

The 2014 Mecklenburg County Sales Tax Referendum

Education. Library. Arts.

The Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners has voted to put a proposal for a quarter-cent (one-fourth of a penny) sales tax increase on the ballot Nov. 4. If the measure is approved by voters, it is expected to bring in approximately \$35 million a year in additional revenue to Mecklenburg County. County commissioners will give 80 percent of these revenues to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS). Other beneficiaries will be Central Piedmont Community College, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and the Arts & Science Council. CMS' projected portion of about \$26-\$28 million in annual revenue will be used to enhance salaries for district employees. Here are some facts about how the funds could be used for CMS and the 145,000 Mecklenburg County students and families it serves.



The sales tax revenue could:

1 Help make Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools more competitive locally and nationally.

This year, the General Assembly voted to give NC teachers an average – *not an across-the-board* – salary increase of seven percent. The budget takes a meaningful first step toward making NC teacher pay more competitive – but it is not enough to close the salary gap between us and neighboring states and the national average. Money from the quarter-cent sales tax could help to further increase salaries for CMS employees. More competitive salaries would help CMS attract and retain the nation's best educators and support staff for the students and families of Mecklenburg County.

2 Help make pay raises more equitable.

The state salary increases adopted this year do not apply to all teachers equally. The increase ranges from 18.5 percent for teachers in the early years of a teaching career to 0.3 percent for veteran teachers. The salary increases for other employees were also varied. School district support staff such as bus drivers, custodians and cafeteria workers will receive a \$500 raise while other state employees will receive a \$1,000 raise. Money from the quarter-cent sales tax could help CMS address some of these variations in pay.

3 Help more CMS employees earn a living wage.

Fifty-nine percent of CMS employees earn less than an annual living wage in our area for a family of four (two adults, two children). Eighty-three percent reside and pay taxes in Mecklenburg County. The sales tax increase could provide a sustainable revenue source to fund raises and help CMS employees better support their families.



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Voter Information

When is the vote?

The general election is Nov. 4, 2014.

When is the deadline to register to vote?

The deadline to register for the general election is Oct. 10, 2014.

How can I register to vote?

To register, pick up a form at any Charlotte-Mecklenburg public library or at the Board of Elections office (741 Kenilworth Ave., Suite 202). You can also visit the Board of Elections website at www.meckboe.org to download a copy of the registration application. To register, you must be a U.S. citizen, a resident of North Carolina and Mecklenburg County for 30 days, and at least 18 years old.

Can I vote early?

Yes. Early voting begins **Oct. 23, 2014**, and ends **Nov. 1, 2014, at 1 p.m.** There will be 21 early voting sites. Please check the Mecklenburg County Board of Elections website (<http://charmec.org/mecklenburg/county/BOE/Pages/default.aspx?src=ud>) for locations and hours of operation.

Absentee voting

Citizens may print an absentee-voting application from the Mecklenburg County Board of Elections website and mail or fax (704-343-0537) it to the Board of Elections. The address is 741 Kenilworth Ave., Suite 202, Charlotte, NC 28204.

Absentee ballots will be mailed starting **Friday, Sept. 5, 2014**. The deadline for requesting an absentee ballot by mail is **Oct. 28, 2014**. Absentee ballots must be returned in person by **5 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 3, 2014**. Mailed absentee ballots must be postmarked by **Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2014**.

Questions?

For general voting questions, please call the Mecklenburg County Board of Elections: (704) 336-2133. For CMS questions, please call CMS Communications Services at (980) 343-7450 or email your questions to cmscommunications@cms.k12.nc.us.

