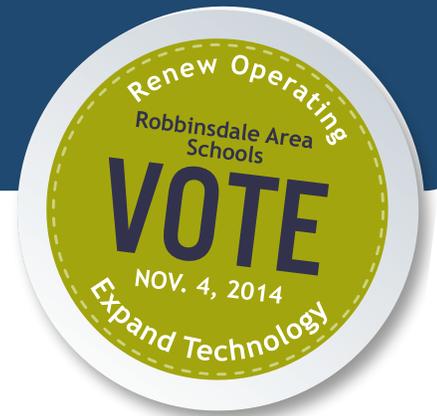# Q2: Technology Levy
Individual Focus. Infinite Potential.

Two referendum questions are on the November 4 ballot:
- Q1: Asks for a no tax increase renewal of the existing operating levy
- Q2: Asks for a new technology levy to support student learning

Question 2 Overview

Technology is a vital tool for students to be career and college ready. Technology-literate graduates are prepared to thrive in our digital world and join a highly skilled 21st century workforce. However, Robbinsdale Area Schools is one of the few Hennepin County school districts without a voter-approved capital project levy to provide funds for technology. A technology levy would provide a stable source of funding for the technology tools that students and staff need to succeed in today's digital world.

What is the technology levy request?

The request is for approximately $3.5 million per year for ten years to fund the school district's comprehensive, research-based technology plan. This plan is updated every three years and is the basis for all technology purchases and decisions. Without a technology levy, this plan must compete for funding with other important district capital needs such as security equipment, textbooks, roofs, parking lots and other building maintenance. The current district budget does not include enough money to fully implement the district's technology plan to support student learning. If voters approve the plan, the tax impact on the median value district home ($195,000) would be $7 per month.

What role does technology play in Robbinsdale Area Schools?

Technology Helps Teachers Manage Student Learning - Teachers use software in the classroom to share classroom information and to communicate with students and families. Teachers use Schoology, a learning management system, to organize resources such as links and videos for students and families, accept assignments digitally, host online discussions and provide online quizzes. Each student and family has their own secure account through which they can communicate, learn, access and provide information. The Compass Odyssey integrated learning system helps students in grades 3-5 gain math enrichment and support; grades 6-8 receive math and language arts intervention and acceleration; grades 9-12 take hybrid online/in-class courses, credit recovery, and advanced course options.

Technology Helps Students Learn According to their Learning Style - Not all students learn in the same ways. Classroom learning can be personalized to accommodate individual learning styles through the use of technology. Teachers can upload videos, provide links to detailed articles, and load practice assignments. Students can learn material in the way they learn best - either through auditory, visual or hands-on methods.

Technology Gives Students More Learning Options - The options for learning are expanded through the use of technology. One example is the use of Open Educational Resources (OER), which are freely licensed documents and media that are useful for teaching, learning, educational, assessment and research purposes. Some OER courses are already in use, including 6th and 7th grade social studies courses; 20 more courses should be ready to pilot in fall 2014. Another example is the use of hybrid courses, which combine online learning with in-class learning. Robbinsdale Area Schools has developed and offered 12 semester credits of hybrid courses in the high schools.

Technology Allows Access to Information From Anywhere - Cloud computing makes communication and learning mobile - available anytime, anywhere. One example is Google Apps, which provides storage and applications that work on any wired or mobile device: desktop, laptop, Chromebook, tablet or smartphone. Students use applications to integrate their notes, web resource links, audio and video clips and other resources in one place, creating a cumulative portfolio of learning over time. Lost notes and forgotten assignments are a thing of the past.

What Can Technology Look Like in a 21st Century Classroom?

Robbinsdale Area Schools has worked hard to integrate technology into its classrooms for student learning, but limited resources have made it a challenge to sustain the level of technology that students and teachers need. The following are examples of opportunities currently available in some classrooms that could be expanded to more classrooms with additional technology funding – or opportunities that could be added if dedicated technology funding were available.

1. Collaboration - Students gather in small groups to work on a project using a Chromebook laptop to access the information they need, take group notes and post responses to teacher questions.

2. Science Experiments - Students use Vernier technology and probes that link directly to computers to complete science experiments, log data, do graphing/analysis and solve complex science and math problems. By using these tools and learning these skills, students develop into the next generation of scientists and engineers.

3. Online Accelerated Learning - Students who have mastered a lesson can move ahead to the next lesson ahead of their peers by using their Chromebook or other personalized device and the Compass Odyssey integrated learning system and
curriculum. The teacher can see which lessons each student has mastered and facilitate the learning of all students in the class at each student's own pace.
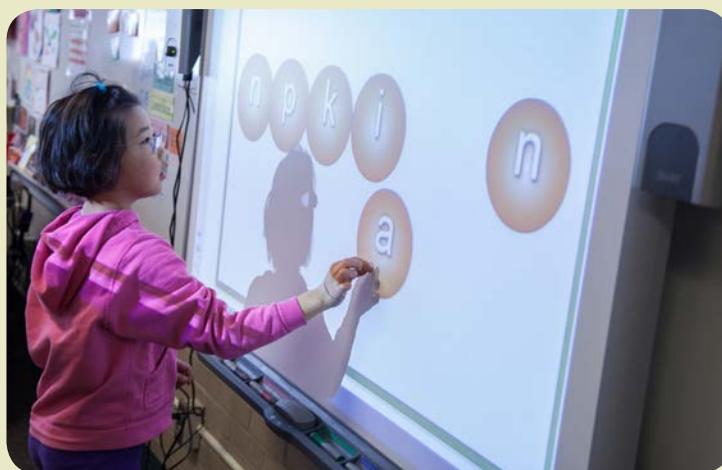
4. Unique Presentations - Students use digital presentation and video creation programs on their devices to present book reports, share information and complete assignments.

5. Accessing the World - Students use Skype and teleconferencing programs to join lectures at universities, zoos, international events, NASA and much more.

6. Interactive Learning - Teachers use SMART boards, or electronic whiteboards, and handheld devices to demonstrate a lesson through interactive learning activities that can be built like games to motivate and engage students in their learning.

7. Instant Feedback - Teachers use digital assessments to provide instant feedback to students on their assignments. Knowing each student's progress enables teachers to make changes to the teaching or resources provided.

8. e-Books - Students read e-books on Chromebooks, iPads and other digital devices, with the ability to make notes online, add bookmarks to flag key information and download new books instantly.
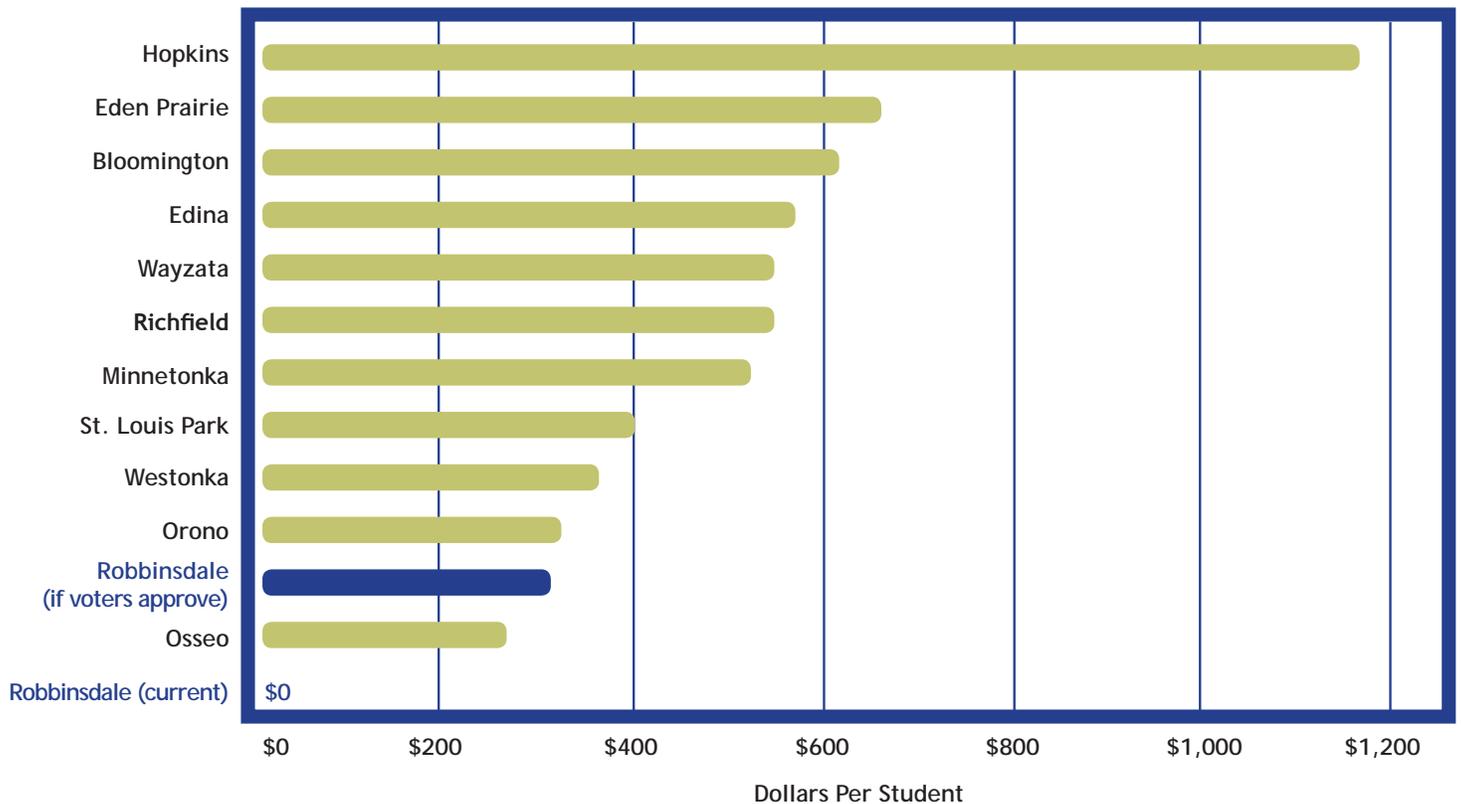

Funding: Technology for Learning

Need	Year One Budget*
Technology for schools, classrooms and students– Add and maintain interactive whiteboards, digital projectors, classroom sound systems, classroom assessment tools, computer labs, mobile technologies, teacher workstations and audio/video equipment to improve the classroom learning environment. Provide and maintain a personal learning device (Chromebook or comparable device) for all students in grades 5-12 to ensure anytime, anywhere access to classroom learning resources and communication tools.	$2,520,000
Technology Systems, Support & Training - Provide instructional technology systems, support and training to deliver and sustain more efficient and effective teaching and learning practices.	$720,000
Network Infrastructure – Maintain and replace access points, routers, servers and other network equipment to ensure a secure and robust network environment.	$260,000
Total Year One Budget	*$3,500,000*

* The school board reviews its educational priorities and expenses annually and will adjust these expenditures as necessary for changes in technology and priorities over the ten years of the levy.

Voter-Approved Capital Project/Technology Levies

District	Dollars Per Student
Hopkins	~$1,170
Eden Prairie	~$660
Bloomington	~$620
Edina	~$580
Wayzata	~$555
Richfield	~$550
Minnetonka	~$525
St. Louis Park	~$400
Westonka	~$370
Orono	~$330
Robbinsdale (if voters approve)	~$315
Osseo	~$275
Robbinsdale (current)	$0

Dollars Per Student

Robbinsdale Area Schools is one of the few school districts in Hennepin County that does not currently have a voter-approved capital project levy to provide funds for technology. If approved, the technology levy would generate $3.5 million per year to help fund the Robbinsdale Area Schools technology plan.

What if Question 2 Passes?

Robbinsdale students and staff would have increased access to up-to-date technology, in 21st century classrooms, allowing more efficient ways of teaching. District staff could move forward on a 10-year technology plan knowing there is a stable funding stream that would sustain both its quality and effectiveness.

Specifically, technology levy funds would be used to:

- Help teachers manage student learning
- Provide instant feedback on student assessments
- Help students learn according to their learning style
- Give students more learning options
- Provide access to information from anywhere, anytime

What if Question 2 Fails?

The school district's technology plan – which details how technology will support student learning – would have to compete for funding with other basic district capital needs, such as security equipment, textbooks, roofs, parking lots and other building maintenance. Without a fully-funded technology plan:

- The school district would struggle to provide updated computers and other technology for students and staff. Equipment would become outdated, slow or unusable with increased repair expenses.
- Students would not have access to the same opportunities that neighboring school districts offer, resulting in a technology gap.
- Student access to online classroom resources and tools would be limited.
- Staff would be limited in the amount of attention they could provide individual students and would not have the same level of information about each student's progress.
- Cuts would need to be made to the district's budget in order to maintain basic levels of technology.
- There would be slower turnaround times for family and community requests of teachers and district staff.

Impact of the Technology Levy

	Stable Funding Can Provide:	Lack of Stable Funding Can Cause:
Learning	• Up-to-date resources and tools for students to prepare for career and college. • More personal learning devices for students, allowing 24/7 access to digital classroom resources and communication tools.	• A widened technology gap between Robbinsdale Area Schools and neighboring districts. • Barriers to online classroom resources and tools, limiting student's learning experiences.
Teaching	• Classrooms with effective technology systems for 21st century learning environment. • Tools and systems to manage personalized learning for all students.	• Additional expenses to repair aging equipment. • Unusable, outdated technology. • Limited opportunities for innovation.
Assessment	• Tools to deliver immediate feedback that empowers students to manage their own learning.	• Delayed and less personalized feedback that limits teachers' ability to focus on individual students' needs.
Productivity	• Streamlined administrative functions, increased staff productivity and more value -added services to families and the community.	• Less efficient systems and services that reduce productivity. • Slower turnaround times for family and community requests of teachers and district staff.
Infrastructure & Support	• Reliable, secure and robust equipment and networks. • Necessary technology support and training.	• Reduced instructional time due to slow performance, increased log-in times and system failures.

Strong Schools = Strong Communities

Did You Know?

Research shows that public school quality is one of the most important determinants of home value.

Schools directly affect a community's vitality and home resale values.

Where to Vote

Visit pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us
or call 763-504-8038 to find your specific polling location.

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Call 763-504-8022

ROBBINSDALE
Area Schools

Individual focus. Infinite potential.