

Committee in favor of Prop E educates Edwardsville area about need of added tax funding

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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NOTE: This is the first in a series on the work of Committee for Excellence in Education volunteers and Prop E in Edwardsville.

EDWARDSVILLE - Members of the **Committee for Excellence in Education** in Edwardsville can be found nearly everywhere around the Edwardsville area these days promoting passage of Proposition E.

The committee is comprised of community members from different segments all with the purpose of sharing information about Prop E and working to shore up Edwardsville School District 7 as well, said **S.J. Morrison**, a spokesperson for the organization.

Morrison said the committee's biggest challenge is getting the word out to those in the community.

"People aren't really opposed to it once they know about it," he said. "As the school district goes, so goes the community. In a lot of ways Edwardsville has really benefitted from a high-quality school district for a long time with a tradition of academic excellence. That has been a draw for families."

Morrison said once they talk to people and residents, they are more likely to understand Prop E. Most see the need and pledge to in its favor on Election Day, Nov. 8.

"What we are doing is we are reaching out to the community at meetings with the community, parent groups, booster clubs-- wherever we can," Morrison said. "We are trying to meet with any group or organization that will be affected by the success or decline of the school district. All these meetings have gone very well for us."

Morrison said once they communicate with people, even those without kids in the district, they realize their property values are linked to the quality and success of the school district.

"If the school district declines, it will have a negative impact for housing in our area," Morrison said. Morrison said he is a product of Edwardsville School District, but does not presently have kids in the district. He said eventually he will have children within the schools. He believes many in the Edwardsville/Glen Carbon area are in the same boat he is with their young children.

If Prop E doesn't pass, Morrison said the district will continue deficit spending.

"District 7 is borrowing money to pay bills," he explained. "The district has eliminated 100 positions and \$14 million in expenditures. They have issued working cash bonds and have spent reserves."

He said if Prop E is passed, it will allow the Edwardsville School District to pay bills, update technology and textbooks. Also, he said it would improve security in a time where it is necessary across the country.

With Prop E's passage, the district would be able to start restoring cash reserves in 2022.

"There are not any cash reserves right now," Morrison said. "You wouldn't run a business or a household without cash reserves. We shouldn't expect our school district to operate without cash reserves."

Morrison said passing Prop E would allow District 7 to avoid losing control to the state and remove Edwardsville from the state financial watch list.

"Obviously, we see how the state is handling its finances, or rather, not handling its finances might be more appropriate," Morrison said. "You cannot continue to cut in District 7 and maintain the same academic excellence. If Prop E doesn't pass, programs are going to suffer."

Morrison urges people who aren't informed to read and become aware of what Prop E means and what it will do for District 7's schools.

"Once they see what the district has done with substantial declines in funding, I think they will see why this important," he said.

For more information, visit www.VoteYesPropE.com, "Vote Yes Proposition E" on Facebook or email info@VoteYesPropE.com.



FAST FACTS

Committee for Excellence in Education — Education Fund Referendum Guide

Proposition E is a referendum on the November ballot that would increase funding for local schools and ensure both the children and community's future by raising the Education Fund tax rate, **for the first time since 1977.**

An Education Fund tax rate increase is necessary because the State of Illinois has reduced its funding for District 7 by \$7.3 million annually and District 7 cannot maintain its tradition of academic excellence at current funding levels.

100 percent of the funds will stay local, allowing District 7 to restore financial stability, replace aging textbooks, update curricula, upgrade technology and failing security systems, maintain performing arts and athletic programs, eliminate debt and ensure the district does not lose local control to state.

To address the decline in state funding, District 7 has reduced operating expenses by \$14 million, depleted \$9 million in cash reserves, refinanced debt, issued working cash bonds, implemented salary freezes and eliminated 101 positions.

The world has changed a lot since 1977, the last time the Education Fund tax rate was increased. Technology, security, unfunded mandates, and student health services, along with inflation have raised the cost of education significantly in the last 39 years.

The current tax rate is \$4.22 and would increase to \$4.77 if Prop E passes. Currently, District 7's rate of \$4.22 is the second lowest of all school districts in Madison County and would continue to remain one of the lowest if **Prop E passes.**

On Election Day, Nov. 8, with enough yes votes, Proposition E would pass and be in place for the future for funding of District 7 education needs.

Website: VoteYesPropE.com

Email: Info@VoteYesPropE.com

"Vote Yes Proposition E" on Facebook

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FOR THE COMMUNITY.
FOR OUR FUTURE.**