



North Harrison R-III School District

12023 Fir Street
Eagleville, Missouri 64442
660-867-5221

January 4, 2024

Dear North Harrison R-III Families,

I hope this letter finds that you had a terrific holiday with your family and the new year is off to a great start for you! It's hard to believe, but we are officially halfway through our school year. We had a terrific first semester here at North Harrison R-III, and I am confident our second half of the year will be as productive as the first.

I am sending this letter to inform you of an important decision made at our December Board Meeting that would greatly impact the future of education at North Harrison. During that meeting we approved a ballot measure "Proposition Shamrocks C.A.R.E. (Community Action Reinvesting in Education)" for your consideration during the April 2, 2024 election. We are asking your approval for a \$1.00 tax levy increase to our current rate of \$4.5000, which would increase it to \$5.5000. This decision wasn't arrived at lightly; it has resulted from multiple discussions over the past six months, which have included evaluating our current financial situation and where we want to be, and need to be, for the future of our Shamrock students. The impact this levy increase would have for our district is significant; if 93% of constituents pay their taxes (our current average collection rate), the levy would generate an additional \$214,000 of local revenue annually based on our current assessed valuation.

The challenges for small school districts in today's educational landscape are numerous, but obviously finances are a huge part of the equation. While there is no doubt raising taxes never comes at a good time or "easily," the outlook for our district receiving additional state or federal funding is limited, especially as our enrollment holds steady. Our best mechanism for generating additional dollars to meet the ever-growing needs of providing a quality education would be at our local funding level. Therefore, running this levy increase during the April 2024 election is the best option for our future. There are some factors that influenced our decision that I would like to share below...

The last levy increase was during the 1979-80 school year: For taxable property in the calendar year 1978, the levy was \$4.00; during the calendar year for 1979, the levy was increased to \$4.50, and has never been higher. Simply put, it has been 44 years and our levy has not increased. Consider all of the educational changes you have seen during this period of time (some of you reading this letter weren't even alive in 1980). The amount of facilities improvements, technology, and student needs alone have certainly changed the cost and resources of providing a great education. While North Harrison continues to perform significantly higher than state averages on required assessments, the playing field is getting harder and harder to compete on. To retain our high-quality staff and continue to provide the education and additional programs we offer, we face an uphill battle without raising our levy.

Sales tax revenue does not go to school districts: In Missouri school funding, sales tax collected from local businesses is not distributed to schools. The buildings and personal property from businesses are reflected in our district's assessed valuation (just like your own personal property, etc.), but sales on items in our community do not impact district revenues in any manner. Without a large amount of "building" occurring in our district, our local revenue stream remains stagnant.

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Our tax rate compared to other local districts: When compared to other small school districts in Northwest Missouri, North Harrison's tax rate is behind the average. As mentioned earlier, the collection of local property taxes is the main source of revenue for many small school districts, and its impact on revenues cannot be overstated. Below is a chart of adjusted tax levies for fiscal year 2022-23 for local smaller school districts in our area, including North Harrison.

School District	Total Levy	School District	Total Levy
Jefferson C-123	\$6.3550	Gilman City R-IV	\$5.0229
Cainsville R-I	\$5.9800	North Mercer R-III	\$4.9296
South Nodaway R-IV	\$5.9514	North Nodaway R-VI	\$4.6259
Ridgeway R-V	\$5.9480	Tri-County R-VII	\$4.6259
Northeast Nodaway R-V	\$5.7302	King City R-I	\$4.6241
Stanberry R-II	\$5.4300	North Harrison R-III	\$4.5000
North Daviess R-III	\$5.3570	Albany R-III	\$4.4893
Pattonsburg R-II	\$5.2692	North Andrew R-VI	\$4.2290
Princeton R-V	\$5.2445	Worth County R-III	\$3.7700

Increasing our starting teacher salary: As part of our Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) that was approved in June 2022, one of the goals was to raise our first-year teacher salary to \$38,000. That number was not randomly decided; based on recent legislative sessions, it seems imminent that Missouri school districts will be required to offer a minimum salary of \$38,000 to a first-year teacher in the near future. Currently North Harrison pays \$34,250 to a first-year teacher, a salary that has increased significantly with the requirement looming (during the 2020-21 school year, a beginning teacher made \$29,250 at NH). However, we still have a serious gap in reaching the \$38,000 mark, and are already operating at a negative budget to reach our current salary levels. Even without it becoming law, improving the pay of our entire staff is a necessity in these times of shortages for all positions. Without an increase to our local funding, meeting the salary requirement will quickly deplete district reserves and impact our efforts to retain our staff, maintain the quality education we currently provide, and continue providing innovative opportunities for our students in the future.

Additional Expenditures: In addition to striving to pay our staff better, other operational expenditures continue to increase while our revenues remain the same. Increased focus on safety and security, supporting students with varying needs, providing the technology necessary for education, increasing Department of Education requirements for instruction, and rising transportation costs are stretching our budget further than in previous years. Additional funding from the levy increase will be beneficial in ensuring we can continue to meet operational needs.

For financial information on how this levy increase affects you, a document is located on our website that gives you an approximation for increases to residential property, personal property, commercial property, and agricultural property (acreage is based on soil type...if you are unsure of your soil type, that information is available from the Assessor's Office). To access this document, go to our website at nhr3.net, then click on the link for "Proposition Shamrocks C.A.R.E.," then click on the Cost Table document. This letter will also be available under the link as well, in case you know of anyone who may benefit from this information. Additionally, in February a brochure will be sent to every district mailing address highlighting much of the information included in this letter.

If you have any questions or need more information about our ballot initiative, please do not hesitate to reach out...stop in the office, email me at sickelse@nhr3.net, or call the office at 660-867-5222 ext. 104. I'll do what I can to provide additional information supporting our efforts to ensure a terrific future for the North Harrison R-III School District and its families.

Sincerely,



Ethan Sickels