



***Harris County Schools ESPLOST VI***  
***“Funding Our Future With The Power of A Penny”***  
***Frequently Asked Questions***

**1. What is an Education SPLOST (ESPLOST)?** An Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (ESPLOST) allows local school districts the option to ask voters for the ability to levy and collect a one percent sales tax to help fund school improvements. It can be used to pay for capital projects or to retire debt, but cannot be used to pay operating expenses, such as salaries. ESPLOSTs are enacted by a referendum.

**2. When is the ESPLOST vote?** The election is Tuesday, November 5, 2019. The polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. There will also be an early voting period from October 14, 2019 through November 1, 2019. Please be informed and go vote! Please contact Dr. Justin Finney at [finney-j@harris.k12.ga.us](mailto:finney-j@harris.k12.ga.us).

**3. Would the proposed ESPLOST be a tax increase? NO!** The education SPLOST is not a property tax. If approved, the sales tax for education would remain at its current level. A “yes” vote would simply continue the current 1% sales tax for education an additional five years or until ESPLOST funds (\$18 million) are collected, whichever comes first. Collection of the ESPLOST extension would begin only after the current ESPLOST ends on December 31, 2021.

**4. Why do we need an ESPLOST?** The Education SPLOST provides a method

of funding the cost of educational improvements and construction such as a new middle school, additional classrooms at Creekside School, buses, and technology. Everyone, not just property owners, contributes to the ESPLOST. The one cent sales tax is paid by everyone who shops or stays in Harris County.

**5. How much money would be generated and how long would this sales tax be in place?** The ESPLOST extension is for a \$18 million limit or five years, whichever comes first. The current ESPLOST V ends on December 31, 2021. The ESPLOST VI will begin in January 2022 if approved by Harris County voters.

**6. Is the ESPLOST different from the Harris County Commission SPLOST? YES.** The Education SPLOST is a special sales tax approved by the citizens for the construction of a new middle school, improvements of school facilities, purchase of buses, and purchase of technology. The county SPLOST is a special tax designed to fund county projects identified by the county commissioners.

**7. Why should people who do not have children in school support the ESPLOST extension?** The ESPLOST helps keep ad valorem taxes stable. Additionally, the children are not the only ones who benefit from good schools. The social and economic strength of a community are greatly influenced by the school system. High performing schools mean well-prepared citizens, a strong labor market, and an inviting atmosphere for both living and working. One of the key questions asked by industrial/commercial or residential prospects looking to move into a community is “What is the quality of the school system?”

**8. Will the school system sell bonds or incur long term debt during the ESPLOST extension? Yes.** If approved by Harris County voters as outlined in the November 5, 2019 referendum, the Harris County Board of Education will have the option to sell bonds to fund the construction of the proposed new Harris County Carver Middle School. In addition to ESPLOST money being used to service bonded indebtedness for the construction of the new middle school, a portion of the collected ESPLOST money will be set aside for additional capital projects such as improvements of school facilities, purchase of buses, and purchase of technology.

**9. Why isn't the money used for salaries and operations cost?** State law prohibits using ESPLOST proceeds for salaries or instructional

materials. However, passing this referendum will free up funds to meet required financial obligations without having to rely on excessive ad valorem taxes.

**10. Why do we need to extend our current ESPLOST?** Harris county is growing rapidly! More and more students are registering in Harris County Schools every day. The school system must continue to move forward with facility construction, renovations, and equipment replacement to meet the demands of the ever increasing student population and growth in Harris County. We have a tremendous need for a new middle school, additional high school classrooms, additional classrooms at Creekside, and the need to fund transportation and technology upgrades that are not adequately funded in the state allotment. Our citizens have supported education for years and the passage of the ESPLOST extension would be a strong demonstration of continued school support by our community.

**11. Have past ESPLOSTs been a success? YES!** The following projects have been completed with zero debt as a result of the current and past ESPLOST:

ESPLOST I: 1997-2002

- HCHS Addition
- HCHS Auditorium
- HCCMS Additions/Renovations
- Technology Upgrades

ESPLOST II: 2002-2007

- HCHS Additions
- HCCMS Gym
- NMHE Addition
- PRES Addition
- Park Addition

ESPLOST III: 2007-2012 and ESPLOST IV: 2012-2017

- Creekside School
- MCES Gym HVAC
- HCHS Athletic Facilities After Tornado
- HCCMS Bathroom Renovations
- HCCMS Roof Repairs

- Energy Upgrades Across the District - Total HVAC Replacement at Multiple Schools
- Paint and Carpet System-wide
- Technology Upgrades

ESPLOST V: 2017-2021

- 20 New Buses
- Hope Center Facility
- New Transportation Facility
- Furniture System-wide
- Paint and Carpet System-wide
- Security Cameras System-wide
- Security Upgrades System-wide (Fencing, Security Doors, Communications Equipment)
- Technology Upgrades (IT Network and over 1500 Chromebooks)

**12. What would the school system do with the funds collected from the ESPLOST extension?** The Harris County Board of Education in cooperation with employee and stakeholder groups have established the following project areas:

- Construction of a new middle school
- 4 additional classrooms at Creekside
- 16 additional classrooms at HCHS
- HVAC renovations at HCHS
- Acquire new technological equipment and upgrading existing technology infrastructure.
- As needed facility renovations and modifications such as roof repairs and replacement, carpet and flooring replacement, painting.

**\* This document is for information purposes only. We encourage all Harris County School System stakeholders to be informed and to vote on November 5, 2019!**