For Immediate Release

Norton City Schools Board of Education
Places Earned Income Tax Levy on November 3, 2026 Ballot

Norton, Ohio - August 18, 2026, As Norton City Schools navigates its financial future, the Board of Education believes in respecting the community's voice and its expectations for the school district. The Board is providing Panther Nation with the opportunity to help determine the district's path moving forward.

To allow the community to make that choice, the Board has placed an additional **.75% Earned Income Tax levy** on the November 3rd ballot. Passage of the levy would allow the district to maintain its current level of services and educational programming.

The Board emphasizes the following key points regarding the proposed levy:

- It will *not* reverse or reimplement previous staffing reductions.
- It will *not* eliminate the need for continued fiscal oversight and long term financial planning.
- It will *not* increase property taxes.

The goal of this levy is to provide financial stability and allow the district to stretch its resources for approximately six to eight years before needing to seek additional funding. Several factors contribute to this projection. The district remains hopeful that the State of Ohio will identify ways to increase school funding and reduce the burden currently placed on local communities. With a change from the state we anticipate the timeline to increase in the seeking of additional funding.

Over the last several decades, state funding for public schools has shifted significantly. The elimination of taxes on tangible personal property reduced a source of revenue that previously supported schools and transferred more of the burden to local property owners. In addition, increases in voucher funding and continued challenges in school funding formulas have impacted public school districts across the state.

The Board also recognizes that school funding remains a statewide challenge. Court cases dating back to the 1990s called for the development of a fair and equitable funding system, and discussions regarding long-term solutions continue today. While the district remains hopeful for future changes, recent state budgets do not indicate necessary increases in support for public education.

The Board understands there is never an ideal time to seek additional funding. However, the district has reached a crossroads regarding its future. The Board believes the community should have a voice in determining the direction of its schools because public schools play a critical role in preparing the next generation of nurses, electricians, police officers, educators, business owners, and community leaders. A strong educational system strengthens the entire community.

The district also remains committed to fiscal responsibility. Over the last year, Norton City Schools has made approximately **$3 million in reductions** to control spending and eliminated Open Enrollment for non-residents which provided savings. Without additional funding, however, deeper cuts will be necessary and will directly impact students, families, staff, and the Norton community.

Transparency is important in helping residents make informed decisions. Because Ohio law requires districts to maintain a balanced budget, the district has identified reductions that will become necessary if additional funding is not approved.

Without passage of additional funding, the district will need to implement the following reductions:

Transportation

- Elimination of all high school busing
- Elimination of busing within two miles of the elementary, middle school and 8th grader students attending the high school.
- Reduction of multiple bus drivers and transportation support positions

Increase Pay to Participate Fees

- **No Individual or Family Caps**
- **Athletics**
    - Increase high school pay-to-play fees from $100 to $200
    - Increase middle school pay-to-play fees from $50 to $100
- **Marching Band**
    - Increase high school pay-to-play fees from $100 to $200
    - Increase middle school pay-to-play fees from $50 to $100
- **Co-Curricular Activities**
    - Increase throughout the district fees from $25 to $50

Timeline for Implementation

- **Immediately upon possible failure of November Levy:**
    - Pay-to-play changes would take effect beginning with winter athletics 2026
- **August 2027**
    - Transportation changes would begin at the beginning of next school year.
- **2027- 2028 School Year**
    - Increase Marching Band Pay to Participate Fees
    - Co-Curricular fee increases

The Board understands the significant impact these changes would have on students, families, staff, and the broader community. However, the Board believes it is important to respect the community's choices regarding public funding and provide a transparent understanding of the consequences associated with those decisions. Unfortunately, these reductions will not resolve the issue long term but will only allow the district to stay out of

state oversight for a limited time. Without the infusion of additional funds the district will inevitably come under state control in the future.

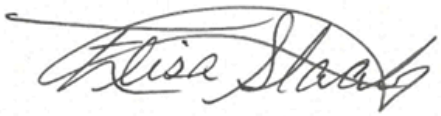
We appreciate your consideration and support. The future of Norton City Schools will ultimately be shaped by the priorities and choices of the community we serve.

Respectfully,

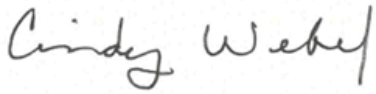
Chris Inks, Board President

Mark DeDomenic, Board V.P

Jennifer Bennett, Member

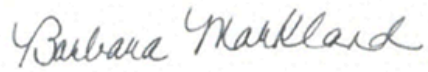


Elisa Staats, Member



Cindy Webel, Member

Bryan Farson, Superintendent



Barb Markland, Treasurer