Millage Elections in Arkansas - Strategies for Planning a Successful Campaign

Dr. Donnie Whitten, Superintendent
Arkadelphia Public Schools
Key Players

- Board of Education / Superintendent
- Administrative Team
- Teachers & Staff
- Parents – Steering Committee
- Business Community – Chamber & Economic Development Alliance
- Universities – Henderson State and Ouachita Baptist
- Local Media
Planning, Planning, Planning

- Initial Press Release
- Overview for Internal Stakeholders
- Economic Development
- Steering Committee / Parents
- Campaign Kick-off – Open House
- Community Meetings
- University contacts
- Newspaper / Media
- Social Media***/
Arkadelphia Public Schools
Our Kids, Our Future

What is Arkadelphia’s current millage rate?
The current school millage rate is set at 38.90. Voters approved the last increase in 2000, and prior to that, in 1999.

How much is the proposed increase?
The Board of Education is seeking a total increase of 5.75 mills. With the increase, the school millage rate would be 44.65.

What will the tax money be used for?
The millage increase will provide funds for the construction of a new middle school (grades 6-8) and elementary school (grades 2-5) and other necessary renovations. The middle school will be located at the current AHS complex. The new elementary school will be constructed on the current Peake Elementary School site.

The millage increase will also provide for more competitive salaries that are necessary for attracting and retaining high quality teachers for our students.

How much will the State provide toward these projects?
The state has committed to providing $3.7 million toward the construction of the $10 million middle school, but the public must approve the millage increase to cover the remaining costs. The Board of Education is expecting a similar match to be awarded from the state for the development of the elementary school.

When is the election?
The election will be held on September 15, 2015. Polls will open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 p.m. at the Arkadelphia Recreation Center. Early voting will begin September 8 in the courthouse.

Why are new facilities and renovations necessary?
Arkadelphia’s school buildings are aging and the District must plan for improvements for future generations. In order to compete globally, we must provide state-of-the-art facilities and innovative technology for our students.

The construction dates of our buildings:
- Arkadelphia High School – 1972
- Guza Middle School – 1956
- Central Primary – 1946
- Peake Elementary and Perritt Primary – 1960

How much will the increase cost the average taxpayer?
The increase will cost the average homeowner less than $10 per month. The annual cost per year will be $15.00 on a $100,000 home.

How can I find out more information?
For more information on the future facilities plan, please visit the Arkadelphia Public Schools website at www.arkadelphiaschools.org. Additional information about the millage campaign can be found on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter.
New Elementary School

Our Kids, Our Future

September 15, 2015

Poster for Open House
New Middle School

September 15, 2015

Poster for Open House
Millage Facts

How much will the increase cost the average taxpayer?

The increase will cost the average homeowner less than $10 per month. The annual cost per year will be $115.00 on a $100,000 home.

Fact Graphic for Social Media
Arkadelphia Public Schools Millage

- Two new buildings at an approximate cost of $20 million. We expect the State of Arkansas to provide partnership funds of $8 million.
- Arkadelphia will lose this partnership money if we do not proceed with these projects.
- Higher teacher pay. Currently ranked 17th out of 19 surrounding districts.
- Increase will move Arkadelphia teachers to 9th out of 19.
- Higher pay will help attract and keep the most qualified teachers.
- Interest rates are at historic lows. A 1% increase in future rates will result in an additional $200,000 per year in interest unless we lock in our rate.
- Construction costs are expected to increase over time. A delay will result in higher cost for the same buildings.
- Old buildings are expensive to maintain. Current maintenance budget of $450,000 per year. We plan to eliminate 3 buildings built in 1908 (rebuilt after a fire in 1943), 1954 and 1960. Buildings are at the end of their useful life.
- Reduction from 5 to 3 campuses resulting in greater efficiency. Easier for parents. Shorter bus routes. Reduced costs. Improved safety measures.
- Modernization of facilities to current standards and recommendations. Old buildings are not designed to accommodate current technology.
- Positive impact on potential industries. New buildings will project a positive image for our community.
- It’s the right thing for our students and teachers.
Logos (Profile Picture for social media)
Supportive Quotes from the Community

“We urge you to vote YES for the Arkadelphia millage on September 15. Education is a primary industry in Arkadelphia. It is critical we do everything we can to help these institutions grow and stay strong. New facilities and competitive salaries will make our town more attractive to relocating families and businesses, and improve our quality of life.”

-Taylor & Terri King

“We chose to return and raise our children here because Arkadelphia values academics, athletics, and the arts! We are proud to support this millage and all that it will do to improve our home community for decades to come!!! Go Badgers!!!”

-Glen & Charity Manning

“This is an exciting time for Arkadelphia. We came together as a community after a devastating tornado, and created a strategic plan that led to improved economic development efforts and the Arkadelphia Promise. Now it is time to make another investment in our children and grandchildren. Vote YES on September 15.”

-Paulette Blacknall
Former APS Board Member

“To invest in the education of our children, our future leaders, is the best investment a community can make. Being able to see new, energy-efficient buildings being constructed for our kids is well worth my tax dollars. I support our public schools and I wholeheartedly support this plan for progress.”

-Dr. Shelly Bray
Family Physician & Former APS Board

“I believe Arkadelphia has the potential to be the best district in the state. Voting FOR this millage is a positive step toward being #1. This investment will give our students the resources to become difference-makers in our world. Go Badgers!”

-J.R. Eldridge
Head Football Coach, AHS

“Arkadelphia has the BEST students and hard working, dedicated teachers that have been loyal to the district! Voting YES will greatly improve our schools for our kids, and raise salaries so we can keep our teachers and recruit other great educators!”

-Trudy Conzel
Retired APS Teacher
Early Voting Begins:

September 8

Clark County Courthouse
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Arkadelphia Public Schools

√OTE FOR

Our Kids, Our Future

Election:

September 15

Arkadelphia Recreation Center
7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Voting Advertisement
TODAY is ELECTION DAY!

September 15, 2015
7:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Arkadelphia Recreation Center