

Edwardsville School District's stance on the one-cent sales tax measure

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EDWARDSVILLE - Voters in the Edwardsville School District have two tax-related measures on the upcoming April 4, 2017 ballot - Proposition E and the School Facilities Sales Tax.

Proposition E would raise property taxes by 55 cents for every \$100 of equalized assessed valuation (EAV) in the district. Due to state funding multipliers, however, the district was able to lower its [tax levy](#) from its current \$4.22 to between \$4.10 and \$4.14 for every \$100 of EAV. If Proposition E passes, however, that will raise to \$4.65 to \$4.69 for every \$100 of EAV.

The School Facilities Tax is a proposed one percent sales tax increase on certain retail items throughout Madison County, which would be earmarked specifically for school building and infrastructure improvements. It could not be used for salaries, education or pensions. Despite the restrictions, many school districts in Madison County, including Alton, have promised to dedicate as much as 50 percent of the revenue from the sales tax measure to lowering property taxes if it passes. Edwardsville was not one of those districts.

Proposition E was defeated by a margin of nearly two percent when it went to ballot in November 2016. The Edwardsville School District released a [list of cuts](#) it would be forced to make if it was voted down again. On the other hand, after the state legalized the usage of one cent sales taxes for schools to use for infrastructure in 2007, 47 counties across the state have voted in its favor, including all eight, which put it to ballot in Nov. 2016.

According to a release from Edwardsville Superintendent Lynda Andre, the Edwardsville School District would receive 18 percent of the revenue generated from Madison County if the School Facilities Tax passes, which is estimated to be as much as \$4.3 million. The revenue is distributed by the county to school districts based on enrollment and population. That money would also be restricted for the district's usage.

"Revenue from the new sales tax cannot be used for: textbooks, computers, all instructional expenditures, all moveable equipment and other direct operating costs, all of which are the district's first and most urgent priorities to maintain academic excellence," Andre said in a release.

Instead, Andre said her district's main priority is the passage of Proposition E, which she said would provide the following to the district:

- New student textbooks, new student computers, upgraded technology and new school security cameras

- Funds to preserve programs and services currently offered to District #7 students
- Funds to ensure that the Education Fund is balanced by June 2019 as required by the Illinois State Board of Education
- Funds to begin establishing necessary cash reserves to remove District #7 from the state's Financial Watch List

"Revenue from the new sales tax can only be used for new facilities, energy efficiency, additions and renovations, land acquisition, ongoing facility maintenance, fire prevention and life safety, roof repairs, parking lots and abatement of property taxes levied to pay bonds issued for capital purposes," Andre said in a release. "Previous estimates provided to the district indicate that the One Percent School Facilities Sales Tax could generate approximately \$4.1 million annually to be used for these purposes only."

The sales tax was proposed by a majority of Madison County school districts, with the exception of Edwardsville, Collinsville and Venice. The districts requested the Regional Office of Education submit the tax to the Madison County Clerk for placement on next Tuesday's ballot.