

# Two ballot items affect RE-2 future

Constituents to vote on Initiative 4a and Amendment 73 on November 6

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This year's November election holds the promise of new funds for the district in the form of two items on the ballot: Initiative 4a and Amendment 73.

If passed, Initiative 4A will provide \$75 million for the Eaton School District to renovate and build new facilities.

Amendment 73 (A73) is the result of a citizen's ballot initiative known as Great Schools, Thriving Communities, and if passed, Eaton would see an additional \$3.1 million in the operating budget each year.

A73 will go toward funding day-to-day expenses like salaries and eliminate student lab fees, while Initiative 4A will fund the construction of school facilities.

## What is Initiative 4a?

Initiative 4a is the district's method of combating school overcrowding through the construction of new facilities.

Initiative 4a is a bond project that will fund \$75 million worth of construction throughout the district if passed.

According to information from a school board report, EES is at 116 percent capacity and EHS is at 101 percent capacity.

According to the Eaton

District website page on the Long-Range Facilities Project, the initiative would be funded through a bond that would cost \$7 per month for every \$100,000 of residential property value and every other class of property \$28.50 per month for every \$100,000.

## Project highlights

The \$75 million that stands to be gained from the bond would be used to build the future of the RE-2 school district.

The majority of the \$75 million budget will be spent on renovations to EHS and constructing a new K-5 school in addition to other projects.

## How does A73 work?

The Eaton School District is one out of hundreds of Colorado schools that would receive increased funds from A73.

According to the Amendment 73 Factual Summary for the Eaton RE-2 School District, A73 is an income tax increase that would affect eight percent of Colorado tax filers in the category of taxable income over \$150,000.

A73 increases the state corporate income tax rate for "C" Corporations.

Colorado's current individual and corporate income tax rate is a flat 4.63 percent. Beginning



The proposed concept design of EHS with renovations from Initiative 4a funding. According to the Proposed 2018 Bond Projects and Summary of Costs document, EHS would receive maintenance updates, a two-story addition, a new band room, a secure entry vestibule, and new classroom spaces built to accommodate up to 800 students.

in 2019, the measure would increase the corporate income tax rate from 4.63 percent to 6.0 percent.

For property taxes levied by school districts, A73 will permanently reduce and set the residential assessment rate (RAR) to seven percent (currently at 7.2 percent), and decrease the rate from 29 percent to 24 percent for businesses property owners.

A73 is predicted to generate \$1.6 billion in the public education budget in the first year of implementation.

## How would Eaton use the money?

According Eaton superintendent Bridgette Muse, Eaton schools will use the funds generated from A73 to hire, train and retain quality hourly staff such as bus drivers, teachers, counselors, and administrators, eliminate student technology fees, enhance safety and security with additional personnel and technology, support the social and emotional needs for all students, and provide additional programming

and activities for students.

Legally, Muse can not do any campaigning for the Amendment. Muse said, "I think all of these five items will resonate with voters, but I have heard several say removing the technology and lab fees is very appealing. That alone would put more money back into families' budgets." The tech fee for students in high school is \$50 per year.

President of the Eaton Education Association (EEA) Doug Preston said, "During the recession of 2008, educational spending was cut. The problem is that the state hasn't gotten back to the point of pre-recession spending."

## Arguments for A73

According to the 2018 State Ballot Information Booklet, some arguments for the proposed amendment are:

- A73 creates a sustainable source of revenue that would help alleviate budget cuts that stemmed from the Great Recession
- A73 provides tax relief for business owners, farmers, and

ranchers, who have historically paid a higher proportion of property taxes compared to homeowners

- A73 would allow local school districts to spend the money on needs they see fit

- A73 would allow the state's general operating budget to spend less money on meeting required education funding levels

## Arguments against A73

According to the 2018 State Ballot Information Booklet, some arguments against the proposed amendment are:

- A73 creates a tax increase without promise of increased academic achievement

- A73's new income tax could negatively affect the state's economy because Colorado would have the ninth highest state income tax in the nation, which could potentially drive away business owners

- A73 provides a tax cut for businesses at the expense of homeowners

- A73 doesn't allow the state to adjust the income tax thresholds to account for inflation

Example individual income tax increases under A73	
Income	Tax increase
< \$150,000	\$0
\$200,000	\$185
\$250,000	\$870
\$400,000	\$3,925
\$1 million	\$24,395

Information adapted from 2018 State Ballot Information Booklet