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Perry, Franklin Township voters face school referendums

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By Kris Kirschner - bio

Indianapolis - The primary election is a few weeks away, but the campaigns are in full swing. Two south side districts are among others trying to sway votes in favor of money for the schools.

Faster than spring tulips, signs are popping up on front lawns in neighborhoods on the south side. It's part of a grassroots campaign to convince homeowners to vote "yes" for school funding referendums.

"We'll lose art, music and gym. Class sizes are going to go up," said Karen Schuldt, Adams Elementary School principal.

Those are the concerns at Adams Elementary School in Franklin Township if voters once again reject the referendum.

"I'm concerned about my neighborhood," said Stacy Gillen, parent.

For Gillen, who is a realtor, there's a broader concern at stake. Losing school programs might also mean losing families.

"Could they choose to move to another district like Center Grove or Perry Township if they pass their referendum?" she wondered.

Perry Township's campaign, which officially began over the weekend when supporters handed out more than 1,500 signs, centers around two referendums, one for operating costs like school programs and the other to update facilities.

In Perry Township, if one of two referendums is voted down, you could see Southport and Perry Meridian High schools combined into one.

But in both cases, there is a concern about the affect on property values in those communities.

"We think that there is a possibility the market could flood when it comes to the fact that people might want to move out of Franklin Township, which in turn is going to decrease our property values potentially," said Gillen.

Those who have homes for sale may find it tough to find a buyer if schools aren't competitive, according to property appraiser Brett Martin.

"I think many potential home buyers are going to tell their realtors to automatically exclude Franklin Township from their search," said Martin.

"As a parent if I have to choose between a school system that doesn't have busing, and that doesn't have art, music and gym for my little people, or a school system that does, I'm probably gonna buy a house over there," said Schuldt.

While there seems already a good deal of support, not everyone is on board. Organizers will be working hard to sway public opinion in favor of the schools.

[Franklin Township Referendum Information](#)

[Franklin Township Community School Corp](#) - More info on the referendum

[Information for supporters of school funding referendums in Perry Township](#)

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Karen Schuldt, Adams Elementary School principal

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