



Board of Education
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Superintendent:
Dr. Will Hoffman

Press Release

Madison County Schools appreciates the clear statement made by our County Commission on June 11, 2019 when they voted to place on the March 2020 ballot an advisory referendum giving Madison County voters the opportunity to vote again on the $\frac{1}{4}$ of a penny sales tax. The Board of Education and I appreciate the Commissioners' effort to provide additional funding for our schools and our students. The Madison County Commission also passed a Resolution on June 11, 2019 stating that if the sales and use tax is approved they are fully committed to invest all additional sales tax revenue received by passage of the public education sales tax on critical public education needs. The 1/4-penny sales tax will generate enough revenue to increase teacher compensation and help to make necessary, long-term capital improvements to our facilities. Estimates show that the $\frac{1}{4}$ -penny sales tax will generate \$290,000 per year. We are already paying the $\frac{1}{4}$ - penny tax when we shop in Buncombe and Haywood Counties.

Teacher Salaries

Currently, our teachers receive one of the smallest supplements in the State of North Carolina. On an annual basis, it is not uncommon to see some of our best teachers leaving for neighboring counties who provide higher salaries and, considering the overall level of teacher salaries in the State of North Carolina, no one can blame a teacher for leaving to seek more compensation just a few miles away.

In 2015, our County took a bold step in starting to increase teacher supplements, but the 1/4-penny sales tax will allow us to increase supplements even more, thereby making it easier for Madison County Schools to recruit and retain the best and brightest teachers.

Capital Improvements

It is no secret that many of our facilities are aging and in need of repair. Our High School is approximately fifty (50) years old and, while the building has been well maintained, it needs significant renovations that include the stadium, new sidewalks, and a new roof for the building.

The high school, however, is just atop the growing list of capital needs. Growth projections in Madison County, along with legislative mandates like K-3 class size restrictions, will create the need for more classroom space at Mars Hill Elementary. Madison Middle School is in need of a new roof, critical security updates are needed such as digital camera systems in each of our schools, as well as

the on-going cost of routine maintenance to ensure we are providing the best and safest learning environment possible for our students.

Many of our smaller maintenance and security needs are addressed by the annual budget provided by the Commissioners, however, some needs, like capital improvements, are expensive enough that the cost must be financed over several years. The revenue generated by the 1/4-penny sales tax could (and should) be used to pay for the financing of these long-range capital improvements. The 2014 State budget, Senate bill 402, rewrote the lottery statutes and eliminated the 40% statutory guarantee of net lottery proceeds for school construction, which was a dedicated funding stream in place since the lottery's inception in 2005. We are hopeful for new K-12 construction funding, in a State budget that has yet to be passed, but we also know that hope is not a strategy. The 1/4-cent sales tax will create a long-term funding stream that we can count on to meet the needs of Madison County students for generations to come.

In March, I hope each of you consider the impact you can have for our children. In order to make our children competitive in the 21st century, our students need the best teachers and the best facilities that can be provided. Although the 1/4-penny sales tax is not the answer to all our needs, it certainly is a start down the path of providing our children with the very best we can. Our kids deserve it!

Will Hoffman
Superintendent
Madison County Schools