Barberton City Schools – 1% Earned Income Tax Levy

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why is the district asking for money again after the levy failed in May?
A: Barberton City Schools is currently under state-mandated fiscal oversight through the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW). To lift this oversight and keep our schools running safely, the state requires the district to secure a balanced budget through a combination of spending cuts and new local revenue.

Q: Has the district made budget cuts before asking for more tax revenue?
A: Yes. Before returning to the ballot, the administration and Board enacted deep operational and staffing reductions totaling **approximately $7 million**. We have cut as much as reasonably possible. Because we have already made these aggressive reductions, any further deficit corrections required by the state will directly impact day-to-day student experiences and school operations.

Q: Did the district listen to voters after the May election?
A: Yes, completely. We heard loud and clear that our community found the 11-mill property tax too large, objected to it being a permanent/continuous tax, and worried about rising property values. In response, the Board of Education changed course entirely for November by introducing a levy that is:

1. **Significantly smaller** than the financial ask in May.
2. **Strictly limited to 5 years**, rather than being permanent.
3. **Structured as an earned income tax** rather than a property tax, protecting senior citizens and property owners.

Q: What exactly is an "Earned Income Tax," and how does it affect me?
A: An *earned* income tax only applies to active income, such as employee wages, salaries, tips, and self-employment earnings.

Q: Who is exempt from this tax?
A: Because it is strictly an *earned* income tax, it protects residents on fixed or retirement incomes. **Individuals who receive income solely from Social Security, pensions, 401(k) or IRA distributions, investments, dividends, interest, or unemployment benefits pay $0 toward this levy.**

Q: I am a retired senior on a fixed income. Will I be affected by this tax?
A: No. This tax applies to only wages and earnings of Barberton residents. **Retirees and seniors on a fixed income will not see an increase, but will gain the benefits of an**

improved school district.

Q: I own a home in Barberton. Will my property taxes go up if this passes?
A: No. This is not a property tax levy. Your property values and real estate tax bills will not change as a result of this issue passing.

Q: How long will this tax be in place?
A: The levy is approved for a fixed term of **5 years**. It will automatically expire at the end of that period unless a future community vote extends it. This ensures the district remains strictly accountable to the taxpayers while we work to stabilize our finances.

Q: What happens if the 1% earned income tax levy fails in November?
A: Because the district is under state fiscal oversight, we are legally required to present a balanced budget to the state. If local funding is not secured, the district will be forced to implement a mandatory new wave of deep, structural reductions to eliminate the deficit. These cuts are not "scare tactics"—they are the realities of state compliance and would include:

- **The potential elimination of all athletics and extracurricular activities** at both the middle and high school levels.
- **The potential elimination of preschool programs**
- **The potential elimination or heavy consolidation of Career Technical education programs**.
- **Deep reductions to non-required elective classes**, such as art and music, across all grade levels.
- **A reduction of student transportation/busing** down to the bare state minimums.

Q: What does reducing busing to "state minimums" actually mean for families?
A: Ohio law does not require school districts to transport high school students, nor does it require busing for elementary students who live close to their buildings. If the levy fails and we drop to state minimums:

- **Grades 9–12:** All high school busing will be entirely eliminated.
- **Grades K–8:** Busing will *only* be provided to students who live **more than 2 miles away** from their assigned school building.

Q: If I have more questions, or need more information, what do I do?
A: Please contact the BCSD Administrative Office at (330) 753-1025. You can also follow the BCSD District Facebook page and visit the BCSD website for further information and updates.