

# REFERENDA

## MAINTENANCE PROJECTS & INSTRUCTIONAL EQUIPMENT

### Full Text of Question 3

#### QUESTION NUMBER III

"Shall the following Resolution be approved?

RESOLUTION  
AUTHORIZING THE SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET TO  
EXCEED REVENUE LIMIT BY VARYING AMOUNTS  
FOR NON-RECURRING PURPOSES

BE IT RESOLVED by the School Board of the Madison Metropolitan School District, Dane County, Wisconsin, that the revenues included in the School District budget be authorized to exceed the revenue limit specified in Section 121.91, Wisconsin Statutes, by \$4,997,000 in 2005-2006; \$5,113,000 in 2006-2007; \$5,234,000 in 2007-2008; \$5,362,000 in 2008-2009; and \$5,491,000 in 2009-2010 for non-recurring purposes of which up to \$500,000 per year may be spent for renovation, replacement and repair of technology and instructional equipment and the balance of which will be spent on maintenance of facilities."

Source: <http://www.madison.k12.wi.us/budget/ref05/q1.htm>

#### **Ask these questions before voting:**

Has the Madison Board of Education and administration

- 1) conducted its due diligence in considering alternatives, consequences and financial impacts upon the school budgets and upon the ability of the taxpayer to pay for increasing property taxes?
- 2) responsibly managed the financial resources it has at its disposal?
- 3) been trustworthy in spending District monies effectively and efficiently?
- 4) been accountable for its decisions and communications?
- 5) Can the taxpayer and the community continue to tax and spend more and more money to support the ways in which the majority of the Board of Education and the administration conduct the business of the school district?
- 6) Can the community trust the Board and administration with "blank" checks to spend more and more money, most of which will not go directly toward the instruction of students?

**Consider a few facts:** Overall, the taxing formulas of the state and district require Madison taxpayers to pay a nearly 60% premium in shared revenues to the state for increasing the revenue caps by referenda approval. In dollars and cents, approval of the three referenda for a total of \$48.1 million will actually cost Madison school taxpayers approximately \$76 million. That total adds up to over \$27 million in taxes paid to the state which cannot be used in the Madison school district for the ‘privilege’ of raising the revenue caps in Madison to support the three referenda. Following are specific impacts of referenda related to issues and costs for Maintenance Projects and Instructional Equipment.

The proposal for **Referenda 3** regarding maintenance and instructional equipment for \$26.2 million will cost the taxpayers over **\$41 million** over the five-year period.

Readers are referred to the link “Maintenance Policy Issues” on the Referenda page of the “Issue Topics” section of the ACE web site. Policy recommendations were made to the Board of Education Long Range Planning Committee in January, 2005.

#### The Board

1. includes in its list of projects a huge amount of expenditures for general day-to-day and annual maintenance that other organizations and businesses include in regular annual operations budgets
2. has not accounted for monies and savings in utility and other costs generated from energy saving projects completed in the current maintenance referenda projects. In March, 2004, the district announced a reported \$4.7 million in energy savings which have not been accounted for in relationship to referendum projects and the maintenance budget
3. has charged for a full-time architect position at \$75,000 per year for five years, plus 37% benefits (over \$500,000) to the referendum revenues for projects the district has not accounted for
4. identified a list of 12 projects postponed from the referendum projects at a cost of \$566,100 “due to construction material cost increases” (relate to # 3 above)
5. has not proposed a list of items for the up-to \$500,000 to be segregated annually in this referendum proposal for renovation, replacement and repair of technology and instructional equipment, which also should be in the regular budget
6. does not make planned expenditure requests for maintenance an integral and continuous part of the total budgeting process; does not show the implications for projected near term and long term revenue shortfalls; does not differentiate clearly one-time projects proposed for referendum support from ongoing operations budget maintenance expenditures
7. does not consider maintenance as an ongoing business expense addressed in the operations budget with expenditures prioritized by using written objective criteria
8. does not ‘hold harmless’ from reduction and/or re-allocation to other budget line items funds allocated for maintenance in the operations budget
9. does not consider proposed maintenance projects in relation to proposed and/or actual closing or the change of functional status of school buildings or other facilities

10. does not make maintenance decisions that are related to purposes which are good business decisions according to established criteria
11. does not balance assessment of infrastructure and equipment using actuarial studies of probable useful life combined with appropriate evaluation of the current condition of the systems within the context of same use and/or changed use
12. does not separate categories and prioritization of energy conservation projects; capital projects; and, day-to-day operational maintenance
13. policies are not initiated and implemented consistently and fairly with regard to Request for Proposals (RFPs) and for scoring projects for contracting out vs projects for possible completion by in-house staff with follow-up evaluation
14. does not know whether or not energy saving a) initiatives are planned and costs are determined in advance; b) calculations are delineated and justify the investment and return on investment; c) or, paybacks and savings are accounted for and re-invested in the maintenance program by the district
15. demonstrates no accountability for the true costs of management and administration and staffing levels for projects spelled out in project estimates and final costs

The above information is intended to be instructive and constructive. Active Citizens for Education is committed to working together with all members of the Board of Education and with the citizens of the school district to move forward in positive ways to improve the effectiveness and results of the education of our students in this community; the operations of the district; and, communications with and the engagement of the community in the educational enterprise.

For more information, or to make comments, contact Active Citizens for Education, Don Severson, President, [info@activecitizensforeducation.org](mailto:info@activecitizensforeducation.org) or call 608/238-8300.

Web site: [www.activecitizensforeducation.org](http://www.activecitizensforeducation.org)

For additional information and comments on the referenda and other school issues connect with

[www.schoolinfosystem.org](http://www.schoolinfosystem.org)

[www.madison.k12.wi.us](http://www.madison.k12.wi.us)