

Argument in Favor of 5A:

Vote Yes on 5A. Douglas County is a great place to raise a family and our schools are preparing students to contribute to Colorado's growing economy. To continue to challenge our students, the schools need to have excellent teachers, adequate learning spaces and updated technology. Currently, our schools are doing the best they can with the resources they have, but things are tight. Douglas County schools have the lowest mill levy funding throughout competitive districts in the metro area and have not received a funding increase from the community in 12 years. While the District has been stretching its dollars as far as possible, it now needs the necessary funds to retain quality teachers and provide safe and efficient schools and classrooms. We are asking our community members to support a mill levy override and a bond measure on the November ballot. This revenue measure will allow us to continue our serious commitment to high academic standards by increasing teacher pay so that we can attract and retain the best, most experienced teachers possible. These resources will also help us provide STEM education resources and access to career focused learning and technical education so more students gain the skills they need for the jobs and careers of the future. Finally, this funding will help provide additional mental health support and prevention programming for students.

5A works best in conjunction with 5B to ensure that all kids in Douglas County School District have equitable access to excellent educational resources. This revenue can be used to update our aging buildings and make them more efficient. It will also allow us to improve the safety and security of our schools.

Great schools increase property values, contribute to safe communities, and are good for jobs and the local economy. Let's come together as a proud community to ensure a bright future for all Douglas County kids. Vote Yes on 5A&B.

Argument in Favor of 5B:

Vote Yes on 5B. Douglas County is a great place to raise a family and our schools are preparing students to contribute to Colorado's growing economy. To continue to challenge our students, the schools need to have excellent teachers, adequate learning spaces and updated technology. This revenue can be used to update our aging buildings and make them more efficient. It will also allow us to improve the safety and security of our schools.

5B works best in conjunction with 5A. Currently, our schools are doing the best they can with the resources they have, but things are tight. Douglas county schools have the lowest mill levy funding throughout competitive districts in the metro area and have not received a funding increase from the community in 12 years. While the District has been stretching its dollars as far as possible, it now needs the necessary funds to retain quality teachers and provide safe and efficient schools and classrooms. We are asking our community members to support a mill levy override and a bond measure to the November ballot. This revenue measure will allow us to continue our serious commitment to high academic standards by increasing teacher pay so that we can attract and retain the best, most experienced teachers possible. These resources will also help us provide STEM education resources and access to career focused learning and technical education so more students gain the skills they need for the jobs and careers of the future. Finally, this funding will help provide additional mental health support and prevention programming for students.

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Argument Against 5A:

The ballot language indicates a number of purposes for which the increased taxes will be spent, but the language specifically states that the purposes of the tax increase are not limited to those items. This means the tax increase may be spent on anything, including increasing the number of administrative employees not directly involved in the classroom or bailing out the district's extremely generous retirement benefits that most taxpayers do not have. The tax increase effectively be a slush fund that will be dumped into the general fund to be spent any way the Board of Education chooses.

The current Superintendent has only been in Douglas County School District since July 1, 2018. Almost 60% of the Board of Education has been in their role for less than 1 year. They have not yet shown they are maximizing the current annual \$715 million budget. Administrators and the Board of Education should be encouraged to find the inefficiencies within the current system and maximize the use of existing revenue, before asking voters for tax increases.

The tax increase is a permanent increase with no sunset date and no opportunity for the taxpayers to evaluate and vote on the effectiveness of the new spending in the future.

The hundreds of dollars per year in new taxes that the District proposes is a nearly 20% increase in district property taxes, and is a significant amount of money for those whose income has not risen as quickly as property values, especially for elderly citizens living on a fixed income facing increasing health care costs, and younger families struggling to work multiple jobs to make ends meet.

Douglas County School District is already a high-performing district with excellent student outcomes, and there is no evidence that throwing more money at the district will increase performance or student outcomes. The ballot language does not attach any metrics by which the taxpayers may evaluate any performance improvements as a result of the tax increase, and the tax increase is perpetual even if there are no improvements. Increased funding does not guarantee increased results as demonstrated by schools in cities such as Denver, Chicago, and Washington, D.C.

If 5A, 5B, and Amendment 73 all pass, Douglas County citizens would be subject to a massive combined tax increase of hundreds or even thousands of dollars per year depending on property values and individual income.

Argument Against 5B:

The ballot language requests taxpayers authorize the District to acquire new debt of nearly a quarter of a billion dollars.

The last time the district asked the taxpayers for a bond, the Blue Book comments in favor of the bond indicated that the failure to pass that bond would "undoubtedly" result in a "dramatic increase in class size" and "loss of electives and specials." Despite Douglas County taxpayers rejecting that bond, the promised dire consequences have not occurred and the district today continues to employ the "best and brightest educators."

The district has made no assurances that the proposed bond would be paid in its entirety prior to the district asking the taxpayers for additional debt. Given the vagueness of the ballot language, the borrowed money could be used largely to fund what should be current expenses, only to ask taxpayers in the future to borrow more money for then current expenses. Borrowing money from the future to pay current expenses is not a sustainable approach to funding.

The district has not demonstrated that the bond is necessary and the district's past appeals to taxpayers have given us reason to doubt the sincerity or urgency of their request.