



Why Now Fountain Lake School District?

Description

Did you get a glossy flyer from Fountain Lake School District [FLSD] in your mailbox recently, asking us taxpayers to OK a 5 mill increase in indebted money?

FLSD Superintendent Dr. Murphy and his school board have set a Special Election for February 8, 2022, on this issue. On the face of it, special elections are designed to lower the turnout. You can bet that every teacher, staff member, and Cobra booster will turn out to vote affirmatively.

Bad weather, likely in early February, will impact older Villager's wanting to get to the polls. To circumvent weather/COVID problems, registered FLSD voters living in Garland should call their County Clerk at 501-622-3610 for an absentee ballot application. Saline county residents should call 501-303-5630.

Before you decide how to vote, you need to understand how much additional money FLSD is asking for.

The difference between millage rates for each surrounding school district is not very important—the factor to look at is the cumulative value of each school district's real property that makes up each district's "tax base." FLSD is fortunate to claim the most expensive real estate in both Garland and Saline counties + a Walmart store, for its tax base.

All properties in Garland and Saline Counties have just been reappraised and HSV values are predicted to rise between 25–40% next year. Additionally, every time a property is sold, its valuation goes to full market value. There have been approximately 700 Village homes sold in 2021, each sale further enriching either FLSD's or Jessieville's tax base.

Revenue per 1 FLSD mill for School Year 2019-2020 was \$270,122.19. For School Year 2021-2022, it is conservatively projected to rise to \$275,592.47, using our historic 92% tax collection rate. FLSD is asking us taxpayers for about a \$1,377,860 increase, and this prior to learning just how much our new appraisals will increase our tax bills in the year 2023.

FLSD superintendents have historically inflated anticipated student growth. However, from 2006 to 2021 their actual student growth has been about 185 students, which includes an estimated 81 “school choice” students. (These are students who live and pay taxes outside district boundaries but have asked to transfer to FLSD.) The problem these students cause is that they leave their student funding with their old district while FLSD’s taxpayers have to subsidize their education. Currently, FLSD is spending \$11,326 per student annually. That will increase substantially once our reappraisals are recorded and become payable in 2023.

If the “Build Back Better” bill that is before the U.S. Senate is passed in its current form, there will be a mandate to school pre-kindergartners. Hopefully, there will be federal money to provide buildings, teachers, and equipment for these babies. Wouldn’t it be wise to wait until we see what further funds may be available from the federal/state governments before we build a new elementary school? Vote NO NEW TAXES NOW!

Patty MacDonald, 38-year resident

Questions? Email: NoFLSDmillageincrease@mail.com

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