Future-Ready FINANCES

ONE VISION: TWO POSSIBLE PATHS

# 3-30-3 MESSAGING FRAMEWORK

## 3-Second Message

**Future-Ready Finances: One Vision: Two Possible Paths**

## 30-Second Message

**Willoughby-Eastlake City Schools' Vision includes four promises to families: Create Engaging Experiences, Prioritize Relationships, Inspire and Nurture Extraordinary Growth and Invest in the Future.**

To continue aligning with our vision and these four promises, the district remains committed to fiscal stewardship and responsibility, which has led us to two possible paths forward:

- One path is a proposed 0.75% earned income tax on the November 3, 2026, ballot, which would allow the district to maintain two high schools.
- The other path, should the community decide not to move forward with additional funding, is to consolidate to one high school and one middle school.

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 such as buildings, technology, security, and buses. A resident with $50,000 in active income would pay about $375 per year, or $31.25 per month.

An earned income tax is applied to the active income of district residents and does not apply to passive income such as Social Security benefits, pensions, capital gains, interest, dividends, or other passive income.

If approved, the district would maintain two high schools under the current plan while continuing to find other operational efficiencies. If it is not approved, the district would move to one consolidated high school and one middle school beginning in 2028-29, with building closures and consolidations at every level.

# 3-Minute Message

## A CHOICE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF W-E SCHOOLS

**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.

## PATH #1:

**Path #1 is a proposed 0.75% earned income tax on the November 3, 2026, ballot, which would allow the district to maintain two high schools.**

Today, Willoughby-Eastlake operates North High School and South High School. If the proposed earned income tax is approved, the district would maintain both high schools while continuing to evaluate enrollment, staffing, building use, and other opportunities to reduce costs and operate responsibly. The proposal would allocate approximately $4.4 million annually to permanent improvements, creating a dedicated funding source for long-term needs to maintain the facilities, technology, and safety and security of our current structure.

If the community decides not to move forward with additional funding, the district will pursue Path #2 to create the operational efficiencies needed to maintain fiscal stability.

## PATH #2:

**If the proposed income tax is not approved,** the district would transition to a single high school campus and a single middle school campus beginning in the 2028-29 school year.

# 3-Minute Message

## 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 such as buildings, technology, security, and buses.**

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 passive income.

A resident with $50,000 in active income would pay approximately $375 per year or $31.25 a 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.**

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