Q. How much is this going to cost homeowners in Hammond?
A. The average homeowner will spend $10.47 per month for both referendums to invest in our schools and students. You can calculate the cost of the referendum on your home by clicking here.

Q. What will happen if the referendum fails?
A. First, we hope that you and others do agree that our schools help make our community a great place to live and that we should make the investments necessary to provide our students with quality educational options. If we are not successful, we will be left with a one-hundred-year-old high school that no longer meets the safety and security needs, the technology requirements and the energy efficient designs of the future. We will also not be able to address additional capital improvement needs that will upgrade and maintain the other SCH schools.

Q. How will the operations dollars be spent?
A. We need your support so that we can pay competitive salaries to retain the outstanding teachers that help our kids each day. Constant turnover with new teachers is not good for our kids and puts our students at a disadvantage as they prepare for educational opportunities and jobs of the future.

Q. Why have a referendum?
A. State and federal funding for public schools continues to be substantially decreased. In fact, in the recently approved state budget, Indiana schools will receive only a 1.7% increase in funding. This, combined with projected budget cuts in federal funding, makes it important for our district to seek local voter support to maintain the quality of our programs and retain our outstanding teachers.

In addition, the over one-hundred-year-old Hammond High School is ill-equipped to meet the challenges of a 21st century teaching environment. Technology upgrades are limited, security upgrades cannot meet new standards, classroom facilities are antiquated, the building isn’t energy efficient, and additional accommodations must be made for those students, staff, teachers, parents, and visitors who are physically challenged. Voter support will enable the community and the school district to build a new middle/high school that will address all of the above concerns in a state of the art facility.

This has been a deliberative process that has involved our board members and included public feedback to determine our best and next steps. We are not rushing this process, we are simply making the right choice at the right time with the options that are available to us. To delay these projects can result in additional costs and a loss of outstanding teachers. Construction costs will continue to increase and will result in a more costly project in the future if the need is not addressed at this time. Finally, interest rates will continue to increase and will cost our tax payers additional dollars.

Q. Who decided that it was important to seek voter support via a referendum?
A. The locally elected school board held several meetings to determine the most effective use of funds, and the results of those meetings, including working sessions, and reviews by professional partners resulted in the recommendation to pursue a referendum. Please note that the board attests that everything has been done to reduce the cost of operations of the district and to receive recommendations on the design and construction of the new middle/high school.
Q. **Who can vote?**
A. Any registered voter living in the City of Hammond is eligible to vote.

Q. **How are school funds being used to promote the referendums?**
A. State law is very clear on the use of funds. No school funds will be used to promote the referendums. A Political Action Committee (PAC) composed of community members will be formed to educate the public and promote the referendums within the community. The PAC will be responsible for raising money to cover the costs to promote the referendums. We are also presently working with the Lake County Elections Board to determine the cost of the special election and we are working in conjunction with other Lake County school districts planning to hold referendums so that costs of administering the election are minimized.

Q. **How will additional operations funding impact our district?**
A. It will send a clear signal to Hammond residents and others in northwest Indiana that we are prepared to make the investment necessary to improve the quality of life in our community by retaining and recruiting outstanding teachers.

Q. **What impact will the new high school have on our community?**
A. A new middle/high school will continue to support the City’s efforts to make Hammond a vibrant and viable location for future growth. A 400,000-square foot building will make a major impact on our community with jobs created during construction, new enrollment of students, and it will be a hub for future job creation and retention in our city. In addition, the new middle/high school can become a center for community activities with the availability of large meeting areas, a theater, a gymnasium and a pool.

Q. **What additional citizen input is required to move forward?**
A. Throughout this process we will remain consistent, accessible, and transparent in all our actions. Although not required by law, the School City of Hammond has acquired over 500 petitions from registered voters to present to the election board to show a strong base of support for placement of the capital referendum on the ballot. Between now and November 7th, the School City of Hammond is planning to conduct community meetings to share the referendum information with the public. In addition, the PAC will be sending and sharing information on the referendums with the community. Once the referendums are passed, a committee composed of School City of Hammond representatives and community representatives will be formed to plan and develop the future for the new middle/high school facility.