

# STRONG SCHOOLS STRONGER HILLSBOROUGH



## What?

Vote on August 23, 2022, to approve a one mil increase in ad valorem tax that will increase funding around \$146 million annually for a four-year period.

## Why?

Our district has more than 1,000 unfilled positions. Many teachers and staff are moving on to higher-paying surrounding counties or changing careers. The one mil increase is designed to retain experienced teachers, compensate support staff, and provide financial support to art, music, PE, and workforce programs.



### Increase Staff Compensation



### Protect & Expand Art, Music, Physical Education



### Prepare Students through Workforce Education



We must address the 150+ bus driver shortage so our students are not waiting at stops for hours and late to school daily.

## What are the Benefits?

- Quality schools are the foundation of a safe and vibrant community.
- Highly qualified teachers and staff would remain in our district, giving students the best education.
- All students would arrive at school on time with bus driver positions fully staffed.
- Students would be better prepared to enter our local workforce with high-paying careers.
- Our economy thrives by attracting businesses due to a well-prepared workforce.
- Students in art, music, and physical education have more desire to learn and achieve higher results.



We have not received state lottery funding since 2020. That is a loss of \$10 million annually.



## Cost to Average Homeowner

Home Appraised Value	Yearly Cost for Property Owner	Monthly Cost for Property Owner	Weekly Cost for Property Owner	Daily Cost for Property Owner
\$250K	\$225	\$18.75	\$4.69	\$0.67

Charter schools also share in funds



FAQs on the back!



**JULY 25 - VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE**  
**AUGUST 8-21 - EARLY VOTING**  
**AUGUST 23 - ELECTION DAY**

# VOTE

**AUGUST 23**

Learn More at [hillsboroughschools.org/strongschools](https://hillsboroughschools.org/strongschools)

# Frequently Asked Questions

**Why is the School Board asking voters to approve a one mil increase in ad valorem taxes?** Over the last two years, our district has experienced an increase in resignations and retirements which have created more than 1,000 unfilled positions in the district. Experienced, successful teachers earn salaries only slightly higher than early career teachers. The one mil increase is primarily designed to retain experienced teachers, compensate support staff, and meet operational needs in art, music, PE, and workforce education. Voter approval is needed to increase funding.

**How much money will the one mil bring into the district, and for how long?** It is estimated to bring in about \$146 million a year. The increase will end in four years unless renewed by voters.

**Why isn't there enough money to pay out of the operational budget?** The state has mandated a steady decline in the Required Local Millage rate each year from 5.629 in 2013 to 3.601 today, costing the district nearly \$975 million over those years. Even if the one mil passes, the rate will still be lower than the 2013 level.

**Where will this money go besides teacher compensation?** In addition to supporting non-instructional staff and charter schools, the district plans to use approximately 20% of its share of funds to improve art, music, PE, and workforce education programs. The district would place an additional 45 art, 67 music, and 39 physical education teachers in our elementary schools to ensure that every student has access to these programs, including Kindergarteners who do not currently receive these learning experiences. The funds would also be used to upgrade musical instruments, art equipment/supplies, stage lighting, audio equipment, and physical education instructional materials/equipment. Additionally, the district will expand course offerings in workforce development – welding, electricians, construction, plumbers, and the like. We believe these programs are vital to helping support well-rounded young men and women and positively impact our local economy. Finally, approximately 16% of the total funds will go to students in charter schools.

**What is the cost of the one mil increase for property owners?** Property owners would pay \$1 for every \$1,000 in assessed value. For example, for a property valued at \$246,808 (median market value in Hillsborough) with a homestead exemption applied, an owner would pay about \$18.48/month or \$222/year.

**What is the economic impact of investing in quality schools?** Economic growth is directly related to the skills of our workforce, and obtaining those skills is heavily dependent on our schools. Furthermore, investing in quality public schools improves academic performance, community safety, and makes our county more attractive to businesses which creates high-quality jobs and raises our property values.

**Isn't this the wrong time to ask for a tax increase with inflation and rising property values already creating higher costs?** Our district realizes any tax increase can be a heavy lift for families. Like many industries, our district is facing staffing shortages. Throughout the current school year, we have had 350-460 instructional vacancies and 150-160 bus driver vacancies, and nearly 550 vacancies in other areas of critical need. We are losing teachers for a variety of reasons, including retirement. To compete with surrounding districts, we must be able to provide a competitive compensation package for teachers and staff so children have the best educators.

**How can the public be assured that the district is spending money as it should?** The district's financial data and audits are fully available to the public on its Accounting Services webpage. For 20 straight years, the Accounting Department has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association. Based on the success of the Citizen Oversight Committee, which oversees the half-penny sales tax Education Referendum, the district would develop a similar structure to review the spending and progress related to funds generated by the one mil ad valorem tax. District leaders created the Citizen Oversight Committee, which meets monthly to oversee and discuss the school improvement projects that the Education Referendum funds. All expenditures associated with the ad valorem increase will be published annually on the District's website.

**Which staff members would benefit from the salary increases?** Classroom teachers, School Counselors, School Psychologists, School Social Workers, Intervention Teachers, Media Specialists, Other instructional and administrative staff, Instructional and Classroom assistants, Food and Nutritional Services employees, Bus Drivers, Transportation Assistants, Custodial Services, School Maintenance, Clerical staff, After School Enrichment Program staff, & all other instructional support staff.

**What is the difference between this one mil ad valorem referendum and the half-penny sales tax Education Referendum passed in November 2018?** The Half-Penny Referendum that passed in 2018 can only be used to improve our schools' facilities and other capital projects – overhauling air conditioning units, replacing aging roofs, painting school buildings, and repaving parking lots, among other necessary projects. The one mil ad valorem increase can be used to assist operational expenses such as compensation and programmatic needs.

**Is the district currently on sound financial footing?** Superintendent Addison Davis and the leadership team have worked tirelessly over the last two years to bring the district out of a \$150 million financial deficit. Many tough decisions were made, such as installing a hiring freeze, phasing out more than 1,000 instructional and non-instructional positions, reassigning approximately 400 staff to ensure that support was provided to schools with the greatest need, implementing new budget controls to limit new hires/expenditures, renegotiating contracts with vendors, and eliminating district positions to create cost savings for the district. To ensure we are more in line with other like-size districts, Hillsborough County Public Schools has reduced staff from 26,857 in 2017-18 to 23,815 in 2021-22. By the end of this fiscal year, the district is estimating that we will have successfully turned around the district's financial deficit – closing out with an operational surplus for the first time in more than ten years. While this is excellent news, there is still much work to accomplish. The national teacher and staff shortage has prompted many districts to seek a voter-approved increase in ad valorem tax to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and staff.

For more frequently asked questions, please scan the QR code or visit [www.hillsboroughschools.org/strongschools](http://www.hillsboroughschools.org/strongschools).

