



All children will learn. All children will be served.

Homewood School District 153

Winter Trimester

2015-16 School Year

Coming Attractions Mark Your Calendars



**Kindergarten
Orientation**
Wednesday, March 16
7 pm
@ Willow School

**James Hart School
presents**



March 3 & 4
7pm



April 9

@ Idlewild Country Club
Foundation153.org

District 153 Seeks Approval for 2-Year Tax Increase State funding shortfalls and property tax limitations cause structural financing problems for local schools

On March 15, District 153 will ask Homewood voters to approve a tax referendum to help balance the budget while maintaining crucial services for students.

A description of the problem

District 153 is known for its committed staff, low class sizes, superior support for students who need extra help, resources for those who need more vigorous challenges, and a full menu of activities to enrich students' minds and bodies. But these things do not come without a price.

For the past three years, School District 153 has run budget deficits. The projected deficit for the current year is \$2.5 million. District 153 expects to run significant deficits into the foreseeable future. The referendum passed by voters in 2011 allowed the school district to borrow funds that have bridged the gap between district revenues and expenditures allowing the school district to maintain the same levels of services and programs for students.

Question on the March 15 ballot

Shall the Board of Education of Homewood School District Number 153, Cook County, Illinois be authorized to issue \$9,000,000 bonds for a working cash fund as provided by Article 20 of the School Code?

However, these funds will be depleted in about two years. Once again, District 153 must make some tough decisions about how to balance budgets in the future—and ask for taxpayer help in doing so.

We expect to keep running these structural deficits for the foreseeable future because there isn't enough revenue coming in to pay for all the great things we want for our students—and our community expects its

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Referendum Contingency Plans Developed About 30 Staff Positions to be Eliminated, Larger Class Sizes

Homewood School District 153 will be forced to eliminate approximately 30 positions next year—including 20 certified teaching positions and 10 educational support personnel—should a proposed March 15th ballot referendum to approve the issue of \$9 million in working cash bonds fail.

Superintendent Dale Mitchell says that district administrators and school board members have been working to develop contingency plans with the least impact on classrooms as possible. As an example, Mitchell cites next year's school

consolidation plan to reduce administrators, certified staff and bussing costs with little impact on the classroom.

“School consolidation is expected to save about \$600,000, but the fact remains that we'll have to cut \$1.4 million from the budget next year if the referendum is not successful. The only way to cut that much money is to look at the 85 percent of our annual budget that covers salaries and benefits. There's no way to soften the impact on classrooms when personnel are reduced,” said Mitchell.

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District 153 Continues to Spend Responsibly

Per Pupil Spending

<u>School District</u>	<u>FY15 Instructional Exp. Per/ Pupil</u>
Tinley 146	\$9,105
Evergreen Park 124	\$7,635
State Average	\$7,419
Tinley 140	\$7,140
Flossmoor 161	\$7,039
Homewood 153	\$6,807
Frankfort 157C	\$5,925
Summit Hill 161	\$5,722
Matteson 162	\$5,483
Mokena 159	\$4,754
Brookwood 167	\$4,657

Administrator Salaries

<u>School District</u>	<u>Ave. Adm. Salary</u>
Tinley 146	\$118,908
Tinley 140	\$117,848
Matteson 162	\$111,561
Brookwood 167	\$108,808
Summit Hill 161	\$106,107
Worth 127	\$105,111
Flossmoor 161	\$104,225
Frankfort 157C	\$103,688
State Average	\$100,719
Evergreen Park 124	\$100,251
Homewood 153	\$99,917
Mokena 159	\$97,211

Teacher Salaries

<u>School District</u>	<u>Ave. Teacher Salary</u>
Tinley 140	\$65,692
Tinley 146	\$63,368
State Average	\$62,609
Summit Hill 161	\$60,805
Flossmoor 161	\$59,203
Mokena 159	\$58,312
Evergreen Park 124	\$57,665
Homewood 153	\$56,734
Matteson 162	\$54,312
Frankfort 157C	\$52,650
Worth 127	\$52,273
Brookwood 167	\$47,384

[Source: Illinois State Report Card, 2013-14]

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public school to deliver—such as challenging academics, manageable class sizes, and plentiful supports, enrichment and co-curricular opportunities.

The primary source of District 153's revenues comes from local property taxes. Declining local property values and financial incentives for businesses have meant less local revenues for the schools. In addition, the state formula that defines the amount of revenue a school district may collect from local property taxes from year to year is tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). CPI has experienced historically low rates for the past few years.

The lack of State revenues exacerbates the problem. According to our state's constitution, "The State has the primary responsibility for financing the system of public education." Even in better economic times, Illinois has never fulfilled its responsibility. District 153, for example, gets about 25 percent of our overall budget from the state. This is a sizable portion, but nowhere near being the "primary" source of our education dollars.

And for the past few years, Illinois has been unable to live up to even its declining funding commitments. Since 2012, education funding has been prorated, meaning that school districts have received less than they are owed. By the end of the current school year, District 153 will have been shortchanged about \$2.8 million since the state started prorating education funds in 2012. See box on page 3.

What is the school district's record on controlling spending?

District 153 continues to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars. We spend less than the state average on per pupil expenditures and on teacher and administrator salaries (see box left).

Moreover, the contract between the school district and its teachers' union limits future pay raises to CPI (the Consumer Price Index or inflation).

In an effort to further tighten the school district's belt, District 153 made the difficult decision to reduce the number of grade centers (schools) from four to three. We expect to save about \$600,000 a year on salaries, benefits and transportation costs, while continuing to look for further reductions in spending with limited impact on students. *More about school consolidation on page 4.*

Can't the school district cut back on supplies and other items?

Salaries and benefits account for 85 percent of our operating budget. The school district has cut back as much as it can on the remaining 15 percent. We have reached the point where the

By the end of the current school year, District 153 will have been shortchanged about \$2.8 million since the state starting prorating education funds in 2012.

budget cannot be cut further without cutting staff, increasing classroom sizes and reducing educational offerings.

Plenty of families have had to cut out “extras” during these tough times. Why can’t the school district cut back on things like technology, music, art and after-school activities and stick to reading, writing and arithmetic?

We disagree that the arts, technology and after-school activities are expendable. These “extras” are an essential ingredient of what has made our schools and students successful.

Research shows that students who participate in co-curricular activities at school have higher grade point averages, better attendance records, and fewer discipline problems than students in general. Moreover, more and more college admission officers are looking to see that applicants have participated in such activities as a condition for acceptance to their colleges and universities.

If we want our students to find jobs in our increasingly high tech world, they must be exposed to the latest technologies early. Whatever field our students choose in life, whether it’s as a factory worker, office worker, or doctor, there is no workplace where technology will not be used.

How would the referendum work?

Similar to the way a car or home equity loan works, the proposal would allow the school district to take out what is essentially a one-time, \$9 million loan. Taxpayers will make payments on the loan for eight years. The added assessment automatically expires when the loan is paid off.

How much will it cost individual property owners?

For every \$150,000 of property value, taxes will increase by about \$100 per year for two years and then will go back down to what is being paid now for six years. The payments would run for a total of eight years. The current payment is about \$200 for a property value of \$150,000.

Will approving the referendum fix the problem?

Adoption of the referendum will mean that District 153 will be able to maintain a balanced budget through approximately 2020.

Won’t the additional local revenues just result in further reductions in state education funding for District 153?

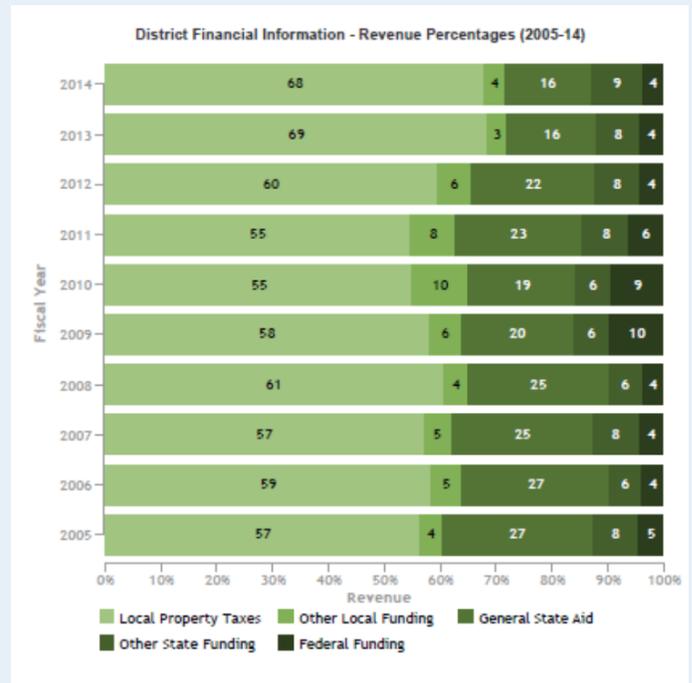
No. The state does not take revenue generated from working cash bonds into account when determining state education funding distributions.

Why not ask for a bigger and more permanent funding solution instead of asking taxpayers for more every few years?

Because of declining property values in the community, District 153 is at its statutory limit for education funding, ruling out a permanent increase in property taxes. The only option is some kind of temporary authority to borrow funds. The latter option does have its advantages, most notably that it will not negatively affect our share of state education funds.

The State of Illinois Continues to Shortchange

This graph illustrates how much the cost of education in District 153 has shifted from state to local sources. [Source: Illinois State Report Card, 2013-2014]



Since 2012, state education funding has been “prorated,” meaning that school district have received less than they are owed. By the end of the 2015-16 school year, District 153 will have been shortchanged about \$2.8 million. [Source: School District 153]



Homewood School District 153

Administration

Dr. Dale Mitchell, Superintendent
Dr. John Gibson, Business Manager
Kathy Schaefflein, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Melanie Mandisodza, Director of Student Support Services
Beth White, Director of Technology
Wayne Scardigli, Director of Grounds and Maintenance

Board of Education

Steve Anderson
Ashanti Bethea
Alex Bosch, Vice President
Deb Havighorst
Greg Lawrence, Secretary
Shelly Marks, President
Jim Schmidt

ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER

18205 Aberdeen Street
Homewood, IL 60430
708.799.5661
hsd153.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit 106
Homewood, IL

Postal Patron

Willow School

1804 Willow Road
708.798.3720
Mary Ann Savage, Principal
Melissa Lawson, Asst. Principal

Churchill School

1300 West 190th Street
708.798.3424
Cece Coffey, Principal
Nicole Kerr, Asst. Principal

Millennium School

18211 Aberdeen Street
708.799.8697
David McAtee, Principal
Mary Kay Gardiner, Asst. Principal
Jack Gaham, Dean of Students

James Hart School

18220 Morgan Street
708.799.5544
Scott McAlister, Principal
Laura Ugo, Asst. Principal
John Ugo, Dean of Students

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Mitchell said that class sizes after the proposed reductions would increase about 20 percent to a range of 28 to 32 students per classroom.

Other programs slated for reductions include:

- Co-curricular offerings and fine arts
- Foreign language program
- Field trip experiences
- Teacher professional development
- New program and curriculum adoptions
- Student support services including behavior management efforts like the Positive Behavior and Intervention System (PBIS) program, gifted education and media center programming
- Administrative operations such as custodial, food services, and residency enforcement
- Deferred maintenance on sewage lines and parking lots

Together, the proposed actions will save the school district about \$2 million.

School Board Approves School Consolidation Plan; District Expects to Save about \$600,000

To an effort to further tighten the school district's belt, District 153's Board of Education made the difficult decision to reduce the number of grade centers (schools) from four to three.

Current student enrollment has led to some inefficiencies in school building usage and associated costs. Enrollment is expected to remain stable for the next few years. Those enrollment projections suggest the school district could realize some cost savings if existing space was used more efficiently.

- Willow School would remain unchanged, serving about 600 students in prekindergarten through 2nd grade.
- Churchill School would serve about 600 students in 3rd through 5th grades.



In 2016-17, 5th-graders will attend Churchill School and 6th-graders will attend James Hart. Millennium School classrooms will be used for other purposes.

- James Hart School would serve about 700 students in 6th-through 8th-grades.

District 153 expects to save about \$600,000 a year on salaries, benefits and transportation costs, while continuing to look for further reductions in spending with limited impact on students.