

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS REGARDING THE PROPOSED TAX INCREASE

1. Is it true the Board of Trustees voted to raise the tax rate on the M & O side of the budget?

Yes, at the September 21, 2009 school board meeting, the Board of Trustees voted to have a Tax Ratification Election on December 12, 2009. The community will decide whether the Maintenance and Tax Rate will increase to \$1.17 or stay at \$1.04. At the same meeting the Board of Trustees voted to lower the tax rate on the I & S side from .30 to .27. The overall increase for the taxpayers of Crosby ISD, if the Tax Ratification Election passes, would be 10 cents. The overall tax rate would go from \$1.34 to \$1.44.

There are two sides to a school district budget, the M & O (Maintenance and Operation) side which covers all district expenses (salaries, instructional supplies, etc) except those used to pay off existing debt from past bond elections. Those funds come out of the I & S (Interest and Sinking) side of the budget. Last year the Crosby ISD tax rate was \$1.04 on the M & O side and .30 on the I & S side, for a total school tax rate of \$1.34 per \$100 of valuation.

2. Why would the district, in tough economic times, ask the community for an increase?

The Board of Trustees recognizes it is a bad time to ask for an increase. However, the district has many needs that must be met and that have been unable to be funded out of the existing budget.

3. What would the tax increase provide for our students?

The tax increase would be used for the following major items:

- a) **Technology**-We would invest 2.1 million dollars in technology immediately. At present, CISD is able to compete with every school around us academically. For instance, our SAT average is 1027 and has consistently been over 1,000 for the last 10 years. That compares favorably with any district around. However, we are behind many districts when it comes to technology in the classroom. For example, we have approximately 2,500 computers in the district. Of those, roughly 90% are 5 years or older. Also, in this day and age of technology, having an LCD projector in every class is like having a chalkboard in every classroom 30 years ago. This projector allows teachers to access all of the wonderful tools available through the internet and bring it to the entire classroom. Currently, we only have a few LCD projectors K – 4 and only in math and science classrooms at the secondary level. The tax increase would provide our students with the technology to be able to compete with students from around the state. In addition to the initial investment of 2.1 million dollars in technology, the tax increase would allow the district to allocate \$300,000 every year to technology to ensure our staff and students have the tools they need to prepare our students for living in the 21st century.

- b) **Transportation** – we currently have 5 spare buses to accommodate trip requests before our regular routes are completed in the evening. With a growing enrollment, we are adding 1 – 2 new routes a year. There are many days when all spares are used. Of the buses we have on regular routes, 5 are 16 years or older. We need to allocate \$300,000 per year to replace old buses, at a cost of \$100,000 per bus. The tax increase would allow us to do that.
- c) **Science labs at Crosby High School** – We currently need to add two science labs so that all of our students have the opportunity to attend a science class in a lab setting. The state now requires all students to have four years of science to graduate, which has increased our need for the additional science labs. Our current facility cannot accommodate all the needs of students in science.
- d) **Renovate the Instructional Annex** to have 11 classrooms available for elementary growth – Crosby is a growing district. Our enrollment as of last Friday was 5,039 students. The additional classrooms would allow for the projected growth in the elementary grades for the next 4 – 5 years.
- e) **Security and safety of our Students** – We need to invest money in a security system at each of our elementary campuses. This system would place cameras in all front offices and outside the building. In addition, the tax increase would allow us to modify the driveway at BPS so that we would get all of the pick-up traffic on FM 1942 off the road. This is a serious safety issue that needs to be addressed.
- f) **Major Renovations** – we have two facilities that need a new roof, Crosby Middle School and the Administration building. Without attention, the facilities will be a safety hazard to staff, students, and visitors. Water now leaks and streams into CMS classrooms and hallways.

4. Why would the district go for a Tax Ratification Election instead of a bond election?

The advantages to the district to have a Tax Ratification Election instead of a bond election are significant. The state of Texas will give to the district 60 cents for every dollar of local money raised in a Tax Ratification Election. In a bond election, the state would only give the district 30 cents for every dollar of local money raised.

5. Why doesn't the district set aside money every year so that when buses or big ticket maintenance items are needed, funds are available?

The practice is good, in theory, but the reality of the situation is that most school districts are like most families. It would be great for districts and families to put aside money every month so that when a car or bus was needed, the cash would be available. However, most districts have to go to the tax payers to request the help, much like most families have to borrow the money to help pay for their big ticket expenses.

6. Why is the Tax Ratification Election being held on December 12, 2009 instead of with the general election on November 3rd?

This is something the district does not have any control over. The Texas Election Code requires an election that is held on one of the general election dates (May and November) to be ordered no later than the 62nd day prior to the general election. In order to hold the Tax Ratification Election on November 3, it would have had to be ordered by September 2nd. Texas Tax Code prohibits a tax rate from being set until after the certified tax roll is received from Harris County Appraisal District and CISD did not get those rolls until after the September 2nd deadline.

7. What would the tax increase mean for the individual tax payer?

The tax increase would mean, on a house valued at \$100,000, an increase of \$100 per year, or \$8.33 per month.

8. If I am 65 or older, would my taxes increase?

Anyone who is 65 or older and has completed the forms for the Over 65 exemption will not see any increase in their taxes. To obtain a form, you may call our tax office at (281) 328-9220.

If you have a question, or heard a rumor and want to know the facts, please e-mail or call the Superintendent. We will have a new link on the web entitled **“Community Questions about the Proposed Tax Increase.”**