

Edwardsville School District approves resolution for cuts if referendum does not pass

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - The push for **Proposition E** continues.

Edwardsville Superintendent Lynda Andre concluded both the **Edwardsville Board of Education's** financial committee and regular school board meetings on Monday, Feb. 27, 2017, by informing the public regarding the district's current funding woes and need for an increase of property taxes to fix them. Among the things mentioned in her statements were once-potential cuts required if Proposition E, a referendum on the April 4, 2017, ballot to raise property taxes in the district by 55 cents, from \$4.22 for every \$100 of equalized assessed value (EAV) to \$4.77, does not pass.

Following her statements near the end of the regular school board meeting, the Edwardsville Board of Education voted unanimously, but with some objections, to "approve a resolution to implement expenditure reductions to offset a portion of the projected \$3-\$3.5 million budget deficit for the 2017-18 school year should the district's education fund tax referendum on April 4, 2017, fail."

Put simply, the board voted to make the cuts Andre has warned would come for at least the last month if the measure fails again, as it did in the Nov. 7, 2016, election by a margin of more than 1,000 votes, which only constituted about one percent of the votes cast.

Those cuts include the following:

All Ninth Grade Sports

- Football
- Boys' Soccer
- Girls' Volleyball
- Boys' Golf
- Boys' Basketball
- Girls' Basketball
- Baseball
- Girls' Soccer
- Field Hockey
- Boys' Track
- Girls' Track
- Wrestling
- Girls' Golf

All Middle School Athletics

- Baseball
- Boys' Basketball
- Boys' Track

- Boys' Volleyball
- Football
- Wrestling
- Poms/Dance
- Cheerleading
- Cross Country
- Field Hockey
- Girls' Basketball
- Girls' Track
- Girls' Volleyball
- Softball

Performing Arts

- Eliminate fourth-grade band
- Eliminate fifth-grade band
- Eliminate fourth-grade orchestra
- Eliminate fifth-grade orchestra
- Reduce Edwardsville High School drama performances to one per year
- Reduce middle school drama performances to one per school per year

50 Percent of Middle School Extracurricular Activities

- Act 1
- Art Club
- Computer Club
- Ecology Club
- Future Farmers of America
- FIT/GO
- Intramurals
- Math Team
- Model UN
- Newspaper
- Robotics
- Scholar Bowl
- Science Club
- Yearbook
- Young Authors

50 Percent of High School Extracurricular Activities

- Computer Team

- Debate
- Environmental Club
- EPIC
- Interact Club
- Key Club
- Literary Magazine
- Math Team
- Model UN
- National Honor Society
- Newspaper
- Prom
- Student Council
- Thespian Club
- Yearbook

All Elementary Extracurricular Activities

- Elimination of Elementary Math Club

Other Cuts

- No future new class offerings at the high school level
- No Early Bird bus service
- No K-12 field trips
- No after school bus service for the middle and high school students

Board member **Terry Dalla Riva** said she felt as if the cuts were "whittling away at children's educations." She described the cuts as "unfair," and expressed she had further reservations about the cuts chosen before voting yes with the rest of the board.

Another board member, **Dr. Lelan Olsen** said he feared the cuts would hinder the district's abilities to help generate successful careers for its students. He spoke of actresses, actors and long-jumper Julian Harvey, who is one of the best long-jumpers in the world and a graduate of the Edwardsville School District.

His concerns were echoed by transgender activist **Andrea Maxwell**, who attended the meeting to ask the board to make "progressive policies" regarding bathrooms and transgender students. She said some trans students in the district are afraid to "come out" as who they are due to a lack of such policies. She also said suicide rates in schools with progressive policies is much lower for trans students than it is in schools without such policies (suicide rates for transgender people is around 41 percent compared to the overall population's rate of 4.6 percent).

After asking the board for such policies and receiving a round of applause, Maxwell said she was in school with Harvey and on the track team with him. She said his influence as well as the school programs able to foster that character were why she felt comfortable and confident in her own skin. She said the cuts the board approved would "take away a lot of hope and possibility for students who need it."

Edwardsville School Board President Monica Laurent said the cuts approved at the Feb. 27, 2017, meeting would only be a third of the required cuts needed for the district to be "good stewards" of taxpayers' money.

More information about those cuts and why they are needed can be found in previous stories by Riverbender.com:

[Edwardsville School District holds special board meeting to receive public input regarding referendum and possible cuts.](#)

[Edwardsville School District reveals possible cuts if April 4, 2017, referendum is not passed.](#)