



WEST CLERMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT

4350 AICHOLTZ ROAD | CINCINNATI, OH 45245 | 513-943-5000

www.westcler.org | @westcler

Natasha Adams, Superintendent | Kelly Sininger, Treasurer

David Fultz, Assistant Superintendent | Mike Overbey, Assistant Superintendent

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Jeffrey Riel, Coordinator of Strategic Initiatives
West Clermont School District
513.943.5000 — riel_j@westcler.org

West Clermont Board Takes Final Step to Place Operating Levy on the March Ballot

At the November 18 meeting, the West Clermont Board of Education members unanimously voted to place a 7.99-mill emergency operating levy request on the March 17, 2020 presidential primary ballot. If passed, the levy will help to maintain the day-to-day operations of the district, such as staffing, utilities, supplies and K-8 busing.

It has been 15 years since West Clermont passed a new operating issue in 2004. Since that time, the district has made millions in deep cuts; cuts which had a direct impact on the district's ability to keep pace with student and teacher needs in the classroom.

"Due to budget restrictions, cuts to programs and services have compromised the quality of education we can offer," said Natasha L. Adams, superintendent. "We have delayed the request to voters for as long as possible but now the need can no longer wait. Without these funds, we will continue to fall farther behind."

If the levy fails, then the district will need to enact \$3.5 million in cuts and reductions for the 2020-21 school year. These cuts and reductions will be announced in early 2020.

"Our situation is urgent and our most vital need right now is stabilization to continue our current level of programming and services," said School Board President Tina Sanborn. "We are requesting the lowest possible amount while still providing the kind of education that people expect in this community."

According to the 2018 Cupp report, West Clermont's per pupil spending ranks in the bottom 5% of all Ohio public school districts. In fact, the average cost to educate a child at West Clermont is substantially lower than the state average and comparable districts and so is the residential taxpayer share of the daily costs, which, according to District Treasurer Kelly Sininger, means the district is doing as much as it can to maximize resources.

"West Clermont Schools has a long track record of doing more with less. We have stretched, cut and reduced operational costs, programs and services and have found alternative funding sources through strategic partnerships but it is no longer enough," continued Sininger. "Our five-year financial forecast shows that maintaining current programs and services is unsustainable."

If passed, the March 2020 operating levy will be collected for 10 years and is expected to cost taxpayers \$23.30 per month per \$100,000 of appraised property value.

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