

Questions:

Q: What feedback do you have on the presentation?

- Include when the last time there was a tax increase in Washington Township for educational reasons? The previous referendum was tax neutral.
- The non-resident student issue needs to be addressed. The elementary concerns are different from secondary concerns. Eliminating non-resident students may reduce overall student population but may not reduce class size. Regarding high school non-resident students there is a perception that we are spending our tax dollars supporting students from other wealthy districts who take away scholarships, awards and sports team spots.
- The subject of out of district students will continue to come up. We should “own” the fact that we have out of district students and explain the positive things that they bring to the district. They do not necessarily take things away from our students. The district is compensated by the state for each out of district student. Create an FAQ answers to address this subject.
- The number of slides was perfect but questions should be anticipated so that answers are prepared.
- Add sound bites and video of people who support a referendum.
- Show a slide with the graph of the comparison of Washington Township vs. other district’s tax rates.
- Simplify the presentation to clarify that there are 2 referendums – Operating and Capital Projects. Create a statement that money cannot be moved from one to the other.
- Include the % increase of taxes for schools and clarify that the portion of property taxes that goes to schools is only about 25% of the total property tax bill.
- Show more slides of how everyone would be affected if additional funding is not received.
- Revise the slides to showcase the most important information.
- Get statements from parents of actual experiences.
- Show more than charts – use pictures.
- Include focused credible spots of WHY this matters.
- Emphasize the increased amount for a median home so people easily understand. Also put the total but de-emphasize. Can we give stories and pictures? Do not imply that our schools are not safe but that safety can be improved.
- Have fewer slides and highlight key information so that the most important is seen. The size of the font needs to be larger so that people see what you really want them to see.
- Change “increase the trailers” to “adding trailers” to schools that don’t currently have them.
- People will ask about athletic facilities.
- Educate people on how we arrived where we are – caution to not go too far into the weeds.
- Make sure there is time allowed for questions. Anticipate questions and make sure you have an answer.

- Just enough slides.
- It would be great to have a “sound bite” of community members who support the referendum i.e. we are looking at many options but we need a referendum to secure the funding needed to address the needs we have. Have a slide of Sally saying “why I support this” and other folks who support the referendum to celebrate our diversity.
- Show comparison visuals from other school districts vs. our district.
- Powerful slides that have impact – capacity and what enrollment forecasts look like; the last time updates were done to buildings; tax comparisons between the districts in the county slide was powerful.
- A cost impact slide would be helpful.
- Property values are a weak argument. It cannot be the only reason to support.
- Stress low school tax rate in Washington Township.
- Use a picture of a more average Washington township home.
- Explain in more detail how OTHER (last column) will be funded.
- Make a solid connection between modern quality school buildings and quality education outcomes.
- Add pictures.
- Have a tax rate slide.
- Highlight the 4th column.
- Tell the story. Show regular things we have to let go of – quality programming/teachers
- The slide illustrating the project scope has to be readable or should also be a handout. It’s very frustrating not to be able to read all the information.
- The slide that says what happens if we don’t get at least the 4 million back to Operating Fund needs to state specific examples of what would be cut.

Q: Have you heard from your neighbors?

- One person shared that 2 out of 3 of his neighbors are in favor of the higher amount.
- Most neighbors still need to know “why”.
- Nothing recently.
- It is easy for neighbors to hear something that is not true or talk about the past referendum – the message has to be clear.
- Yard signs should be a variety of items to market to reach the interests of more people. Not everyone supports the same things that are on the sign. Some people are turned off by IB for all, for example.
- Express that we still have unmet needs.
- Lots of questions regarding out of district students and class size.
- People want to know “What is it going to cost me?”
- I have had support for full amount from parents but everybody is concerned about people who do not have students in the schools.
- Neighbors feel that there is disparity between the amounts and folks don’t want to comment.

- 66.6% said they would support the high end – two who supported were retired. They didn't want to spend money on sports but would support classroom improvements and technology.
- A lack of awareness of conditions of schools.

Q: How do we educate the community about the massive need for district wide facility improvements?

- Advertise on radio stations that students listen to. 100.9 for families and 96.3 for voting age students. Many students will be old enough to vote in the November election.
- It is important to acknowledge taxpayer's concerns about increased taxes but we must also show consequences to taxpayers if we didn't pass a referendum; property values could decrease and homes could become harder to sell and worth less when it comes time for senior citizens to sell their home if improvements are not made.
- It is a reality that quality teachers will move to a district with better working conditions that include better salary and physical environment.
- Market MSDWT's successes via neighborhood groups such as BRAG.
- Include how we are currently using grant funding and what needs could be met with grants. Emphasize what other funding options are being considered.
- Effects of tax abatements to businesses needs to be communicated to show how many tax dollars are not coming into the district by allowing businesses to get a break on paying their share.
- Share stories about parking at schools, water problems, etc. Compare to how we invest in our homes.
- Show more things that show the change (or lack thereof) will affect not just families with children in the district but also every taxpayer – home values.
- Recent quote on property study – define assessed valuation and other terms because we can't assume everyone knows the meanings.
- Share the things that we really don't want to show people so the community sees the need. This needs to be a very carefully selected set of images that tell our need in a story format.
- Intentional use of images.
- Provide a tax worksheet.
- Rely on parents and educated people to host "coffee talk" with elderly neighbors and people with children who don't attend our schools. They are less likely to know about the presentations. Go door to door to inform people about meetings.
- Survey people on why they moved into the district and why they stay – how important are the schools in your decision?
- Get a list of precinct committeemen and have a meeting with them.
- Pictures and AV presentations to show current conditions.
- Make presentations short for community meetings (10-15 minutes).
- Social media plan; YouTube video with our youth speaking.
- Door to door, grassroots efforts, PTO groups, school carnivals, sporting events.
- Handouts – what is in it for them? Include pictures of our children.
- Target registered voters who vote.

Q: Should we ask the community for feedback on any amount less than the all-inclusive needed amount (\$185 million)?

- There are some who will not support even the smallest number.
- The difference in individual tax increase is small between the lower and the higher amount. We should get feedback before offering a lower amount than what is really needed.
- Even the \$185 million will only allow the district to offer “adequate” learning environments not “optimal”.
- Go for the “big ask.”
- Overwhelming consensus was not to ask a lower amount - only the full amount should be asked.
- No. Any less would not provide for all the needs.
- Go for the all-inclusive amount. If you show a lesser amount people will always lean to the lesser amount. Leave the higher amount and see what they give in feedback to see if the district needs to cut off some from the \$185 million. Make the public make the first counter offer.
- I would even indicate that the total is actually higher - \$250 million.
- Ask for everything then have a fallback position.