

# UNITY POINT SCHOOL

District No. 140

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September 13, 2016

Unity Point School District Parents/Guardians,

On November 8, 2016, the voters of Jackson County will be asked to approve a proposal to provide funding to all county school districts through a 1% sales tax increase. The revenue from this sales tax can only be used to maintain and improve school facilities or to make payments on existing bond debt issued for capital needs.

The potential funding received by the Unity Point School District will provide the revenue necessary to begin much-needed facility repairs and support the Board of Education's efforts to develop and implement a comprehensive long range plan to improve facilities. Planning options include renovation/replacement of roofs, HVAC systems, electrical, phone, security and technology infrastructure upgrades, parking lots, outbuildings, aging portable pre-kindergarten classrooms, gymnasium and ballfield maintenance and repair. Additionally, security systems, buildings and playground areas will be maintained/renovated as needed in the future to ensure our students encounter a safe, secure and comfortable learning environment at each facility.

The question on the ballot will appear as follows:

**“Shall a retailers’ occupation tax and a service occupation tax (commonly referred to as a “sales tax”) be imposed in The County of Jackson, Illinois, at a rate of 1% to be used exclusively for school facility purposes?”**

The 1% increase in the county sales tax will *annually* generate approximately \$538,000 for Unity Point School District #140.

By law, the sales tax revenues can be used for:

- New or remodeled school facilities  
(i.e. roof repairs, parking lots, demolition, technology infrastructure, etc.)
- Additions and renovations
- Land acquisitions
- Safety and security improvements
- Energy efficiency improvements
- Retirement of building bonds issued for building additions or capital improvements
- Architectural planning and engineering
- Durable equipment (non-moveable items)

By law, the sales tax revenues **cannot** be used for:

- Salaries and benefits
- Instructional costs
- Textbooks and computers
- Moveable equipment
- School buses
- Operating costs

Unlike many types of sales tax, this specific tax does not tax items that many people think to be essential to families, and especially, senior citizens.

The increased sales tax does not apply to:

- Cars, trucks, ATV's, boats, and RV or mobile homes
- Unprepared food (groceries)
- Medicine including prescriptions drugs and over-the-counter drugs
- Farm equipment, parts and farm inputs
- If it is not currently taxed, it will not be taxed

Currently, the Board of Education is discussing how to provide the necessary renovation and improvements with limited resources; as part of the Board's planning efforts, they are focused on determining the best plan to address the immediate needs of our District facility. The potential success of the County School Facilities Sales Tax in Jackson County would allow the Board to address facility needs as soon as possible.

I want all Jackson County voters to have accurate information about the 1% sales tax and how it will impact our schools. If you have questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact me at (618)529-4151 or by email at [ljgross@up140.org](mailto:ljgross@up140.org). **Also, the District is hosting a public informational meeting on Monday, September 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in the Unity Point Library.**

Yours in Education,



Dr. Lori James-Gross  
Superintendent

#### **Unity Point Mission Statement**

*The Unity Point School, our families, and our wider communities embrace the mission to build upon our strong academic standards by providing all students an intellectual, emotional, and social climate that is safe and challenging. Through our varied backgrounds, experiences, and knowledge we model and create an environment for life-long learning.*