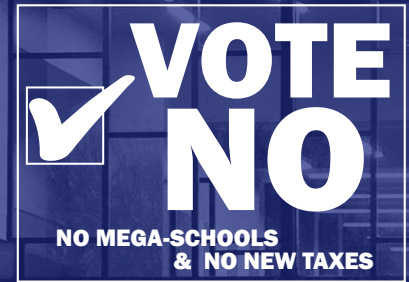


How the Oshkosh Area School District Deceived the Voters and Taxpayers on the 2020 Referendum



*"Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts."
- D P Moynihan*

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Back in the fall of 2020 leaders of the Oshkosh Area School District went to great lengths to secure positive outcomes for both operational and capital referendums. Part of the pitch to taxpayers was an estimate of the anticipated tax impact of approving the \$107 Million building referendum. The district suggested that a property that had a value of \$100,000 would see an annual increase of \$48 in 2021, \$60 in 2022, and \$84 in 2023 and beyond. However, much to the dismay of the citizens of the district, this is not at all what happened. A table that is still posted on the district website shows these values for several different property values (Figure 1).

As an example of what actually happened, we will use a the property within the City of Oshkosh at 2807 Newport Avenue. We use this property because the assessed value is exactly \$200,000. Thus, for example, in 2023 we would have anticipated a total tax impact to be \$14 x 12 months, or \$168 for the year. A copy of the 2023 tax bill can be found [here](#). Roughly two-thirds of the way down is a section labeled "Voter-Approved Temporary Tax Increases". It is here that we can find the impact of the referenda. This section is displayed on the right in Figure 2.

Note there are three entries displayed. The first is the operational referendum, which is costing this taxpayer \$293.69. The second row represents the debt still being paid on the Oaklawn referendum. And finally, the third entry referencing \$21.37 Million is the amount being levied for the \$107 Million capital referendum. Note this is costing this tax-payer \$789.36. This is 4.69 times more than the \$168 suggested in the district's table, or, it cost \$621.36 more than expected.

A recent survey suggested that 78% of americans are living paycheck-to-paycheck ([2](#)). Individual tax-payers have to budget and live within thier means, but our school board doesn't seem to understand the financial realities of our community and deceive us in order to get their new schools approved by the voters. We should not accept this nor continue to give permission to increase our taxes by approving a \$198 Million referendum. **Vote No** on April 1st.

Q2 Estimated Monthly Tax Impact, Sample Home Values

	2021	2022	2023-40
\$100,000	\$4	\$6	\$7
\$150,000	\$6	\$9	\$11
\$200,000	\$8	\$12	\$14
\$250,000	\$10	\$15	\$18
\$300,000	\$12	\$18	\$21

Figure 1

Table displayed on OASD website at <https://www.oshkosh.k12.wi.us/facilities-archived/referendum-2020>

Taxing Jurisdiction	Total Additional Taxes	Total Additional Taxes Applied to Property
OSH	7,950,000.00	293.69
OSH	132,312.00	4.89
OSH	21,367,688.00	789.36

Figure 2

Additional tax increases due to voter approved school referendums for a house valued at \$200,000.