WILLOUGHBY-EASTLAKE CITY SCHOOLS

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Message from the Superintendent



This year, our theme is simple: **The Future is Now.**

Our students are at the heart of everything we do in Willoughby-Eastlake City Schools. As we move further into the school year, it is exciting to see our students learning, creating, competing, leading, and serving our communities. Every day, our schools are creating opportunities for students to discover something they love, develop their talents, and imagine what is possible for their future.

Our Shared Vision is what guides our work. We are focused on strong academics, engaging experiences, meaningful relationships, and opportunities that help every student learn, grow, and discover their full potential. Together, our shared goals inspire confidence in our district's direction.

Across the district, students are exploring their interests through art, music, athletics, clubs, electives, leadership, and service. They are challenging themselves through advanced coursework, Advanced Placement, and College Credit Plus. This year, we are launching new career and technical education programs connecting students with careers and our local workforce through hands-on learning and real-world skills.

Our Portrait of a Graduate brings this work together. Communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, empathy, and resilience are skills students will need wherever life takes them. We want every graduate to leave Willoughby Eastlake with a strong academic foundation, meaningful experiences, and the confidence to take the next step. We aren't just preparing students to graduate. We're preparing them for what comes next.

While our students become future-ready, we are working to make our district finances future-ready as well. We recognize that our district is at an important crossroads, and it is you, our community, who will determine which path we take next.

One path restores funding lost due to recent legislative changes, provides ongoing resources for permanent improvement needs, and allows us to plan for a future around a two-high-school model. Path one provides the district with stable, consistent permanent improvement dollars to keep up with inflation and rising costs.

The other path requires us to plan for a smaller district footprint. It centers on one high school and one middle school. This path would require a more accelerated transformation of our facilities and operations to keep up with inflation and rising costs.

Both paths keep us focused on our district promises or priorities reflected in our shared vision.
Regardless of the path, our focus remains the same: building a strong and sustainable future for our students and our community. Real momentum is building across Willoughby-Eastlake City Schools, and we are excited about what comes next.

The Future is Now.

Thank you for your continued trust, partnership, and support.
My choice for a world-class, student-centered education is Willoughby-Eastlake.

With gratitude,

Patrick Ward
Patrick Ward, PhD. | Superintendent

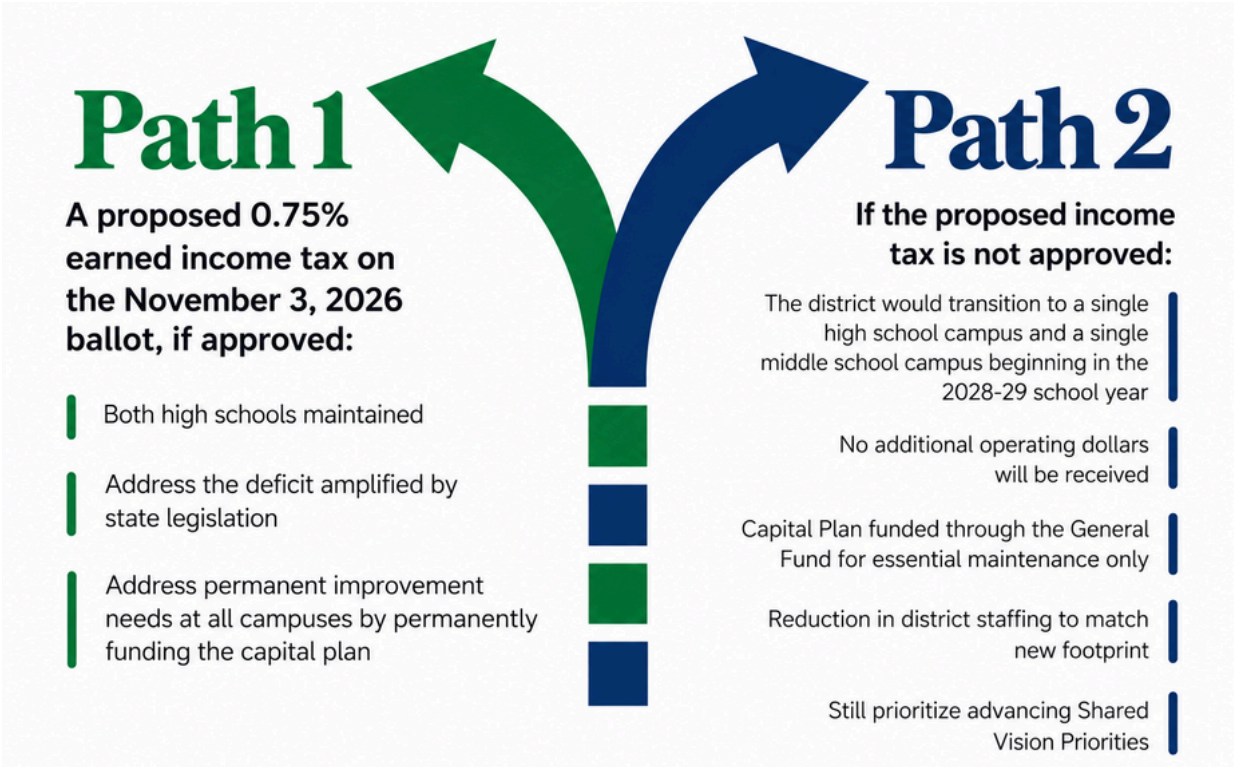
Future Ready Finances

Willoughby-Eastlake is at a decision point.
Reduced state funding for K12 schools and changes to Ohio's property tax system have made local school funding less predictable and put additional pressure on district finances. Enrollment also continues to decline, requiring the district to look carefully at staffing, operations, and the number of buildings it operates. These conditions give our community a choice in the operational efficiencies we create moving forward, while continuing to implement our Shared Vision.

What Is On The Ballot?
The proposed 0.75% earned income tax would generate about $14 million a year on a continuing basis, with roughly $9.6 million for operations and $4.4 million dedicated to permanent improvements.
Those permanent improvements include:

- Complete A/C at Grant & Edison Elementary
- A/C & lighting upgrades at Willowick
- Flooring, paint & furniture at Royalview & Willowick
- Athletic facility & playground upgrades
- Roof, HVAC & building improvements
- Security & safety upgrades
- Parking lots, sidewalks & site improvements
- New buses, as needed
- Technology replacement, as needed
- Ongoing upkeep of district facilities

An earned income tax applies to district residents' active income, including wages, salaries, tips, and other active compensation. It does not apply to passive income such as Social Security benefits, pensions, capital gains, interest, dividends, or other investment income.
A resident with $50,000 in active income would pay about $375 per year, or $31.25 per month.



The Choice:

The Shared Vision of Willoughby-Eastlake Schools has not changed. What has changed is the financial environment in which the district must deliver it. The board placed this issue on the November ballot so the community can decide how the district responds.
For more information, visit weschools.org/futurereadyfinances or scan the QR code.