Article for July 25, 2018

The August 7 election is in two weeks. The Fayette R-III School District has an operating tax levy proposal on the ballot, its first in 19 years. The district is proposing a $0.70 increase to the operating levy taking it from $3.4766 to $4.1766. This increase would put Fayette ahead of Harrisburg and behind Salisbury in operating tax levy when comparing districts within the Lewis & Clark Conference and would keep Fayette between New Franklin and Glasgow in comparing Howard County districts.

The district has a debt service levy of $0.7762 which takes the total proposed tax per $100 of assessed valuation from $4.2528 to $4.9528, placing Fayette just behind Harrisburg in total tax.

Additional funds would help the district cover increasing operating expenses. All expenses of a school district increase annually; including salaries & benefits, instructional supplies and materials, utilities, routine repair & maintenance, programming and technology.

Whether large or small, all districts must be preparing students to compete in a global economy. Fayette graduates are competing with students throughout Missouri and from other states and countries for a seat at colleges and universities in Missouri or nationwide. Colleges are actively seeking students from other states and countries, have strict admissions requirements, and offer rigorous and competitive programs. Not only are school districts charged with ensuring students graduate ready for college, but they must be career ready and prepared for whichever direction in which they head: technical programs, the military, or the world of work.

State and federal funding has decreased over the 19 years since the last operating tax levy was passed, but program requirements and operating costs have increased. This conundrum has left most districts in a difficult financial position. Other than cutbacks and reductions in programming and positions to help address funding shortfalls, a district has few options, as the things that impact its funding – enrollment, attendance, and revenue - are out of its control.

If you have any questions about the proposed levy or the school district in general, you can access the district website at [www.fayette.k12.mo.us](http://www.fayette.k12.mo.us) or call central office at 660-248-2153.