

**DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE  
100 NORTH SENATE AVENUE  
IGC-N, ROOM N1058  
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE REVIEW OF )  
PROPOSED LANGUAGE FOR A BALLOT )  
QUESTION REGARDING SCHOOL CITY )     No. 16-015-REF  
OF MISHAWAKA )**

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**FINDINGS AND FINAL DETERMINATION ON PROPOSED QUESTION SUBMITTED  
JULY 5, 2016**

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1. School City of Mishawaka (“Corporation”) proposes to issue bonds or enter into a lease to finance the 2017/2018 School Building Basic Renewal, Restoration and Safety Project, which is estimated to cost not more than \$13,000,000 and is estimated to increase the property tax rate for debt service by sixteen and seventy-eight hundredths cents (\$0.1678) per \$100 of assessed valuation.
2. Under Indiana law, the voters in the area served by the Corporation will vote in a referendum to approve or deny borrowing for the project and raise property taxes to support it.
3. Indiana law governs the format and wording of the ballot question for the referendum. Indiana Code 6-1.1-20-3.6(c).
4. Under Indiana law, “the **following question shall** be submitted to the eligible voters at the election”:

“Shall \_\_\_\_\_ (insert the name of the political subdivision) issue bonds or enter into a lease to finance \_\_\_\_\_ (insert a brief description of the controlled project), which is estimated to cost not more than \_\_\_\_\_ (insert the total cost of the project) and is estimated to increase the property tax rate for debt service by \_\_\_\_\_ (insert increase in tax rate as determined by the department of local government finance)?”

Indiana Code 6-1.1-20-3.6(c) (emphasis added).

5. The ballot question then must contain three parts:
  - a brief description of the project;
  - the estimated total project cost; and
  - the estimated tax rate increase for the project.

6. The law requires the Department of Local Government Finance (“Department”) to determine the estimate of the tax rate increase.
7. The law also requires the Department to either approve the ballot language or recommend that it be modified to ensure that the description of the controlled project is accurate and not biased.
8. On July 5, 2016, the Department received an e-mail from the St. Joseph County Election Board containing the Corporation’s proposed question.
9. The Board requested that the Department review this proposed question:

“Shall the School City of Mishawaka, St. Joseph County, Indiana, issue bonds or enter into a lease to finance the 2017/2018 School Building Basic Renewal, Restoration and Safety Project which includes, but is not limited to, restoring all or a portion of the basic site and building components including safety and accessibility improvements at all or any portion of the eleven buildings and Baker Park, all of which are operated by the school corporation, and which is estimated to cost not more than \$13,000,000 and is estimated to increase the property tax rate for debt service by \$0.1678 per \$100 of assessed valuation?”

#### **Determination of Tax Rate Increase**

10. The Department estimates the tax rate increase in reliance on the Corporation’s proposed debt from the project, assessed valuation of the property in the area served by the Corporation, an amortization schedule submitted by the Corporation, and estimated miscellaneous revenues of approximately 5.5%. Based on this information, the Department certifies a rate of \$0.1678 per \$100 of assessed valuation.

#### **Accuracy and Bias**


11. The Department must review the language of the public question to evaluate whether the description of the controlled project is accurate and is not biased against either a vote in favor of or a vote against the controlled project. The Department concludes that the description of the controlled project is not inaccurate and not biased against either a vote in favor of or a vote against the controlled project.

#### **Final Determination**

WHEREFORE, based on the above findings and applicable law, the Department finds that the proposed language is in compliance with IC 6-1.1-20-3.6(c) and approves the language as proposed. The Department certifies a rate of \$0.1678 per \$100 of assessed valuation.

Dated this 11th day of July, 2016.

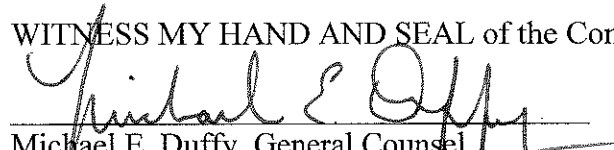
STATE OF INDIANA  
DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

  
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Courtney L. Schaafsma, Commissioner  
Department of Local Government Finance

STATE OF INDIANA  
DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

I, Michael E. Duffy, General Counsel for the Department of Local Government Finance, hereby certify that the above is an order of the Commissioner of the Department of Local Government Finance made this date in the above-entitled matter and that the Commissioner has personally signed the same under her statutory authority.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL of the Commissioner on this the 11th day of July, 2016.

  
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Michael E. Duffy, General Counsel  
Department of Local Government Finance