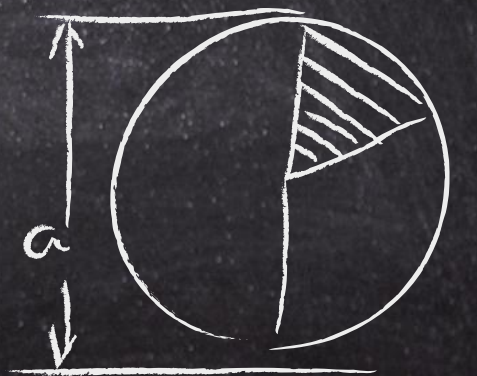


School Funding & Referendums

$$\lambda = \frac{h}{p}$$



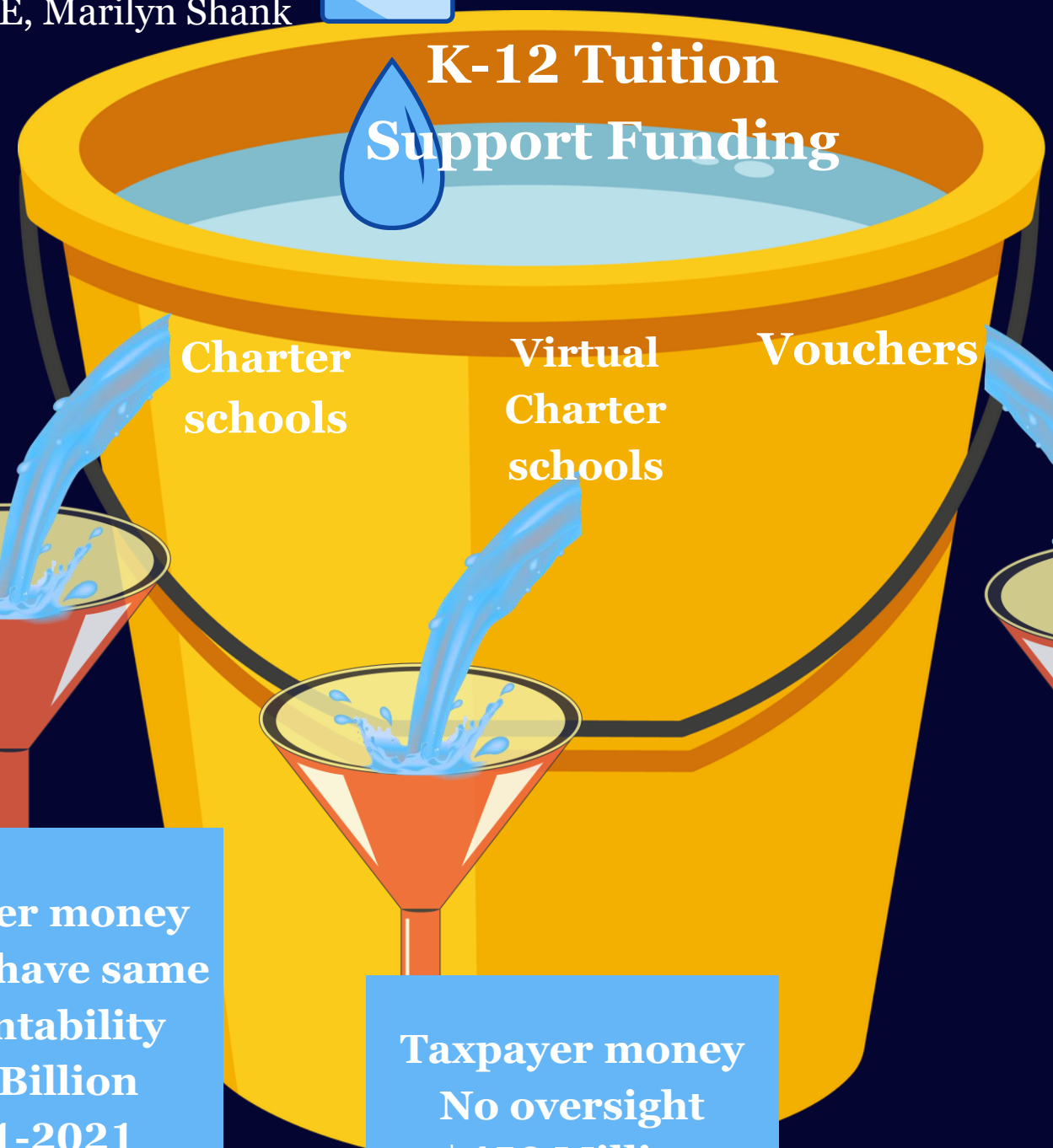
Agenda



- School Funding: How Does it Work?
- Referendums: Why Do We Need to Run Referendums?
- How Do We Build to Run a Referendum
- Steps to Endorse a Referendum
- Working a Referendum Election



**From ICPE, Marilyn Shank



Taxpayer money
Doesn't have same
accountability
\$1.8 Billion
2011-2021

Taxpayer money
No oversight
\$450 Million
2012-2021



Education
Fund
Items that directly
impact student
learning



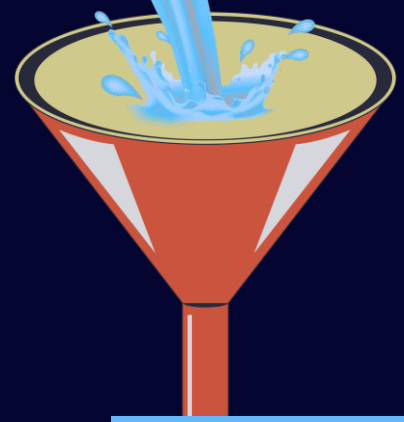
Referendum
Fund
Helps with costs in the
education fund, supports
safety & mental health
supports



Debt
Service
Fund
Principal & Interest on
Debt from Capital
Projects, Short-term
debt & Long term debt



Operations
Fund
Buildings, Transportation,
Technology, Equipment,
Furniture, Staff that is not
in front of students.



Taxpayer money
99% goes to
religious schools
that can
discriminate
\$1.0 Billion
2011-2021

Historic Funding

5%
INCREASE
highest to
date

Indiana's new state budget increased K-12 funding by \$640 million – a 5% increase and the highest funding level to date for Hoosier students. Nearly half of our state budget supports K-12 education.

The Problems We Found: When We Do Math

\$640 million dollars for 2 years.

\$160 million right off for textbooks = \$320 million

Left with \$320 million for the 2 years

First year = 160 million (25% of the 5% increase)

Second year = a new \$67 million to 290 school districts across Indiana, \$93 million to Charters

INDIANA ACHIEVES HISTORIC GAINS IN EDUCATION

"Indiana 4th graders soar to 6th in national reading rankings"
WTHR, Jan. 29, 2025

"Indiana sees historic jump in third grade reading scores"
Indiana Capital Chronicle, Aug. 13, 2025

"Indiana's education system places 8th nationwide in new WalletHub Study"
WISH TV, July 21, 2025

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in.gov/h93 **SCAN HERE**
TO VISIT MY WEBSITE AND TO
SIGN UP FOR MY E-NEWSLETTER.

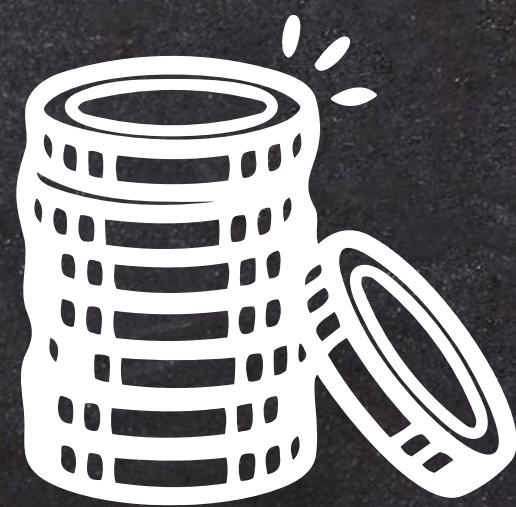
Student Tuition Funding



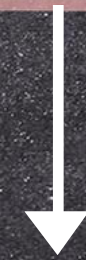
- State tax dollars are allocated to schools based on student enrollment (Average Daily Membership)
- Over 85% of funding comes from state tax dollars, not local property taxes.
- Money is allocated based on enrollment, providing a base rate per student plus additional funding for special education and complexity (factors like poverty, SNAP/TANF usage).

**MONEY
FOLLOWS
the child**

What is this Funding Formula?



**\$6,967 PER PUPIL
GRANT**



PLUS

+



**\$4,001 FOR STUDENTS WHO
QUALIFY FOR SNAP, TANF, OR
WHO RECEIVE FOSTER CARE.**

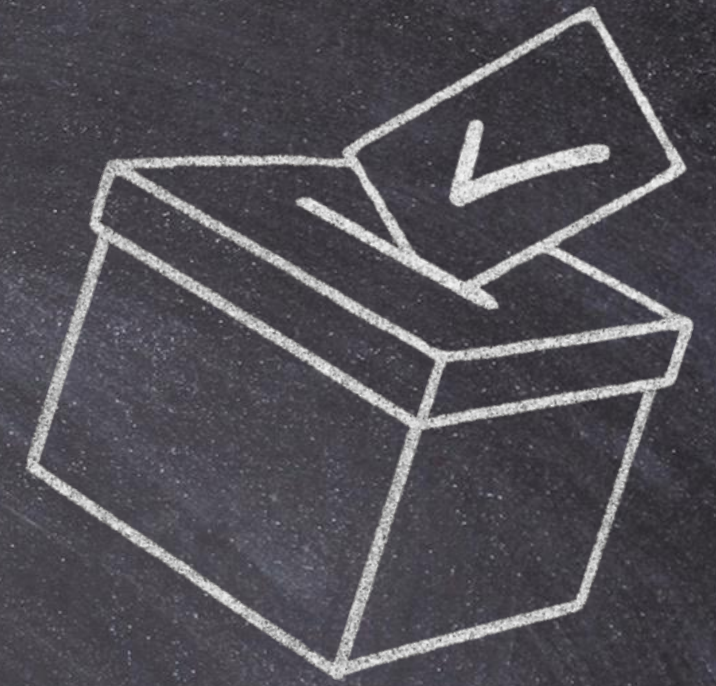


**UP TO \$11,592 PER PUPIL, BASED ON
SEVERITY OF DISABILITY, AND A
\$3,798 FOR STUDENTS IN SPECIAL
ED PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS.**



**UP TO \$1,500 FOR EACH HONOR
STUDENT, \$149 TO \$1,065 FOR
STUDENTS IN A CAREER AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION (CTE) COURSE, AND \$382 TO
\$547 FOR ENGLISH-LEARNERS**

What is a Referendum?



A school referendum allows local voters to decide whether to provide additional funding for their public schools. Referendums give communities direct control over investments in their schools.

Some referendums renew existing taxes, while others add new funding for schools.

Some referendums have lowered tax rates.

School referendums are not simply about funding schools—they are community investments. They help maintain educational quality, support local economic growth, protect property values, strengthen workforce development, and ensure that local residents have a direct voice in the future of their public schools.

Why Referendums?

**VOTERS
SUPPORT
Education**

State Funding Has Limitations

- Indiana school funding is largely determined by the state funding formula.
- The formula may not fully account for local needs, inflation, rising healthcare costs, or increasing operational expenses.
- Schools often face growing costs while revenues remain relatively flat.

Property Tax Caps Reduce Local Revenue

- Indiana's property tax caps limit how much revenue schools can collect from local property taxes.
- Schools can no longer rely on property tax growth alone to fund operations and improvements.
- Referendums provide a legal way for communities to supplement school funding.

To Maintain Educational Programs

- Referendum dollars often help schools:
- Preserve smaller class sizes.
- Maintain arts, music, and extracurricular programs.
- Continue advanced coursework and career-technical education.
- Retain highly qualified teachers and staff.
- Support student mental health and safety services.

To Address Facility Needs

Some referendums are used to:

- Repair aging buildings, roofs, HVAC, etc
- Improve school safety and security.
- Upgrade technology and infrastructure.

Types of Referendums

Operating Referendums

Used for:

- Teacher and staff salaries
- Educational programs
- Student services
- Technology
- Transportation
- Safety initiatives



Construction or Capital Referendums

Used for:

- Building improvements
- Renovations
- Safety upgrades
- New facilities
- Major maintenance projects



How to Build Towards a Referendum

EDUCATING
THE
community

- Educators are the most trusted voices in public education.
- We see firsthand how funding impacts students every day and often our bargaining teams are the first to know that a referendum is what is needed for our school district to survive.
- If we don't tell our story, someone else will tell it for us.
- A referendum campaign is about education, advocacy, and community engagement.
- Strong schools require strong partnerships between educators, families, businesses, and community members.
- Every time your local bargains, you have the opportunity to talk about why and how a referendum would change the district.

People support schools when they understand what is happening and why it matters.

How to Build Towards a Referendum

*START
WITH THE WHY*

Educate Members First

- Before talking to the public, every union member should understand:
- The district's financial situation and how school funding works
- How a referendum would impact students
- Common misconceptions &
- How to answer "Why does the district need this referendum?" in less than 60 seconds.

STAKEHOLDERS

PARENTS

PTO ORGANIZATIONS

SENIOR CITIZENS

BUSINESS LEADERS

CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

FAITH LEADERS

ALUMNI

REALTORS

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Then go to the Community & Key Stakeholder Groups:

- Share the same information
- Put together a presentation with FAQ documents
- Collect names & contact information for volunteers to help when you run a campaign.

How to Build Towards a Referendum

The district's financial story must be simple and understandable.

Stakeholders need answers to:

- What changed?
- Why is funding insufficient?
- Why can't existing funds cover the need?
- What happens if the referendum fails?
- What happens if it passes?

Avoid:

Education jargon
Technical budget language
Political arguments

Use:

Real examples
Student stories
Community impact stories

Putting a Referendum on the Ballot

School Boards Must Initiate the Referendum (Usually Spring/Summer of the Election Year)

The school board adopts a resolution requesting the referendum and submits proposed ballot language to the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) for review and approval. The DLGF generally has up to 10 days to approve or reject the language.

August 1 Deadline

For a referendum to appear on the November General Election ballot, certification must occur by noon on August 1. This is one of the most critical legal deadlines in the process.

Referendums Must Have a Specific Purpose

Indiana law requires districts to identify the purpose of the referendum.

Most Operating Referendums Last Up to Eight Years

Indiana operating referendums are generally approved for a limited period and may be renewed. Extensions cannot exceed eight years.

Public Funds Cannot Be Used to Campaign

Union Endorsing the Referendum



Discussion with the Administration

What does the referendum mean for your bargaining unit members? What is the administration going to say publicly in terms of how the money is going to be used? Are there demands you want to make in terms of how the referendum money is used (i.e., teachers will see at least a 5% increase, teachers will have their years of experience corrected)

Vote Among the Membership

Your local should present the referendum to your membership, the benefits of the referendum, the work it will take to pass the referendum, the asks that you made of the administration, and what their promises were. Then ask your membership to vote on whether to endorse the referendum.

If the Membership Votes to Endorse

Make a public statement at the board meeting where the school board presents the referendum, stating that the teachers are supportive and what it means for programs, students, and retaining quality teachers.

Share with your LPAC that your Local is Endorsing the Referendum

The LPAC will vote to endorse. It's always a good idea to share your campaign plan with your LPAC, along with any funding asks you may have.

How to run

EDUCATING A Community

- Door to Door: Teacher & Admin/School Board working together/Community
- Influential Community Members voices being vocal
- Superintendent/Union President doing community talks/mtgs about need for referend
- polling place
- mail pieces
- radio ad
- newspaper ads (print & digital)
- Community events (fairs, back to school events, etc)

How to Run a Referendum Campaign

WINNING The Election

Create:

- Building captains
- Neighborhood captains
- Parent ambassadors
- Volunteer teams

**Successful campaigns
rely on conversations.**

Communication methods:

- Social media
- Door-to-door conversations
- Community forums by the Superintendent and Union President
- Letters to the editor
- Radio Ads
- Newspaper Ads (print & digital)
- Community events (fairs, back-to-school events, etc)
- Influential Community Members' voices being vocal
- Mail Pieces

***One of the Most
Important Tools for
Referendum Wins:***

***POLLING PLACE PALM
CARDS PASSED OUT
BY STAKEHOLDERS***

Talking Points of a Referendum

Community Points

Strong Schools Support Strong Communities

- High-quality schools attract families and businesses.
- Communities with strong schools often experience greater economic growth.
- School quality is frequently a major factor when families decide where to live.

Protecting Property Values

- Research consistently shows that desirable school systems help support property values.
- Investments in schools can make a community more attractive to potential homebuyers.

Workforce Development

- Schools prepare future employees, business owners, healthcare workers, and community leaders.
- Referendum funding helps maintain programs that prepare students for college, careers, and skilled trades.
- Local employers benefit from a better-prepared workforce.

Community Services Beyond Education

Schools often serve as:

- Community gathering spaces.
- Voting locations.
- Emergency shelters.
- Centers for youth activities, athletics, and cultural events.
- Investing in schools strengthens these community resources.

Talking Points of a Referendum

*Community
points*

Local Control

- Referendums allow local residents—not state officials—to determine whether additional investment is needed.
- Voters decide the amount, purpose, and duration of the funding.
- This process increases transparency and accountability.

Benefits to Students

- More individualized attention.
- Access to broader academic opportunities.
- Increased support services.
- Safer and better-maintained facilities.
- Greater opportunities in athletics, arts, and extracurricular activities.

Talking Points of a Referendum

*Community
points*

People need to understand what referendum funding supports.

Show:

- Programs protected
- Positions maintained
- Student opportunities preserved
- Safety improvements
- Facility upgrades

Use visuals:

- Before and after scenarios
- Student success stories
- Real classroom examples

Many voters do not currently have children in school.

The message cannot be:

"Do it for teachers."

The message should be:

"Do it for our community."

Emphasize:

- Property values
- Economic development
- Workforce preparation
- Community pride
- Attracting families
- Maintaining quality of life

Do's & Don'ts of Referendums



POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AT SCHOOL

Indiana Code 20-14-2-12 and 3-14-1-17 prohibit school employees from using school property to solicit contributions, to advocate the election or defeat of a political candidate, or to advocate "for" or "against" a public question.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

- Internet (WiFi)
- Email
- Computers
- Laptops
- Desktops
- iPads
- Software
- Cell Phone
- Printers/Copiers
- Supplies & Materials
- Bulletin Boards
- Classrooms

FAQ

If I am on my personal cell phone or iPad at school and using my personal email account?

If you are using school Internet or WiFi, the answer is the same, "don't do it!"

I receive an email at my school email addressed from someone who is soliciting contributions, advocating for the election or defeat of a political candidate, or advocating "for" or "against" a public question?

Do not forward it, even to your personal account, or print out the email or any part of it. The law does not prohibit you reviewing this information, only sharing or distributing it.

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

It is always better to be safe than sorry. Communicate political information through personal equipment, accounts, and internet access OFF SCHOOL GROUNDS and OFF CONTRACTUAL TIME. Please feel free to contact your building administrators or me with specific questions or concerns.

OUR SCHOOLS

OUR FUTURE

HSE teachers support the
referendum & ask you to:



VOTE YES!



NO
ADDITIONAL
TAXES



RETAIN &
ATTRACT
TEACHERS



MAINTAIN
CLASS SIZES



MAINTAIN
ACADEMIC &
EXTRA-CURRICULAR
PROGRAMS

★ Make your voice heard! ★

Vote YES on Nov. 7th on the HSE Schools Operating Referendum for
our students, our teachers, our schools, and our community.

VOTE YES!



Early voting begins
October 11.

Scan here to find early
voting locations.

150 W Market St, Ste 900
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Paid for by Indiana Political Action Committee for Education

Hamilton County
Teachers Support
The Referendums &
These Candidates



**NO
ADDITIONAL
TAXES**



**RETAIN &
ATTRACT
TEACHERS**



**MAINTAIN
CLASS SIZES**



**MAINTAIN
ACADEMIC &
EXTRA-CURRICULAR
PROGRAMS**

HSE School Board
Candidates: Sarah
Parks-Reese, Latricia
Schooley, Suzanne
Thomas

Noblesville School Board
Candidates: Christi
Crosser, Stephanie
Lambert,
Bret Richardson

Election Tips



Remember: voting
straight ticket does
not cast a vote for
school board or
referendum. Vote
Yes on
Referendum!



Make sure you
bring a valid form
of identification
with you to the
polls. This can
include a driver's
license, passport,
or other
government-issued
ID.



Paid for and authorized by Indiana Political Action
Committee for Education. Not authorized by any
candidate.

One of the most critical components of a successful referendum campaign is building a strong volunteer operation at polling locations. The union should dedicate significant time and resources to recruiting, training, and scheduling volunteers for every early voting date and Election Day. Every voter contact opportunity matters.