MAXIMIZING COMMUNITY AND STUDENTS

Why the Operating Referendum Is Needed

MICHIGAN CITY AREA SCHOOLS
SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

Securing programs, people, and essential services for students

Our district

About 4,600 students across Michigan City and surrounding communities

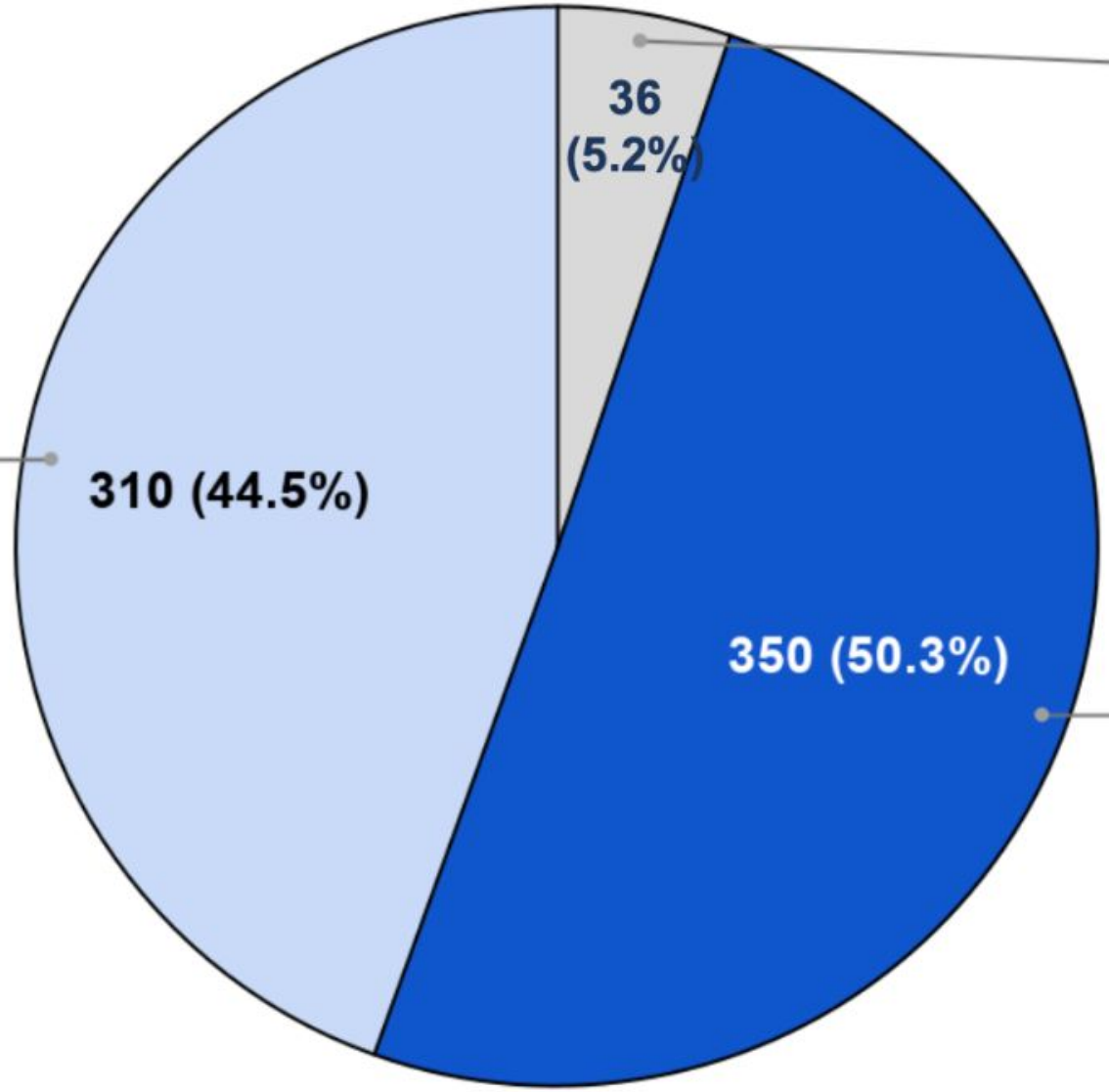
696 employees

Eight elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, plus early learning and career and technical education



MCAS Employees (696)

MAXIMIZING COMMUNITY AND STUDENTS
Michigan City Area Schools



Administrators
5.2%

- Superintendent
- Assoc. & Asst. Superintendent
- Principals & Asst. Principals
- Directors & Asst. Directors

Classified
44.5%

- Food Service
- Transportation
- IAs & Paras
- Building Secretaries
- Technology Staff
- Finance & HR Staff
- Admin Support Staff

Certified
50.3%

- Teachers
- Counselors
- Social Workers
- Success Coaches
- Nurses

Our students

24% receive special education services

14% participate in high ability or gifted programming

72.1% qualify for free or reduced-price meals



Class of 2026

Michigan City Area Schools

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340 high school graduates

3,542 college credits earned, saving families more than $760,000

70 Early College completers, including 31 Indiana College Core earners

114 academic or technical honors diplomas

72 21st Century Scholars

$8.9 million in scholarships



Programs and pathways

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11 CTE programs at two locations

Serving juniors and seniors from seven area high schools

52 graduates earned 126 technical certifications in 2026

18 graduates earned Work Ethic certifications

High school and college credit, plus industry certifications



Tonight's presentation

How did we get here?

What are we asking for?

Where would the dollars go?

What happens if it does not pass?

What have our educators accomplished?

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How did we get here?

IN THE STATE OF INDIANA, SCHOOL FUNDING IS STRICTLY REGULATED BY LAW, CATEGORIZING REVENUE INTO SPECIFIC, NON-INTERCHANGEABLE BUCKETS.

Indiana school funds have different purposes. By law, the dollars in these accounts are not interchangeable and must be used for their specific designated goals.

DEBT FUND



Covers Buildings, Roofs, HVAC, and Safety; this fund cannot generally be used for salaries or daily operations.

EDUCATION FUND



Dedicated to Teacher and staff salaries and Classroom expenses; it is funded largely by state tuition support and student enrollment.

OPERATIONS FUND



Covers Transportation, Utilities, and Maintenance to support the day-to-day operation of Michigan City Area Schools.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A district can improve facilities while also facing difficult staffing or compensation decisions because each fund has separate legal restrictions.

MICHIGAN CITY AREA SCHOOLS

Why MCAS needs the operating referendum

The district has already reduced expenses. State policy, tax caps, enrollment loss, and rising costs have now overtaken those savings.

$2M+

SAVED THROUGH INTERNAL REDUCTIONS

EDUCATION AND OPERATIONS SPENDING

$5.8M+

PROJECTED ANNUAL TAX-CAP LOSSES

PRIMARILY OPERATIONS FUND REVENUE

280

FEWER STUDENTS

EDUCATION FUND REVENUE

The immediate issue

Without new operating revenue, MCAS must identify at least $4 million in additional annual reductions to balance the budget.

Debt Service dollars have restricted uses and generally cannot pay salaries or recurring operating expenses.

Internal reductions alone can no longer close the structural gap.

Legislative and financial forces

SEA 1

SEA 1 phases in tax-base changes from 2026 through 2031. MCAS projects less room for local revenue growth as those provisions take effect.

PROPERTY-TAX CAPS

Circuit-breaker credits and the new homestead credit reduce the revenue MCAS can collect. Annual losses are projected above $5.8 million.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

Education, Operations, and Debt Service dollars have different legal uses. Debt dollars generally cannot pay salaries or recurring services.

Enrollment loss compounds the pressure: 280 fewer students reduced Education Fund revenue by more than $2 million.

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What are we asking for?

The operating referendum proposal

A focused, time-limited investment in students, staff, and essential services.

UP TO $10M

ANNUALLY

8 YEARS

PROPOSED TERM

$0.2998

PER $100 OF ASSESSED VALUE

What voters are considering

The referendum would provide operating revenue for academic programs, transportation, student support, employee retention, and school safety.

The proposal appears on the November 3, 2026 ballot.

DRAFT BALLOT LANGUAGE

Michigan City Area Schools

MAXIMIZING COMMUNITY AND STUDENTS

Shall the Michigan City Area Schools increase property taxes paid to the School Corporation for no more than eight (8) years to support the Maximize Community and Students (MCAS) initiative which will sustain educational and operational funding stability in response to reductions in property tax revenue by recruiting and retaining teachers and staff, supporting essential student health and safety initiatives, and maintaining class sizes, academic programs, and opportunities to meet educational needs. **This will be achieved by imposing a property tax rate that does not exceed $0.2998** and results in a maximum annual amount that **does not exceed $10,000,000. If this operating referendum public question is approved by the voters, the property's annual property tax bill for a median residence of $200,000 would increase by $260 per year.**

MISLEADING

The additional $260 will NOT be what you pay in additional taxes per year.

For more information please call (219) 873-2000 or email wmccollum@mcas.k12.in.us

Michigan City Area Schools

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SECURING OUR FUTURE

CALCULATOR

See what the proposed operating referendum would mean for your household.



EducateMC.net/Calculator

Lake Hills Elementary • Indiana-certified STEM Magnet School

Where would the dollars go?

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How the referendum money would be used

The proposed $10 million annual investment focuses on academics, student access, and safety.

65%	$6.5M	ACADEMIC PROGRAMS	Class sizes, career and technical education, literacy, teacher recruitment and retention
20%	$2.0M	STUDENT ACCESS	Transportation, extracurricular opportunities, activities, and student support services
15%	$1.5M		School resource officers, mental health and behavior supports, and safety improvements

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Programs our students use

Theater



Esports



Elementary volleyball



Illustrative scenes

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What happens if it does not pass?

What is at stake for the community

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IF IT DOES NOT PASS

- Fewer bus routes, larger walking zones, and reduced transportation.
- Cuts to academic supports, electives, activities, and enrichment.
- Fewer counselors, social workers, success coaches, and behavior supports.
- Reduced custodial, maintenance, safety, and facility services. School closures could become necessary.

IF IT PASSES

- Maintain current programming and protect student opportunities.
- Preserve transportation and access to school activities.
- Strengthen student mental health, behavior, and safety support.
- Retain strong employees and maintain reliable services through future school transitions.

Learn more

Scan for the facts or estimate the cost for your home.

MCAS facts

Tax calculator

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At least $4 million in annual reductions

If the referendum does not pass, MCAS must close this annual gap.

EDUCATION FUND

Academic supports, electives,
activities, and enrichment
Counselors, social workers,
success coaches, and behavior support

OPERATIONS FUND

Bus routes and transportation
Custodial, maintenance, safety,
and facility services

DEBT SERVICE FUND Restricted dollars generally cannot cover salaries or recurring operations.

What MCAS has already done

MCAS acted before asking the community for additional support.

25

POSITIONS REDUCED

$2M+

SALARY AND BENEFIT SAVINGS

15%

MAXIMUM EDUCATION-TO-OPERATIONS TRANSFER

- Reviewed and renegotiated contracts and services to seek savings.
- Right-sized staffing, programs, and organizational structures.
- Established tighter controls for future staffing decisions.
- Continued advocacy with state legislators for sustainable funding.

These steps reduced costs, but they cannot offset the combined effect of tax caps, SEA 1, enrollment loss, and rising operating costs.

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What have our educators accomplished?

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Student results exceeded predictions

Ball State value-added study | MCAS results

Grade 3 ILEARN

ELA and math proficiency

+8.9

percentage points

23.5% actual | 14.6% predicted

Top quintile

Grade 8 ILEARN

ELA and math proficiency

+4.6

percentage points

11.3% actual | 6.7% predicted

Quintile 2

SAT benchmark

College-ready share

+3.9

percentage points

9.6% actual | 5.7% predicted

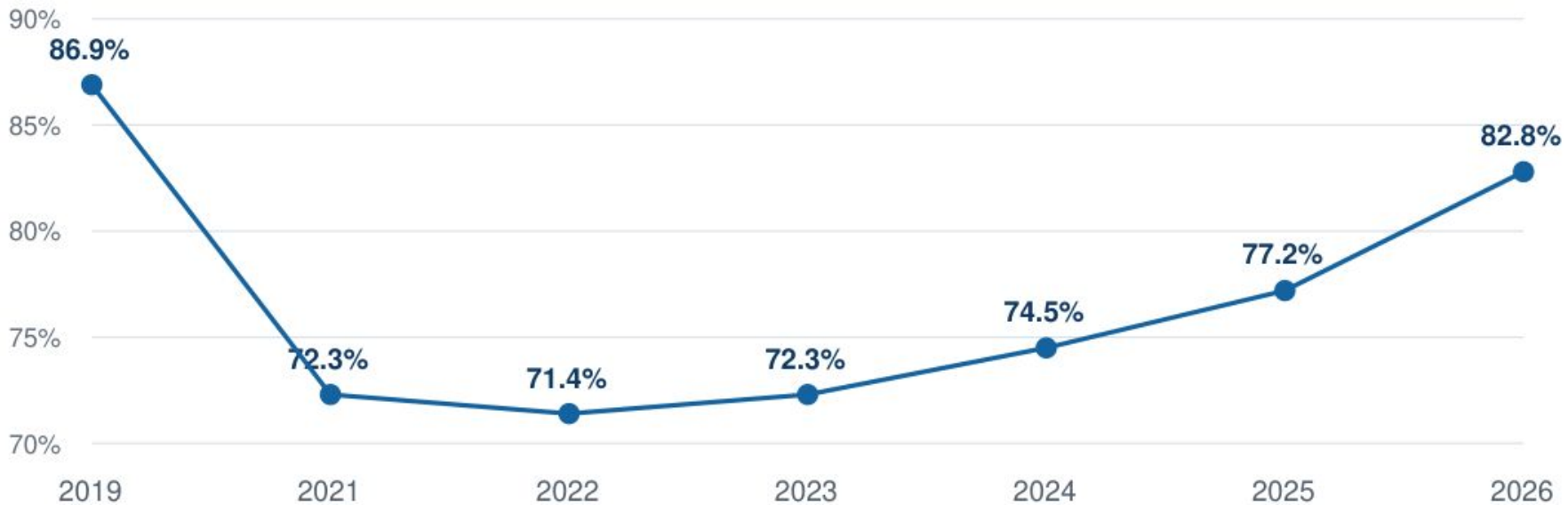
Quintile 2

After accounting for poverty, demographics, enrollment, spending, and English learners.

Source: Ball State University CBER, A Value-Added Measure of School Performance in Indiana (2026), Tables B1-B3.

MCAS IREAD-3 proficiency

Percent proficient, 2019·2026



2026

82.8%

+5.6 points from 2025

309 of 373 students

2020: No test administered (COVID-19). Four consecutive yearly increases since 2022.

Indiana State Teachers Association

Education Support Professional of the Year Award



Indiana Music Education Association

EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY



BARKER middle school

Indiana Teacher of the Year Finalist

MCAS educator recognized at the state level



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Indiana
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

2027 Indiana Teacher of the Year Finalist










FUTURE WOLVE



MICHIGAN CITY
GOLF PACK
2


DKNY N Y

NEXT LEVEL





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Learn more and join the conversation

NEXT COMMUNITY MEETING

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22

6:00 PM | Krueger Middle School

2001 Springland Avenue

SCAN FOR REFERENDUM INFORMATION

EducateMC.net/MCAS

Estimated household impact: EducateMC.net/Calculator

Questions and answers will follow each presentation.

Make your plan to vote

Key dates and voter information for the November 3, 2026 election.

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KEY VOTING DATES

Election Day: November 3, 2026
Early Voting: October 6–November 2
Absentee Voting: Apply by October 22

REGISTER & FIND YOUR POLL

Scan the code or visit
indianavoters.in.gov

MCAS OPERATING REFERENDUM

Michigan City Area Schools

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THANK YOU!

We'd love your feedback