ELECTION TO INCREASE TAXES ON A REFERRED MEASURE

Election Date and Hours: November 3, 2020, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Designated Election Official:
Jonathan V. Levesque, Director of Finance
5776 South Crocker Street, Littleton, CO 80120
Telephone: (303) 347-3300

BALLOT ISSUE #4C

IN ORDER TO MAKE MORE GENERAL FUND REVENUES AVAILABLE FOR THE PURPOSES DESCRIBED BELOW, SHALL ARAPAHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER SIX (LITTLETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS) TAXES BE INCREASED BY \$12,000,000 IN 2020 FOR COLLECTION IN 2021 AND BY SUCH AMOUNTS IN ANY YEAR THEREAFTER AS MAY BE RAISED FROM A MILL LEVY OF UP TO 11 MILLS, PROVIDED THAT THE MILL LEVY FOR THE FIRST YEAR SHALL NOT EXCEED 6 MILLS AND NO MILL LEVY INCREASE FROM YEAR TO YEAR THEREAFTER SHALL EXCEED ONE MILL IN ANY PARTICULAR YEAR, AND PROVIDED FURTHER THAT SUCH MILL LEVY MAY BE INCREASED ANNUALLY SUCH THAT THE AMOUNT OF REVENUE PRODUCED BY SUCH MILL LEVY REFLECT THE PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN INFLATION, WITH THE EFFECT THAT MORE GENERAL FUND REVENUES WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PURPOSES SUCH AS:

CONTINUING TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN QUALITY TEACHERS;

MAINTAINING SCHOOL COUNSELING FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION;

PROVIDING CAREER, TECHNOLOGY, AND SKILLED TRADES CLASSES THAT PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH REAL WORLD JOB SKILLS SUCH AS HEALTH CARE, SKILLED TRADES AND COMPUTER SCIENCE;

AND SHALL SUCH ADDITIONAL REVENUES FROM THIS TAX INCREASE, IMPOSED PURSUANT TO AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 22-54-108.7, C.R.S., BE DEPOSITED INTO THE SUPPLEMENTAL CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION, TECHNOLOGY AND MAINTENANCE FUND AND USED FOR ONGOING CASH FUNDING FOR CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION, NEW INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY, EXISTING TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES, AND MAINTENANCE NEEDS OF THE DISTRICT; AND SHALL THE DISTRICT BE AUTHORIZED TO INCREASE SUCH MILL LEVY BEGINNING IN TAX COLLECTION YEAR 2022 AND ANNUALLY THEREAFTER TO OFFSET PROPERTY TAX REFUNDS OR ABATEMENTS OR REDUCTIONS IN THE PERCENTAGE OF ACTUAL VALUATION USED TO DETERMINE ASSESSED VALUATION?

FISCAL INFORMATION

Actual Historical and Current Estimated Fiscal Year Spending

Year	Fiscal Year Spending
2020-2021 (estimated)	\$169,902,476
2019-2020 (unaudited actual)	\$168,642,990
2018-2019 (actual)	\$165,137,872
2017-2018 (actual)	\$154,069,837
2016-2017 (actual)	\$150,607,633
Overall percentage change in fiscal year spending over the five-year period from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021	12.81%
Overall dollar change in fiscal year spending over the five-year period from 2016-2017 through 2020-2021	\$19,294,843

Proposed District Tax Increase

Estimated maximum dollar amount of proposed tax increase in first full fiscal year:	\$12,000,000
Estimated first full fiscal year spending without the increase:	\$178,397,600

Summary of Written Comments For Issue:

A yes vote on 4C is an investment in our kids, our schools and our community. Excellent public schools are a consistent community priority that has allowed Littleton's reputation to flourish as a great place to live and raise a family.

Littleton Public Schools' slogan, "Big enough to serve you; small enough to know you" is an accurate portrayal of the district's culture. LPS has received the Colorado Department of Education's highest accreditation eight of the nine years it has been offered -- more than any other Denver metro-area school district.

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LPS offers a comprehensive education from preschool through Grade 12 to approximately 15,000 students. Students attend 13 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 3 high schools, several alternative programs, preschools, and 2 charter schools. LPS teachers are caring professionals who are devoted to helping every student achieve their highest potential. LPS teachers average 12 years of experience and nearly 80% have advanced degrees.

Colorado has shortchanged LPS more than \$156 million over the past decade because of the State of Colorado's chronic inability to adequately fund its public schools. This has placed tremendous pressure on the district's budget. No state solutions are in sight.

After making \$4.2 million in cuts for the 2020–2021 school year and with looming projected cuts of \$12 million for 2021–2022, the LPS Board of Education recognized that these budget cuts will negatively impact the academic excellence the community values and expects of its schools. If local solutions are not found, people and programs will face drastic cuts for the 2021–2022 school year and beyond. Those cuts include program reductions to specials/electives, career tech, alternative education, and preschool programs, among others. Cuts will also force increased class size, increased fees for athletics and activities, reductions in transportation services, and reductions in employee compensation.

LPS conducted two community surveys and respondents expressed support for a local mill levy increase to keep quality teachers, provide a variety of programs for students of all ages, help ensure physical safety, provide mental health supports, and expand career and technology classes that provide students with real-world job skills. Two-thirds of survey respondents prefer that the LPS community invest in the school district given reductions in state funding, rather than experience even further cuts to people and programs that affect students.

If 4C is passed, the district would raise roughly \$12 million. The money raised will be held in a separate fund with a separate Board of Education-approved budget, and this new fund will be included in the district's annual audit.

We need to invest in our local schools to continue the legacy of excellence for generations to come. Quality schools increase our property values, thus protecting our biggest financial investment - our homes. More than ever, we need to come together to support our kids, our schools, and our community.

Vote YES on 4C to keep our schools strong.

Summary of Written Comments Against Issue:

Littleton Public Schools (LPS) thinks it is entitled to ask the local taxpayers for even more funding yet again. We are in the middle of a pandemic with the local community, including small businesses, struggling to even survive.

They state that over \$156 million has been withheld from them by the State over the past decade. But they fail to point out that the local taxpayers have provided over \$28.8 million in each of the past 10 years, or over \$288 million in support of LPS. That level of support is scheduled to continue regardless of the outcome of this election.

They also claim that the current mill levy override provision, that caps the available request to 25% of the Public School Finance Total Program funding to the district, is too restrictive at \$6.9 million.

That provision is based on the district's total enrollment, which includes both district students and non-district students. The non-district student population has been about 20% of the total enrollment for many years. Why is that distinction important for property tax purposes? Because only district residents contribute to the bond payments and to mill levy overrides. Based on a flaw in the calculation, local taxpayers have been providing LPS with a 20% premium (currently about \$5.8 million extra) over the level of mill levy override had the calculation been based only on district students. Yet they are telling us, even that excessive level of local taxpayer support is not sufficient for them. They want an additional \$12 million (about 6 mills) on top of the current \$28.8 million of mill levy overrides they are receiving from the local taxpayers. Plus, they wish to add an additional 1 mill for each of the next five years as well, for a total of around 11 mills over the current level.

They wish to use a new provision called Debt-Free Schools, without any caps or limitations. That new provision could have been used for the construction activities as well. But instead, they saddled the local taxpayers with \$298 million in 25-year bonds (or out to the year 2043) with a tax-exempt interest rate of 5 – 5.5%. They intend to use this new provision to impose an even greater mill levy override on the local taxpayers.

The official pupil count will not even be known until after the November election. Maybe the district enrollment will continue to decline. Therefore, we should not be locking in a mill levy override amount until more facts are known to us.

We would expect a declining enrollment district to cut expenses, that would be appropriate. To continue to ask the local taxpayers to support excessive levels of funding for their vision of a regional educational empire is not.

This is too much, too soon. Vote NO on the latest Littleton Public Schools request. NO on 4C.