

Dr. Andre expresses disappointment with Prop E results, says decision will have big impact

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EDWARDSVILLE - Voters yesterday voted down **Edwardsville Community Unit School District 7's** plan to ensure its ongoing financial stability and academic excellence by increasing the Education Fund tax rate by \$0.55. Proposition E lost by a vote of 14,468 to 13,388.

Dr. Lynda Andre, Superintendent of Schools, is disappointed with the results. “I want to remind the citizens of District 7 of the challenges we face to continue providing all of our children with the excellent education that is the hallmark of our school district. In order to do that, it is critical that we are able to balance the budget. The decision made last night will have a significant impact on the education of thousands of students as we continue to grapple with a decline in state and federal funding,” Andre said.

Andre said that the dedicated citizens group, the *Committee for Excellence in Education*, who provided leadership, energy, enthusiasm, and countless volunteer hours, communicated these complex financial and educational issues throughout the District 7 community. “I want to specifically thank Amanda Brase, Donna Charleston, SJ Morrison, Lucas Siron, Diana Speicher, Katie Robberson, Krista Miller, Kris Trgovich, Beth Duncan, Jennifer Fowler, and Rick Salmi, who took the lead and were willing to accept the challenge of assisting the District in its effort to address this extremely complex issue for the benefit of the children in our communities.”

As a result of their efforts and those of PTOs, booster clubs, parents, employees, business leaders, and civic and community organizations, Proposition E gained support from nearly every sector of the community. Civic leaders, community groups, and labor groups endorsed Proposition E early on in the effort. In spite of this support, it wasn’t enough.

The District had planned to allocate funding from the referendum as follows:

- **\$2.7 million annually** to ensure a balanced budget by June 2019 to avoid a potential state takeover.
- **\$1.7 million annually** to eliminate the expected June 2017 Education Fund operating debt of \$6.7 million and begin establishing cash reserves.
- **\$1 million annually** to begin the process of addressing academic, technology, and school security needs, including replacing aging textbooks, restoring the curriculum review cycle, upgrading technology infrastructure and hardware, and updating failing school security systems.
- **\$1.5 million annually** to allocate sufficient funding to address increases in operational expenditures.

Board of Education President Monica Laurent stated, “The **District 7 Board of Education** will have tough decisions to make in the months ahead in an effort to reduce the borrowing that is expected to reach \$5 million in the spring as a result of the state’s failure to honor its funding commitment to District 7. The Board of Education has taken all available steps since 2008 to try to minimize the impact of its financial crisis on students. That is no longer possible. We will continue to be good stewards of taxpayers’

dollars and will make the financial decisions necessary to provide quality educational services for our students.”