



## Urbana School District

We are located in Urbana, Illinois, population 45,500, the home of the world-class University of Illinois. With our neighborhood schools, recognized arts programs, enriching extra-curricular activities, and strong academics, we can truly say we are "Outstanding Schools in an Outstanding Community!" District 116 serves over 4,000 students. There are 330 teachers in the Urbana School District. The faculty averages 15.5 years of experience and 60% of District 116 teachers have at least a masters' degree—both higher than the state average. Our student to teacher ratio is smaller than the state average at the elementary and secondary levels.

### The Referendum: Why Now?

The referendum is authorized under the recently passed County School Facility Occupation Tax Law. Previously, sales taxes were not an available source of revenue for school districts in Illinois. The State of Iowa has used sales taxes to supplement education funding for many years, and this method of funding is now available to Illinois residents. The Champaign County Board voted to put it on the ballot and it will go into effect if a majority of the voters in the county approve it. Williamson and Cass counties in Illinois have already passed it and many more counties are considering it.



### The Urbana School District 116 Mission:

Our mission in the Urbana School District 116, through the active engagement of the community, is to provide a quality education by vigorously fostering high expectations for individual growth within a nurturing environment, enabling each student to become a self-sufficient, productive, caring and responsible member of a changing world society.

### Questions? Contact Your School Board

- Mark Netter at 344-0499**
- John Dimit at 367-5362**
- Ruth Ann Fisher at 367-9004**
- Benita Rollins-Gay at 766-7561**
- Brenda Carter at 384-1377**
- Cope Cumpston at 239-5338**
- Steve Summers at 328-6769**

Or, visit  
[www.champaigncountyclass.cc](http://www.champaigncountyclass.cc)

Please take the time to research this issue and be sure to vote on April 7, 2009.

# Vote April 7, 2009



## Questions and Answers About the 1% Sales Tax For School Facilities

**URBANA SCHOOL DISTRICT 116**

205 N. Race Street  
Urbana, IL, 61801

Phone: 217-384-3600

Fax: 217-337-4973

Email: [contactus@usd116.org](mailto:contactus@usd116.org)

# Be sure to Vote April 7, 2009



## **How will the money be used?**

The Countywide Sales Tax will enable the Urbana School District to develop and implement a strategic short- and long-term maintenance plan. Currently, with no major budget for repairs, the school district must operate in a boom-and-bust environment. Buildings must deteriorate almost beyond repair, and only then can the district ask voters for permission to borrow money, which then has to be repaid (through property taxes) with interest.

## **How much sales tax will the district receive?**

The amount of money the district receives each year will be based on the number of our students living in Champaign County as a percent of the total and the total amount of general merchandise sales taxes generated. Urbana School District is projected to receive \$3 million in revenue annually.

## **How long will the sales tax be in place?**

The sales tax will remain unless the County acts to remove it. However, the County can only reduce or remove the sales tax if no school districts are relying on the taxes to pay debt service on bonds.

## **WHAT WILL DISTRICT 116 DO WITH TAX REVENUE?**

### **Lower Property Taxes**

With this steady source of revenue the school district will be able to retire the bond it took out to repair the high school, the middle school and Leal elementary, and build the pool. This will result in a savings of \$66 per year in property taxes for the owner of a \$150,000 home.

### **Make Our Schools More Sustainable**

- Spend money on education, not on utilities
- Install energy efficient air conditioning in five K-5 buildings and the 1914 wing of the high school
- Replace lights with energy efficient fixtures & bulbs
- Make buildings as green as possible, as technologies like solar become affordable and new ones are available.

### **Replace and Repair Buildings**

- Repair or renovate Washington Early Childhood School —a key part in Urbana's mission to help prepare all children for a good school experience.
- Improve libraries in five K-5 schools
- Add multipurpose rooms — where large groups of children can gather for academic and social activities
- Install security systems, replace badly worn sidewalks, and make buildings accessible to all.
- Stop borrowing money for emergency repairs and delayed and deferred maintenance

### **How much will I pay?**

The amount you will pay depends on how much general merchandise you buy in Champaign County each year; estimate what you spend in Champaign County establishments each year and multiply by 1%.

### **What items are NOT subject to the sales tax?**

Rent, mortgage, groceries, drugs, medical supplies, cars, trucks, ATVs, farm machinery and parts, mobile homes, boats and RVs, and resale items are exempt.

### **Can the sales tax revenue be used for ANYTHING other than facilities improvements?**

No. By law it will NOT be used for salaries or programs.

### **When and where do I vote?**

You will vote on the 1% Sales Tax Referendum on April 7, 2009 during the School Board and Municipal Elections. Be sure to read the entire ballot and vote on this question. You will vote at your regular polling place. Please contact the Champaign County Clerk at 384-3724 if you have any voting questions. Early voting runs from March 16 to April 2 at 1776 East Washington Street, Urbana.

## **The Ballot Question**

**“Shall Champaign County be authorized to impose a retailers’ occupation tax and a service occupation tax (commonly referred to as a “sales tax”) at a rate of one percent (1%) to be used exclusively for school facility purposes?”**