



## Rebuttal #1 – Fountain Lake School District Proposes Millage Increase

### Description

#### If Passed, Higher Taxes Coming for Fountain Lake School District Property Owners

In the November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, edition of the Hot Springs Village Voice an **article on page 6A, was published. It started out by saying: “Publishers Note: This is the first of a six-part series of comments offered to the Hot Springs Village Voice regarding the upcoming school millage vote. Personal opinions reflect their own and not necessarily the view of the Hot Springs Village Voice. The series is offered to bring information to voters.”**

#### Another Point of View of the Proposed Fountain Lake School District Millage Increase

**FLSD: “The Fountain Lake School District [FLSD] is proposing a 5 mil increase to fund the construction of a new elementary school, a community workforce center, a sports complex, a performance arena, and expansion of the roadway system within the campus.”**

**“Under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Michael Murphy and the Fountain Lake Board of Education, conservative budgeting and management of resources have allowed the district to purchase two adjacent tracts of land. Expanding the district footprint to the south and west by more than twenty-five acres, clearing and developing those sites for future use has been done from district revenue fund balances.”**

**Taxpayers: While we find it commendable for FLSD to engage in conservative budgeting and management of their resources, we question why this endeavor was undertaken PRIOR to knowing the results of the upcoming Special Election on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022? Is FLSD so confident that the vote for the 5 mil increase will be in their favor that they purchased the property for their “needs?” Also, it is not transparent to the taxpayers how much revenue FLSD netted from the sale of timber on the cleared 25 acres. Where is this information located?**

**FLSD:** “After completing a facilities audit during the 2017-2018 school year, the need for adequate elementary classrooms rose to the highest level of concern. Current classrooms in the 2-4<sup>th</sup> grades building no longer meet the state minimum standards for square footage.”

**Taxpayers:** We researched AR State minimum standards for classroom square footage in the ‘Arkansas Public School Academic Facility Manual’ (Chapter 6, June 27, 2016). No mention of minimum square footage was found.

**FLSD:** “Two 30 year old portable buildings are not conducive to learning.”

**Taxpayers:** What classes are currently held in these portables? How can we better understand what makes them not conducive to learning?

**FLSD:** “One kitchen from which to serve the entire student population requires lunch for some students to begin at 10:00 AM, while the last students finish lunch at 1:00 PM.”

**Taxpayers:** FLSD has approximately a 1370 student enrollment count. Not a large student population for a pre-k-12 school when compared to other schools in AR. Adjusting the lunch hours ½ hour later may alleviate some of their problems.

**FLSD:** “The construction of a self-contained elementary school on the site of the current tennis courts will separate those students from the middle and high school students. Classrooms, a cafetorium/multipurpose facility, and a secure playground will allow the district’s early learners to remain on their own campus throughout the day.”

**Taxpayers:** FLSD is not an over-crowded campus and sharing resources is fiscally prudent compared with building and staffing an entirely new elementary school campus. Also, there is pending legislation in the U.S. Senate to provide school facilities and teachers for every child ages 3 -5 years. Wouldn’t it be wise to see what federal money and mandates become law before starting a new elementary campus?

**FLSD:** “The construction of on-campus baseball and softball fields would allow the district to have actual home fields rather than the current required travel to local youth league fields for practice and home games. Additional parking and a reconfiguring of the entrance to the football field would also be completed.”

**Taxpayers:** Please help us understand how this construction of on-campus athletic fields contributes to improving the academic progress of the District.

**FLSD:** “To further improve traffic flow and safety on the campus, a roadway along the southern and western border of the campus will move student drop-off and pick-up away from the center of the campus. The new road would connect Park Avenue to Cobra Drive and on through to Fox Pass Cut-off.”

**Taxpayers: Why are HSV Property Owners who reside in the FLSD boundaries being asked to foot the bill for a new road that NONE of our approximately 200 HSV students use to get to and from school? We already provide approximately 78% of FLSD's total revenue through our real estate taxes. At the current millage rate, we've made FLSD one of the wealthiest schools per student in Arkansas. Some taxpayers in HSV perceive this "needs" list to be an excessive "wants" list which will cost each and every property owner in FLSD boundaries a considerable increase in their existing real estate taxes—regardless of their current real estate property tax freeze under Amendment 79. It also does not consider the implications of the current reappraisals of all real property in both Saline and Garland counties. Most importantly, we the taxpayers do not feel the "needs" outlined by Superintendent Murphy are essential to the academic progress of our FLSD students. Vote NO!**

Respectfully submitted,

Concerned HSV Property Owners for NO Fountain Lake District Millage Increase, December 8, 2021

For more information please email [NoFLSDmillageincrease@mail.com](mailto:NoFLSDmillageincrease@mail.com)

Click **HERE** to read the full article in the Voice titled, "Fountain Lake millage increase to fund new elementary school, sports complex." Update: Unfortunately, this HSV Voice article link no longer works.

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Thank you for reading. If you like, please comment below. **We love to hear your opinion and thank you for keeping the comments polite and on topic.** If you would like to submit an article for publication, please contact us through this website. Be sure to bookmark this website.

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1. Uncategorized

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