

# **Dr. Andre's comments as District 7 Board of Education considers referendum list for April 4 vote**

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**District 7 Board of Education Considers Referendum List for April 4<sup>th</sup> Vote**

On January 9, 2017, the District 7 Board of Education voted unanimously to place Proposition E, an education fund tax rate increase, before the voters of the communities that make up the school district on the April 4<sup>th</sup> ballot. As we all know, Prop E was narrowly defeated last November.

Last night, however, the administration and Board of Education began the very difficult task of identifying programs and services that must be reduced or eliminated if Proposition E does not pass this April.

This is difficult because, for decades, the role of the administration and the Board of Education has been to develop and maintain high quality programs and services to enhance the educational experiences of the thousands of children who live in Edwardsville, Glen Carbon, Hamel, Midway, Worden, Prairietown and a large portion of unincorporated Madison County.

However, in the face of nine years of decreasing state support and stagnant property tax revenue, the Board has no choice but to make the tough decisions that will move this District toward a balanced budget, an action that has been mandated by the Illinois State Board of Education, to ensure financial stability for the future.

Today, nearly 7,600 children receive an outstanding education within District 7's 15 campuses each year as a result of the commitment of our communities to prepare their young people for responsible citizenship and future educational opportunities.

On a daily basis, children receive instruction from a highly talented teaching staff – educators who can work anywhere but choose to teach in the Edwardsville School District. Children receive high quality fine arts experiences, opportunities to participate on athletic teams coached by the most dedicated teachers, and a wide array of extracurricular activities designed to broaden their horizons and explore their interests.

We know this system is successful as year after year we witness graduating classes who continue to attend college in enviable numbers - 95 percent of Edwardsville High School graduating seniors attend universities across this country and earn millions of dollars in scholarship funds to do so. Test scores on state assessments have proven to be the highest in the Metro East area for at least 15 years.

The administration and the Board of Education **MUST** find a way to balance the budget **AND** continue to provide a quality education for our students. The ultimate solution to this financial crisis will have real consequences to our students and our communities.

**District 7 Proposed Referendum Reductions for the 2017-18 School Year**

Below is the proposed list of programs and services that will be considered for reduction and/or elimination for the 2017-18 school year if the April 4<sup>th</sup> referendum is not passed.

### **Athletics**

- Eliminate freshmen sports at Edwardsville High School
- Eliminate all middle school sports at Lincoln and Liberty

### **Extracurricular Activities**

- Reduce extracurricular clubs at Liberty and Lincoln Middle Schools by 50%
- Reduce extracurricular clubs at Edwardsville High School by 50%
- Eliminate elementary Math Club at Woodland, Cassens, Worden, and Columbus Elementary Schools

### **Performing Arts**

- Eliminate 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade band
- Eliminate 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra
- Reduce EHS drama performances to one per year
- Reduce Lincoln and Liberty drama performances to one per year per school

### **Academics**

- Reduce course offerings at Edwardsville High School
- Eliminate EHS summer school
- Eliminate EHS Writing Center
- Eliminate middle school and high school after school tutoring
- Eliminate elementary Challenge Program

### **Other Services**

- Eliminate EHS Early Bird bus service
- Eliminate K-12 field trips
- Eliminate middle school and high school after school activity bus service

### **Continued Impact of a Failed Referendum**

- No updated textbooks
- No new student computers

- No building-wide WIFI access at Edwardsville High School, Lincoln or Liberty Middle Schools
- No updated school security cameras

## **Calendar**

District 7 students will not be in attendance on Friday, February 17, due to a scheduled Teacher Institute Day and on Monday, February 20, due to the observance of President's Day.

## **Student Recognition**

The Board recognized Edwardsville High School seniors Seth Davey and Ian McAtee for winning the 2016 Congressional App Challenge in Illinois' 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Established by Members of the U.S. House of Representatives in 2013, this competition is a nationwide event intended to engage students' creativity and encourage their participation in STEM fields. Congressman Rodney Davis visited these students at EHS to personally congratulate them on their success and took a photo to be used in announcing their accomplishment to local media. Their app will be featured on the U.S. House of Representatives website ([www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)) and displayed in a U.S. Capitol exhibit.

## **Recognition of St. Cecilia's Knights of Columbus**

Spencer Chapman and members of the St. Cecilia's Knights of Columbus made a \$10,323.18 donation to support District 7's Special Education Program. The Board recognized these members for their continued positive contribution to students with special needs.