

# Devine: Our schools vital to our community, our future

By Pat Devine ISD 110 superintendent   Oct 19, 2020   0

I would like to start by thanking our parents, students and staff for getting the 2020-2021 school year off to such a great start. A school year like none other is an understatement. Just about everything had to change or be tweaked to successfully and safely deliver the high quality education that we are known for at ISD 110 and, accomplishing all of it during a pandemic. Thank you to everyone for your support and partnership as we do what is best for kids.

Our community has a longstanding tradition of doing what is best for students, allowing them to explore their passions and create their success every day. Waconia Public Schools has also historically been very respectful of local taxpayers, asking for funding only when necessary.

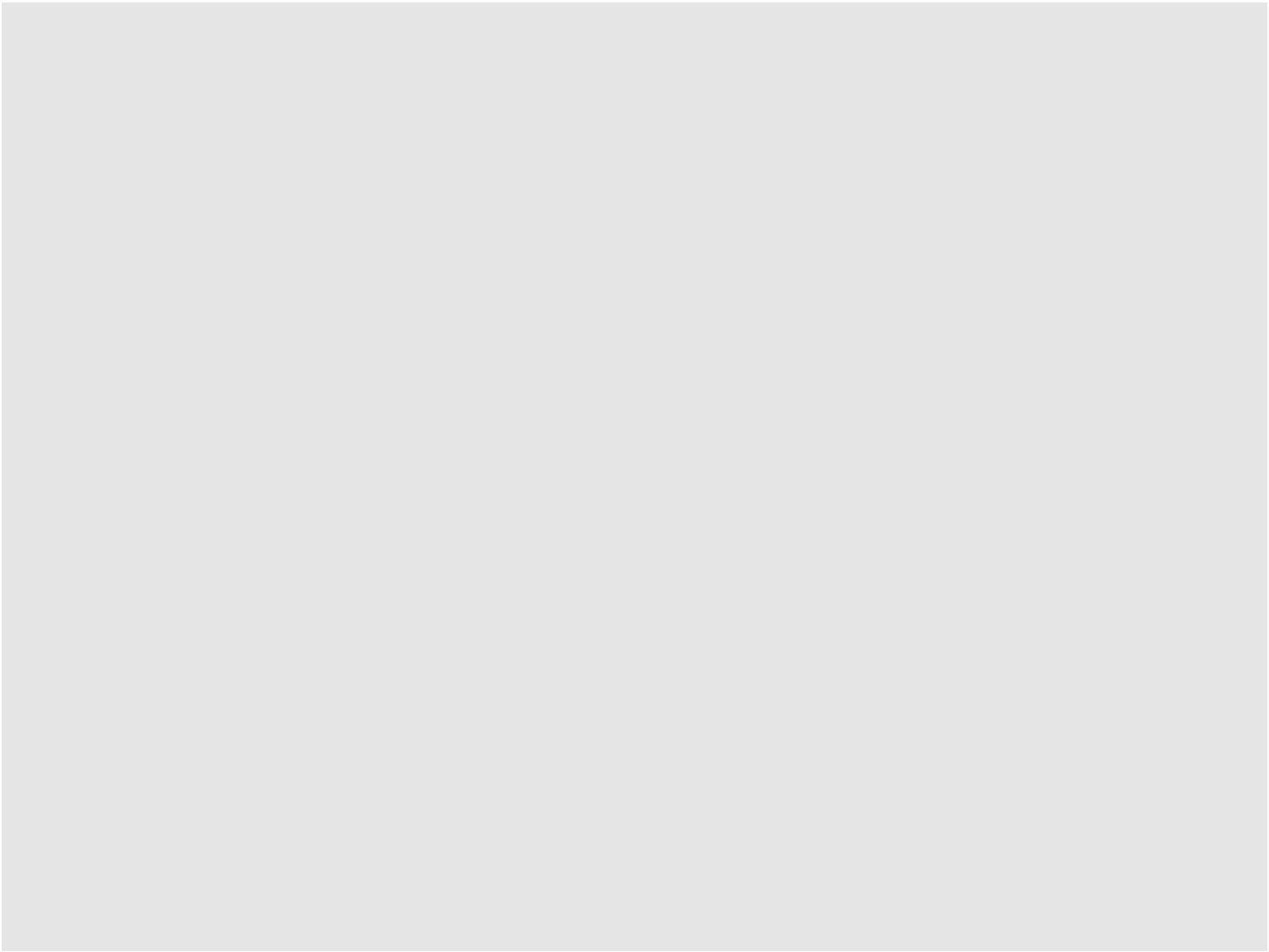
In 2018, voters said yes to an operating levy of \$525 per student. We are thankful that they supported ISD 110. At the time, we predicted that the additional funding would set our finances for years to come. But then, the unpredictable happened...and the state changed the way they reimburse school districts for special education expenses. Waconia Public Schools was hit exceptionally hard by this new funding formula. The additional funds from the 2018 operating levy that were supposed to help us move forward...are now being used to cover this gap in state special education funding.

The amount of general education money that ISD 110 uses to pay for unfunded special education mandates is called the cross-subsidy. When the state changed the formula, our cross-subsidy doubled...going from \$600 per student to \$1,200 per student. That means, \$1,200 of the \$7,100 that the state gives us per student, must be shifted to pay for unfunded special education expenses. We have an excellent special education program and families move to the area because of it. We are very proud of that and, our hope is that state legislators fix the law to make it more equitable for school districts such as ISD 110. Until then, we will need funds from an operating levy or more budget reductions to operate our school. We have already made more than \$2 million in budget cuts in the past

two years.

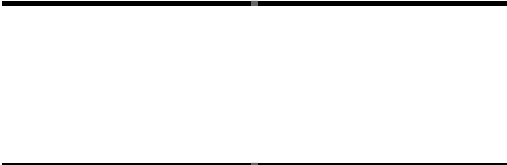
This hit to our finances placed us at a crossroads where we are coming to voters again, asking them to consider an operating levy of \$410 per student with a tax impact of about \$19 on an averaged priced home of \$350,000. If approved, extra funding would allow us to continue providing the quality programming that the community has come to expect and students deserve. If it does not pass, Waconia Public Schools will have some tough programming choices to make. In that instance, we would look for community input on which programs to keep and which ones we can no longer afford. This ballot question will allow voters to determine the quality of ISD ONE10 moving forward. More information can be found at our website, [www.isd110.org](http://www.isd110.org).

*Pat Devine is superintendent of ISD 110/Waconia Schools.*





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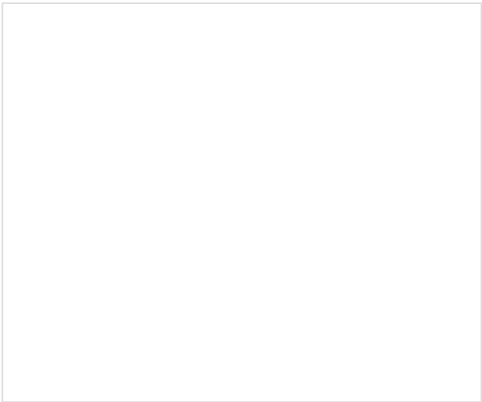
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2	-	 Gonzaga

3	-	 Dayton
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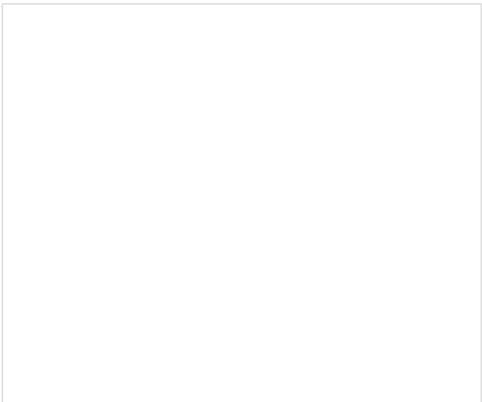


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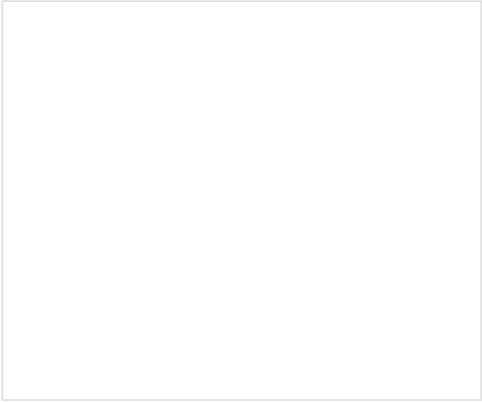


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