

VOTER’S GUIDE TO THE UPCOMING SCHOOL REFERENDUM

On Tuesday, Nov. 4, voters will have the opportunity to decide on ISD#1 Aitkin Public School District Referendum questions

A school referendum is a direct vote by the citizens within a school district on a specific issue, most often related to funding. It is a form of direct democracy at the local level that allows voters to approve or reject proposed tax increases or bond measures for the school district.

WHAT ARE THE QUESTIONS:

There are two questions on the ballot. The second question can only pass if the first question passes.

SCHOOL DISTRICT QUESTION 1 (ISD #1) Approval of School District Bond Issue

Shall the school board of Independent School District No. 1 (Aitkin Public Schools) be authorized to issue its general obligation school building bonds in an amount not to exceed \$59,440,000 to provide funds for the acquisition and betterment of school sites and facilities, including the construction and equipping of a new PreK-6 elementary school and transportation center?

- Question One proposes a \$59.44 million plan to replace the nearly 70-year-old Rippleside Elementary School with a new PreK-6 building and a new school transportation center to replace the existing bus garage.
- Question Two proposes a \$6 million investment in a new community wellness and recreation center attached to the new PreK-6 school. Question Two can only pass if Question One also passes.

SCHOOL DISTRICT QUESTION 2 (ISD #1) Approval of School District Bond Issue

If School District Question 1 is approved, shall the school board of Independent School District No. 1 (Aitkin Public Schools) also be authorized to issue its general obligation school building bonds in an amount not to exceed \$6,000,000 to provide funds for the acquisition and betterment of school sites and facilities, including the construction and equipping of a new community wellness center attached to the new elementary school?

REASON FOR THE REFERENDUM

After evaluating school buildings and hearing from the community, the district proposes a plan to address the greatest need which is to replace the Rippleside Elementary School building and provide a bus transportation center.

The Rippleside building is nearly 70 years old and has many issues that are beyond affordable repairs according to the district. Everything from roofs to windows to flooring needs replacement.

Bond Issue Amount		Question 1 \$59,440,000	Question 2 \$6,000,000	Total \$65,440,000
Type of Property	Estimated Market Value	Estimated Impact on Annual Taxes Payable in 2026		
Residential Homestead	\$100,000	\$91	\$9	\$100
	\$175,000	\$210	\$21	\$231
	\$200,000	\$250	\$25	\$275
	\$250,000	\$329	\$33	\$363
	\$300,000	\$409	\$42	\$450
	\$325,000	\$448	\$46	\$494
	\$350,000	\$488	\$50	\$538
	\$400,000	\$568	\$58	\$625
	\$450,000	\$647	\$66	\$713
	\$500,000	\$726	\$74	\$800
Commercial/Industrial	\$600,000	\$911	\$93	\$1,003
	\$50,000	\$109	\$11	\$120
	\$100,000	\$219	\$22	\$241
	\$250,000	\$619	\$63	\$682
	\$500,000	\$1,348	\$137	\$1,485
	\$1,000,000	\$2,805	\$285	\$3,090
Agricultural Homestead** (Average value per acre of land & building)	\$1,000	\$0.22	\$0.02	\$0.24
	\$2,000	\$0.44	\$0.04	\$0.48
	\$3,000	\$0.66	\$0.07	\$0.72
	\$4,000	\$0.87	\$0.09	\$0.96
	\$5,000	\$1.09	\$0.11	\$1.20
Non-Agricultural Homestead** (Average value per acre of land & building)	\$1,000	\$0.44	\$0.04	\$0.48
	\$2,000	\$0.87	\$0.09	\$0.96
	\$3,000	\$1.31	\$0.13	\$1.44
	\$4,000	\$1.75	\$0.18	\$1.93
	\$5,000	\$2.19	\$0.22	\$2.41
Seasonal Recreational Resident	\$100,000	\$146	\$15	\$161
	\$200,000	\$291	\$30	\$321
	\$300,000	\$437	\$44	\$482
	\$400,000	\$583	\$59	\$642
	\$500,000	\$729	\$74	\$803
	\$750,000	\$1,184	\$120	\$1,304

*Estimated tax impact includes principal and interest payments on the new bonds. The amounts in the table are based on school district taxes for bonded debt levies only, and do not include tax levies for other purposes. Tax increases shown above are gross increases, not including the impact of the homeowner's Homestead Credit Refund ("Credit Breaker") program. Owners of homestead property may qualify for a refund, based on their income and total property taxes. This will change the net effect of the proposed bond issue for those property owners.

#The tax impact for commercial-industrial property in the school district will vary due to the impact of the Iron Range Fiscal Disparities program.

**For all agricultural property, includes a 70% reduction due to the School Building Bond Agricultural Credit. Average value per acre is the total estimated market value of all land & buildings divided by total acres. If the property includes a home, then the tax impact on the house, garage, and one acre of land will be calculated in addition to the taxes per acre, on the same basis as a residential homestead or non-homestead property. If the same property owner owns more than \$3.5 million of agricultural homestead land and buildings, a portion of the property will be taxed at the higher non-homestead rate.

You may be eligible for ways to offset increases to your property taxes, including:

Homestead credit refund – the state's largest property tax refund program.

Special one-year refund – for excessive increases (12% increase and at least \$100).

Senior tax deferral – helping those 65+ manage property tax bills.

Renters' property tax credit – tax relief for renters.

ISD#1 PROPOSAL

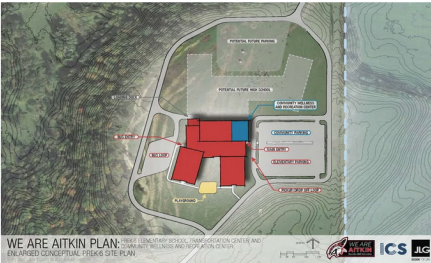
The new pre-k-6 elementary school and bus transportation center would provide: improved classrooms, enhanced safety and accessibility, healthier spaces and energy savings and safer, more efficient transportation.

The new community wellness and recreation center would give residents of all ages a place to gather. The shared facility would be accessible year-round with indoor recreation space (walking track, gym, fitness center) and multi-purpose rooms for community meetings/events.



DRAFT DESIGNS FOR THE NEW PREK-6 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The proposed new elementary school and community wellness and recreation center would be located on approximately 80-90 acres of 225 acres of land owned by the school district (34305 405th Place, Aitkin).



The district has been awarded \$5 million from IRRRB which would reduce the cost/impact of the project.

The polling place for district residents is the Aitkin Public Library (110 First Ave. NE, Aitkin) on Election Day Nov. 4. Early voting is taking place now at the Aitkin County Government Center, 307 Second St. NW, Room 121, Aitkin, Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

For more information about the proposed referendum, visit WeAreAitkin.org.