



**Citizens for Pinellas Schools**  
PO Box 15525 \* Clearwater, FL 33766  
797-9333 \* citizensforpinellaschools@gmail.com

Pinellas voters made a personal commitment to education by overwhelmingly approving an additional one-half mill property tax in November 2004 and renewed that commitment in 2008 and 2012, producing almost \$360 million for our local schools. These funds are used to recruit, retain and train our teachers; preserve reading programs; support music and art classes and provide up-to-date textbooks and technology in our classrooms.

Collection of this money is set to expire in June 2017. In order for our children to continue to receive the benefit of this program funding, the referendum will need to be renewed on November 8, 2016.

There are a few things you should know about the referendum funding:

- **This is not a new tax**, but simply a continuation of our current local commitment.
- 100% stays in Pinellas and, by law, the referendum produces money over and above state funding.
- Every dollar produced by the referendum is monitored by an independent financial oversight committee (ICROC) made up of local citizens.
- The referendum costs the average Pinellas homeowner less than \$6 a month.

Some examples of how Referendum dollars are used:

- Specialized literacy intervention is helping elementary students read at grade level – in 14 to 18 weeks on average.
- Students receive reading assistance throughout the school day, providing needed remediation without losing valuable class time.
- Additional training and support for college readiness is being offered in middle and high schools.
- Participation in art and music has soared and instrument rental fees are waived for students on free and reduced lunch.
- Teachers receive a stipend, and the Referendum funds training to improve classroom skills.
- Technology is integrated into all learning areas. We have Smart Boards in classrooms and computers, iPads and Kindles are in student's hands, aiding workforce readiness.

The Pinellas Schools Referendum is good for our community and businesses and we need to work together toward renewal. Great schools keep kids engaged, reduce crime rates and lessen strain on social services. Great schools support higher property values, provide our businesses with skilled workers and encourage business relocation to our area. We can't afford to relinquish the gains we've made or sacrifice the programs we've built with referendum dollars.

Our past efforts have been endorsed by Chambers, Rotaries, Neighborhood Associations and the Realtors. Now we're asking your organization to endorse referendum renewal and spread the word about this important program to your members. We ask that you address this at an upcoming meeting so we can announce your support prior to the November vote.

Thank you for your help.

*Beth Rawlins*

Chair

[www.Citizens for Pinellas Schools.com](http://www.Citizens for Pinellas Schools.com)