

## The Arts and the Pinellas County School Referendum

Art and Music programs have been strengthened by Referendum funding. Prior to the Referendum, enhancements like high-quality art supplies, elementary music instruments and band uniforms depended upon funding from groups like PTAs and Band Boosters. The Referendum provides all students with access to the arts.

### Visual Arts

- All schools now have digital art labs offering courses like drawing, photography, stop motion animation and Adobe Illustrator. In the last three years; 12 High, 8 Middle, 36 Elementary and 4 ESE Schools have gotten new digital art labs.
- The Referendum allows for the purchase of consumable supplies like paint, clay, paper and pencils and equipment like drying racks and kilns. Since renewal, art classes have received over \$1 million.
- Art classrooms are fully stocked and annually expanded with art books and magazines.
- In the last three years, over 36,000 students have taken field trips to art museums for subjects including history and social studies as well as art.
- Additional “high touch” art supplies like paint brushes and pencils are being purchased to limit the possible virus exposure of sharing.
- Students are highlighted in art exhibits and regularly receive top awards.

### Music/Performing Arts

- In the 2019/20 school year 16 schools taught guitar, orchestra was featured at 27, and all elementary schools offered music. Without the Referendum there would be no funds for guitar or orchestra or elementary music materials.
- New materials like sheet music, instruments and stands are purchased based on student needs. Since renewal, Pinellas classrooms received almost \$788,000 in music materials.
- Instrument rental fees are waived for students who can't afford them and eight high school bands received new uniforms in the last three years.
- Since renewal, student participation in All County groups like Orchestra and Band has increased to allow for two additional concerts and an extra day at the Mahaffey Theater.
- Technology is integrated into many music classes. Expanded digital music and sound engineering tools allowed students to record year end projects remotely. [See an example](#)
- Partnerships with community musicians and the Florida Orchestra allow students the opportunity to train with professional musicians.

### Quick Facts

- Not a new tax. Pinellas voters approved it in 2004 and have renewed it every four years.
- In 2019, the average single family homeowner in Pinellas paid \$85.85, or \$7.15 a month.
- The Referendum produced approx. \$44.5 million for Pinellas in 2019/20. If voters don't renew it, Referendum supported programs like art & music would suffer.
- These are local funds. 100% directly benefit students (no administrative costs) no matter what happens in Tallahassee.
- Funds (including charter) are monitored by an independent citizen oversight committee.

## Question on the November 2020 Ballot

**BALLOT TITLE:** APPROVAL OF THE CONTINUATION OF ONE-HALF MILL AD VALOREM TAX FOR SCHOOL OPERATING EXPENSES

**BALLOT QUESTION:** *Shall the Pinellas County School District ad valorem millage of one-half mill per year be continued beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2025, for necessary operating expenses including funds to recruit and retain quality teachers; preserve reading programs and music and art classes; and provide current textbooks and technology, sharing funds with charter schools proportionate to student enrollment as required by law, with expenditure oversight by an independent citizens financial oversight committee?*

\_\_\_\_\_ **YES**      \_\_\_\_\_ **NO**

### **Recruiting and retaining quality teachers – Great teachers are the key to everything.**

- For the 2020/21 school year, teachers will receive a salary stipend of \$5,231.
- Publicly supporting teachers helps us recruit the 400-600 new teachers we need each year and helps keep the good ones, both in classrooms and remote.
- Additional training and materials are continuously available to improve teacher skills.

### **Preserve reading programs – Small group instruction, new culturally relevant texts and reading intervention help students succeed.**

- Classrooms have content-rich, relevant books, magazines and reference materials. Students receive copies they can take home and mark up to improve their understanding and retention.
- In the coming school year a program is being rolled out for students with dyslexia and other reading difficulties to help them learn how to decode words.
- Early readers (first through third grade) receive small group instruction with additional teacher support.

### **Provide current textbooks and technology – Up to date materials and technology is vital to future careers and integrated into all aspects of student learning.**

- Referendum funds support growth opportunities for our students by supplying 3-D printers, STEM programs, hands on building and collaboration, robotics study and computer coding.
- Students engage with software platforms that support collaboration, real-time challenges, visual and audio explanations, adjusted reading levels and more in multiple subjects.
- Referendum funds have purchased additional licenses to online software, allowing remote learners a more fully integrated classroom experience.