

For Immediate Release

March 15, 2023

For the East Troy Community School District, the non-recurring operational referendum going to voters on April 4 is helping to maintain programming and staffing while also helping to provide predictability and stability to our district.

If approved, the referendum would allow the District to exceed its state-set revenue limits by \$3 million for each of the next three years, beginning with the 2023-24 school year. The tax impact is estimated to be \$1.40 per each \$1,000 of property value each year.

“We need to keep our quality programming for our students, recognize the importance of maintaining and attracting quality staff in an ever competitive labor market, and provide our community, district, families, students and employees some funding stability,” Hibner said.

Like many other Wisconsin school districts, East Troy is struggling with a budget shortfall to fund day-to-day expenses as revenues decrease and costs increase. Over the past 16 years, the District has done \$10.2 million in budget-balancing efforts and deferred some large-scale maintenance needs in order to address the problem. The District is expected to face a \$2.3 million structural deficit for the 2023-24 school year.

For the past two years, there has been no increase in the state’s per pupil allocation to school districts. Federal ESSER funds to help districts meet expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic are no longer available. East Troy’s total revenue limit and per pupil state aid for this school year was only 1.3% over the 2018-19 figure.

At the same time, expenses have continued to increase especially in areas such as transportation, technology, insurance and utilities. The District is also struggling to attract and retain quality staff. Since the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, over 47 licensed staff members have left the District, with the range in past years being 12 - 15 staff members.

East Troy had also considered holding a capital referendum to fund major facility renovations and upgrades. A facility study in spring, 2022 identified over 100 maintenance projects. The District ranked the projects by priority and focused on items that enhanced safety and security and addressed aging infrastructure needs.

After careful consideration, the District decided to hold only one referendum in April to minimize the tax impact on voters, Hibner said. The number of years for the operational referendum was reduced from five to three for the same reason, he added.

The additional revenue from the operational referendum funds can only be used for the District's operating expenses so the capital needs that have been identified can not be paid for with those funds. The District will continue to study ways to address the capital projects, Hibner said.

Additional information can be found on the [District's website](#).