

# Frequently Asked Questions

## ***Will voting for this Renewal Levy raise my taxes?***

No. This is NOT a new tax and will not increase your tax payment. This is a renewal of the money that taxpayers currently pay. There is no additional cost to you as this is a Renewal. The amount that taxpayers currently pay for this Levy is \$140 per year, or \$11.67 per month, for each \$100,000 of home value.

## ***Why is this Emergency Levy Renewal being placed on the ballot again?***

Emergency Levies have a set duration of 5, 10 or 15 years. At the end of that time, taxpayers must vote to renew it. These levies generate a set amount of revenue per year - whether property taxes increase or not. This Levy was first passed by taxpayers in 2005, and was voted on and renewed in both 2010 and 2015. We need to renew this Levy again in order to avoid an operating deficit.

- Madison Local School District is currently projected to end Fiscal Year 2025 with an operating deficit of about \$115,000 with a cash balance of \$8.16 million.
- If this Levy Renewal should fail, we are projected to operate at a \$2 million deficit by Fiscal Year 2027, and have a negative cash balance by 2029.

## ***How much money does this Levy bring in?***

This Levy collects the same amount as it did when first passed by voters in 2005 - \$1.1 million per year. This amount is about 5.5% of our current operating budget. Just like at home, these dollars do not go as far as they did 20 years ago, and they are an important piece of funding for covering costs at Madison Local Schools.

## ***What does the Levy money pay for?***

The Renewal Levy dollars must be used for Current Expenses (salaries, benefits, supplies and equipment, etc.), and cannot be used for Permanent Improvements (buildings, plumbing, HVAC, etc.). Like all school districts, Madison Local Schools' biggest expense is employee payroll and benefits, making up over 67% of our general budget. This money helps to support our educators, classrooms and programs for our children.

## ***What has Madison done to reduce expenses?***

Madison Local Schools have made a concerted effort to reduce costs over the last few years. The following cuts have already been made in staffing and programs:

- Combination of two administrative positions into one (Athletic Director and Dean of Students)
- Elimination of three teaching positions
- Elimination of one State Tested Nursing Assistant
- Elimination of school-sponsored field trips (costs are now covered by students' families)
- Increase in Pay to Participate to \$200 per activity with no student or family cap
- Elimination of 30 supplemental contracts in sports, arts and music (nearly half of which were filled by our neighbors and district residents)

## ***How do our Teachers' salaries compare to surrounding districts?***

In all cases, they are low. In most cases, they are the lowest. As of 2024, we offer the lowest beginning salary and the lowest highest-earner salary in all of Butler County's 11 districts.

## ***My property taxes just went through the roof and the biggest line item on my bill is Madison Local Schools. Where did that money go?***

While Madison Local Schools does receive additional money when property taxes increase, the State Funding Formula offsets that increase by reducing the amount of funding we receive from the State.

## ***My kids aren't in school anymore. Why should I vote for a Renewal?***

Statistics vary, but it is said that approximately 68% of Americans live in or near the place where they grew up. This means that when you require such services as a plumber or healthcare, those individuals you work with/utilize will likely be graduates of local schools like Madison. Supporting the Levy will help to ensure that those local workers come from a strong educational background in the future.

## ***What are some other challenges Madison Local Schools may be facing?***

There are two unique situations that our district is facing:

- The City of Trenton is annexing adjacent parcels of land inside Madison Township for development into single-family homes. This is not new, but the most recent developments are becoming Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts. Within these TIF districts, Trenton will take the first 75% of property tax collected from those properties and use it to pay back the financing for the development (water, sewer, roads, etc.). Madison Local Schools will be 100% responsible for educating any children who live in these homes, but will only receive a portion of the remaining 25% of the tax money collected. These TIF districts last 10 years, and the school district has no recourse to block it. One of the TIF districts currently under construction will be a development of almost 100 homes.
- Our school building is now 20 years old. The Madison Board of Education recently conducted an audit of our facilities to identify potential upcoming repairs and upkeep. It was estimated that our buildings and grounds will require approximately \$5 million over the next five years. The Renewal Levy funds may not be used for these repairs, but will allow the Board to continue to set aside money from other sources each year to meet those obligations.

## ***It can't all be doom and gloom. What positive things are happening?***

There are exciting changes gaining momentum in our district!

- Madison Local Schools was awarded an Innovation Grant for up to \$250,000 to remodel the former high school library into a school-wide learning center. We also received a grant near \$15,000 for enhanced career readiness and STEM integration. The update of this area and introduction of these programs will provide unique and exciting opportunities for our children to explore and learn.
- Our District was awarded a grant through the Middletown Community Foundation to fund a School Liaison position through the Success Program. This Liaison provides access to services and resources that help families overcome non-cognitive barriers to their children's success in school.
- Our District has implemented the Wonder Reading Program for our Elementary students. This program is designed to foster a love of reading and develop students' skills as readers, writers, speakers and listeners.
- Madison Middle and High Schools are in the early stages of career pathway integration which will expose our students to a spectrum of potential occupations and help them acquire skills and credentials for those specific careers. Some pathways that are currently in the works include healthcare and agriculture.

## ***Looking back, what do you remember?***

Think back to your own time in school. What do you remember most? We often tell stories about the clubs we joined, sports we played, dances we went to, field trips we attended, plays we had a part in, or any number of other special events. The failure of this Levy Renewal would significantly impact these opportunities for our children - either by making them cost prohibitive to families, or even eliminating them all together. We hope to continue to afford our students those same opportunities to make memories from homecoming dances, tournament games, and stages to perform on. Your support helps to make that possible!

## ***Thank you!***

Thank you for reading our FAQs. If you have any further questions, please reach out to the Levy Committee at [MadisonMohawksLevy@gmail.com](mailto:MadisonMohawksLevy@gmail.com).