



Q & A

What is Issue 6?

Issue 6 is a 7.9-mill operating issue for Akron Public Schools. It will generate about \$23 million annually. Issue 6 is about the survival of a district that has made great academic gains, been accountable to taxpayers by meeting the goals of the Contract with the Community, and kept a balanced budget through cuts and operational changes. APS has reached a crisis point. Issue 6 is the only hope for maintaining good schools, protecting our personal investments and keeping our city strong.

Why do the schools need additional money?

The short answer is revenue does not keep pace with expenses. State aid to schools is based on local property wealth. However, the principle breaks down because of the 1976 legislative act, House Bill 920, which severely limits a school district's local revenue when property values rise.

More recently, changes by the General Assembly in HB 66 phase out business taxes schools once depended upon. State aid has increased but not in an amount to make up for lack of local revenue growth.

Schools districts have worked hard to get more funding from the state. In the 1990s, school districts actually sued Ohio, claiming that the state's system of funding violated a provision of the Ohio Constitution. Ohio's funding for schools has been found unconstitutional four times, and the state has yet to comply with the Ohio Supreme Court's ruling.

Where is all the lottery revenue?

This is a question school districts are frequently asked. Revenue from lottery funds is about 4% of the state's total education budget. In Akron, the amount of lottery funds we receive is enough to operate the district for less than seven days. Over the years, lottery sales have been relatively stagnant.

What about all the levies Akron passed?

Akron schools have received only four operating tax increases in the past 21 years.

Why not just use some of the money from the massive building project for operations?

In 2003, Akron received state funds to rebuild and renovate every school in the district. To qualify for the state funds, Akron had to generate 40% of the costs. Akron residents agreed by passing a small income tax. These building funds are restricted for school construction and renovation only. These funds cannot be used for education, teacher salaries or other operating expenses.

Does APS spend revenue effectively and efficiently?

Yes, without a doubt; and we have proof of our accountability. The state auditor praised Akron Public Schools for its fiscal accountability and maintaining one of the lowest cost-per-pupil ratios of Ohio's urban districts. In its 2001 Contract with the Community, the district pledged to keep spending increases to 3% or less and to maintain a balanced budget. To monitor that spending, APS appointed a Fiscal Accountability Team, comprised of citizens and professionals with financial backgrounds. The team monitored APS spending for three years and issued independent reports concluding that the district kept its promise.

Has the district tried to cut costs?

Yes! Since 2001, the district has made incessant cuts to balance its budget. The district has streamlined its staff and operations. Following the defeat of Issue 1 last May, it was necessary to make an additional \$7 million in cuts. For the first time, the Board was forced to cut student programs including freshman and middle school sports, elementary and middle school foreign language, and elementary instrumental music. To date, more than \$40 million, including 575 jobs and one third of the administrative staff, has been eliminated.

So what happens if Issue 6 does not pass?

Akron schools have reached a crisis point. Since 2001, the district has been cutting costs to keep its budget balanced. To date, APS cut \$40 million, including 575 jobs and one third of its administrative staff. Without new revenue, the district will have no choice but to continue making cuts. These cuts will come from accelerated school closings and cuts to programs and staff that are above the basics required by the state. Programs at risk include the extracurricular programs that keep students in school and attract residents to the Akron community. If Issue 6 does not pass, our neighborhoods, our city and our quality of life will begin to deteriorate.

How will Issue 6 funds be used?

Issue 6 is critical to keep teachers and programs and buy new textbooks and technology updates. Basically, it allows us to keep the good programs we currently have and continue our academic progress. However, if student enrollment drops significantly, we will be forced to continue right-sizing our schools.

When would Issue 6 funds be available?

When Issue 6 passes, we can begin collecting revenue in January 2007.

When did APS last receive new revenue from a levy?

It has been five years since APS last passed an operating issue. In fact, Akron Public Schools has only had four local increases in revenue in nearly 21 years.

How much will this cost property owners?

The cost of Issue 6 will depend on the value of the home. For the average owner of an \$80,000 home, Issue 6 will cost about \$16 per month.

I don't have kids in schools. Why should I support an operating issue?

Good schools benefit all of us, and Akron Public Schools has had generations of success. Cities that have solid school districts graduate students ready for work or college. Good schools provide a trained workforce, which helps our community attract and maintain jobs.

But good schools affect far more than the education of kids. Good schools protect our investment in our homes and other property. Good schools directly reflect on the level of crime, poverty and unemployment in our neighborhoods.

Is it true that I can vote early?

Yes! Now you can vote early, or avoid long lines and vote from home! To vote absentee, follow these simple steps:

- ◆ Be a registered voter before Tuesday, October 10.
- ◆ Fill out an absentee voting request, available at www.summitcountyboe.com.
- ◆ Return the form to the Summit County Board of Elections, and you will receive an absentee ballot by mail.
- ◆ Return the ballot to the Board of Elections before 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 7, 2006. You don't even have to leave your house! Make sure you use enough postage!
- ◆ Don't like filling out forms? You may also go to the Summit County Board of Elections, and vote on the spot! Remember, if you request an absentee ballot, you cannot vote at the polls on November 7.

When is Election Day?

Tuesday, November 7, 2006 — Vote for Issue 6, before it's too late.

Where can I find more information about Issue 6?

If you have additional questions or need more information, visit www.forakronschools.com; or send an e-mail to vote@forakronschools.com.

Our Schools Come First!

District academic health is good and getting better

- ◆ Continued academic progress
- ◆ Rose to Continuous Improvement in three years
- ◆ Effective rating missed by only four points in 2006
- ◆ The top-performing urban district in the state
- ◆ Competing with suburban districts

We promised, we delivered

District serious about 2001 Contract with the Community:

- ◆ Met or exceeded Contract goals by 2004; still honoring goals today
- ◆ Monumental academic gains
- ◆ Streamlined administration operations and cut jobs
- ◆ Appointed oversight committee to monitor spending
- ◆ Did not seek new levy until every component of Contract was met

State law requires a balanced budget

APS accountable and fiscally responsible:

- ◆ State requires five-year budget projection; first two years must be balanced
- ◆ APS made necessary cuts every year to keep budget balanced
- ◆ Since 2001, district made cuts totaling \$40 million
- ◆ Cut 575 jobs, including 32% of administrative and 17% of teaching jobs
- ◆ Six schools closed by 2007-08 school year

Defeat of Issue 1 was devastating

- ◆ Issue 1 defeated by a few hundred votes
- ◆ Loss necessitated \$7 million in new cuts
- ◆ For first time, cuts made to student programs
- ◆ Cut middle school/freshman sports, elementary and middle school foreign languages, and elementary instrumental music

Our schools are at a critical crossroads

Costs continue rise while revenue stays flat:

- ◆ Without new revenue, we lose more teachers and programs
- ◆ Deficit soars to \$30 million by 2008-09 school year; \$70 million in 2009-10
- ◆ We risk the extras that attract, keep children in school and residents in Akron
- ◆ We weaken academic foundation to give every child best education possible

Condition of schools puts community at risk

Our schools must come first:

- ◆ Good schools are vital component of strong city
- ◆ Businesses don't grow without educated workforce
- ◆ We jeopardize the job market, neighborhoods and home values
- ◆ Crime increases

Our schools are worth the investment

Your investment affects more than schools:

- ◆ Protects your personal investments
- ◆ Protects our educational programs and our children's future
- ◆ Protects our neighborhoods
- ◆ Keeps our city strong
- ◆ Good schools are the only way