

VOTERS GUIDE



November 6, 2018 Election
Richardson Independent School District
Tax Ratification Election

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF RICHARDSON

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972-470-0584 • Website, including complete November 6, 2018, *VOTERS GUIDE*: www.lwvrichardson.org

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When voting in person, either early or on Election Day, you may take written materials into the voting booth to assist you in casting your ballot. You may not take electronic devices like cell phones. [Photo ID](#) is required to vote.

EARLY VOTING - in person October 22-November 2, 2018

		Dallas County	Collin County
Monday through Friday	October 22-26	7am – 7pm	8am – 5pm
Saturday	October 27	7am – 7pm	7am – 7pm
Sunday	October 28	1pm – 6pm	1pm – 6pm
Monday through Friday	Oct 29-Nov 2	7am – 7pm	7am – 7pm



Dallas County

During Early Voting, registered voters in the City of Richardson, **Dallas County**, may vote at any [Early Voting location](#) within Dallas County. The only Early Voting location within the City of Richardson, Dallas County, is:

Richardson Civic Center

Collin County

During Early Voting, registered voters in the City of Richardson, **Collin County**, may vote at any [Early Voting location](#) within Collin County. The only Early Voting location within the City of Richardson, Collin County, is:

Methodist Richardson Medical Center (Bush & Renner)

ELECTION DAY VOTING November 6, 2018, 7am-7pm



Dallas County

On Election Day, voters in the City of Richardson (**Dallas County**) must vote in their designated [precinct polling place](#).

Dallas County Elections: www.dallascountyvotes.org

Collin County

On Election Day, voters in the City of Richardson (**Collin County**) may vote in any [Vote Center](#) in Collin County.

Collin County Elections: www.collincountytx.gov/elections

Richardson ISD Tax Ratification Election

THE TAX RATIFICATION PROPOSAL For more details, see www.risd.org

Ballot language:

“Approving the ad valorem tax rate of \$1.52 per \$100 valuation in Richardson Independent School District for the current year, a rate that is \$0.13 higher per \$100 valuation than the school district rollback tax rate, for the purpose of generating additional local and state revenue for district maintenance and operations.”

Background:

On August 20, 2018, the Board of Trustees of the Richardson Independent School District (RISD) voted to raise its Maintenance & Operations (M&O) tax rate by 13 cents from \$1.04 to \$1.17 per \$100 valuation. Under Texas law, the district is now required to ask voters to ratify the 13 cent tax increase.

The total school property tax rate is comprised of the M&O amount (which pays for normal recurring expenditures such as salaries, utilities, and supplies) combined with the \$0.35 Interest and Sinking (I & S) amount (which is used to pay for infrastructure, facilities, and renovations).

Public schools in Texas are mainly supported through a combination of local property taxes and revenues provided by the state. Generally speaking, school funding formulas used by the state determine the total amount a school district can spend at a given tax rate, regardless of how much local property values increase. A higher M&O tax rate would allow the school district to spend more money on salaries, programs, security, and other recurring expenses.

If this tax rate increase is approved, school property taxes on an RISD house of average taxable value (\$234,915 after homestead exemption) will increase by \$305 next year. School property taxes are frozen for taxpayers with a homestead exemption at age 65, so most older RISD homeowners will not pay higher school taxes if this rate increase passes.

Supporters say:	Opponents say:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RISD needs a local property tax rate increase to offset reduced levels of state funding in recent years, so that it can continue to educate students, pay staff, and run safe and effective schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxes for RISD property owners are already increasing substantially this year due to higher property appraisals. A school property tax rate increase at this time will result in even larger tax bills, which many homeowners cannot afford.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RISD operated at a deficit last year in hopes that the Legislature would increase the state's share of public school funding in its last session, which it did not. There is no guarantee the state will increase funding in the next legislative session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reduction in the state's share of funding due to the current school funding formulas is the cause of the district's financial situation. The remedy should not be an increase in the local property tax rate. The remedy should be an increase in state funding from the Legislature in Austin.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several other local school districts have already raised their M&O tax rate to \$1.17, the maximum allowable and the rate the RISD is seeking. Passage of the higher tax rate will allow the RISD to pay teacher salaries that are competitive with these other school districts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlike some local school districts with the same \$1.04 M&O tax rate that the RISD currently has, the RISD board has not increased teacher salaries to competitive levels. Spending priorities should be adjusted so that teachers can be paid competitively without such a large tax increase.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If this tax rate passes, RISD expects to have sufficient funds to meet planned expenditures for the next five years. If this tax rate does not pass, RISD will have to explore a hiring freeze, increased class sizes, program cuts, foregoing planned hiring of security personnel, and the institution of fees for extracurricular activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the RISD's own projections, a smaller increase in the M&O tax rate would have been sufficient to meet planned expenses for the next year. Future planned spending should be reduced to meet available revenues. This 13 cent increase is excessive.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legally, revenues raised from the 5 cent increase in the I&S tax rate two years ago cannot be transferred to the M&O account. In order for RISD to maintain its standard of excellence, the M&O revenues must be increased to meet recurring expenses, such as salaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RISD raised its I&S tax rate by 5 cents in the 2016 bond election to pay for construction and infrastructure, and now they want to raise the M&O rate by an additional 13 cents. This shows poor planning on the part of the RISD board, which should rein in spending, not increase it.