

**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) No. 26-032-REF-A
HAMILTON SOUTHEASTERN)
SCHOOLS, HAMILTON COUNTY)**

**FINDINGS AND FINAL DETERMINATION ON PROPOSED QUESTION SUBMITTED
JUNE 23, 2026**

1. On June 18, 2026, the Department of Local Government Finance (“Department”) rejected a proposed ballot question of Hamilton Southeastern Schools (“Corporation”) for the purpose of imposing a referendum tax levy. Subsequently, the Corporation submitted a revised ballot question. This Order amends the Department’s June 18, 2026 order.
2. Hamilton Southeastern Schools (“Corporation”) proposes to place an operating referendum on the ballot for the purpose of imposing a referendum tax levy.
3. Under Indiana law, voters in the area served by the Corporation will vote in a referendum to approve or deny the Corporation’s proposed tax rate.
4. Indiana law governs the format and wording of the ballot question for the referendum.
5. Under Indiana law, the “question to be submitted to the voters in the referendum **must read as follows**”:

“Shall _____ (insert the name of the school corporation) increase property taxes paid to the school corporation for no more than _____ (insert the number of years immediately following the holding of the referendum) years for the purpose of funding _____ (insert a brief description of the purposes) by imposing a property tax rate that does not exceed _____ (insert property tax rate) and results in a maximum annual amount that does not exceed _____ (insert maximum amount of annual levy). If this operating referendum public question is approved by the voters, for a median residence of _____ (insert the school corporation's median household assessed value, rounded up to the next fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000)), the property's annual property tax bill would increase by _____ (insert dollar amount, rounded up to the next whole dollar) per year. (If, in the previous five (5) years, the school corporation has conducted an operating referendum public question, the following shall also be included in the ballot language.) The most recent operating

referendum public question proposed by the school corporation was held in _____ (insert year) and _____ (insert whether the measure passed or failed).”

Indiana Code 20-46-1-10 (emphasis added). The number of years for which a referendum tax levy may be extended if the public question under this section is approved may not exceed eight (8) years.

6. The ballot question then must contain up to nine parts:
 - The name of the school corporation.
 - The number of calendar years for which the tax will be in effect.
 - The purpose of the funding.
 - The maximum property tax rate.
 - The maximum amount of annual levy.
 - The median household assessed value for the school corporation.
 - The estimated increase to the property tax bill of a median residence if the referendum is approved by the voters.
 - The year in which the most recent operating referendum was held (if one was held in the previous five years).
 - Whether the most recent operating referendum passed or failed (if one was held in the previous five years).
7. The law requires the Department of Local Government Finance (“Department”) to review the language for compliance with IC 20-46-1-10. The Department may either approve or reject the language.
8. On June 23, 2026, the Department received a resolution from the Corporation presenting the proposed ballot question for the referendum to be held in November 2026. The proposed ballot question is as follows:

"Shall the Hamilton Southeastern Schools increase property taxes paid to the school corporation for no more than eight (8) years for the purpose of funding the HSE Referendum Program by (1) repealing the existing referendum fund tax levy extended in 2023, and (2) replacing the existing referendum fund tax levy with a new referendum fund tax levy which will provide funding for (a) the salary and benefits of approximately 275 staff members, (b) the behavioral health contract that supports therapists in our school buildings with essential mental health support during the school day, (c) the shared salaries and benefits of school resource officers, (d) the salary and benefits of the Director of School Safety, (e) the salaries and benefits of traffic control and after school event security, and (f) the purchase of safety and security supplies and equipment by imposing a property tax rate that does not exceed \$0.3600 and results in a maximum annual amount that does not exceed \$47,500,000. If this operating referendum public question is approved by the voters, for a median residence of \$400,000, the property's annual property tax bill would increase by \$700 per year. The most

recent operating referendum public question proposed by the school corporation was held in 2023 and passed."

9. The resolution represents that the referendum tax rate proposed by the Corporation is not to exceed \$0.36 per \$100 assessed valuation.
10. The Corporation previously held a referendum in 2023, which passed.
11. On June 12, 2026, the Department received from the Corporation, pursuant to IC 20-46-1-10.3, a certification by the Hamilton County Auditor of the median household assessed value in the school corporation and the property tax increase on the median household should the referendum pass.

Median Household Assessed Value and Property Tax Increase

12. As certified by the Hamilton County Auditor under IC 20-46-1-10.3, the median household assessed value is determined to be \$400,000, and the property tax increase on the median household, should the referendum pass, is \$700.

Compliance of Language

13. The Department must review the proposed language for compliance with IC 20-46-1-10. The Department may either approve or reject the language. The Department finds that the proposed language complies with IC 20-46-1-10.

Final Determination

WHEREFORE, based on the above findings and applicable law, the Department finds that the proposed language is in compliance with IC 20-46-1-10 and approves the language as proposed.

Dated this 23rd day of June, 2026.

STATE OF INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE



Jason Cockerill, Commissioner
Department of Local Government Finance