

■ POLK ■ DES MOINES ■
TAXPAYERS
■ ASSOCIATION ■

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We have scheduled a Polk-Des Moines Taxpayers Association Board meeting at noon on Wednesday, June 20th to debate and vote on a position to take on Project Destiny. The meeting will be held at the Embassy Club, 801 Grand, 40th Floor.

Below are recaps of what several area municipalities have decided to do with their sales tax receipts if Project Destiny passes.

Des Moines:

33% < to be allocated for property tax relief
33% < ³to be applied for construction of capital improvements, consisting of expansion to Blank Park Zoo, neighborhood street, curb, and sidewalk repair, neighborhood commercial area improvements and neighborhood park improvements, up to a maximum aggregate amount of Fifty Million Dollars (\$50,000,000), with all of such applied revenues in excess of Fifty Million Dollars (\$50,000,000) to be allocated for additional property tax relief, all as set forth on the additional property tax relief plan on file in the Office of the Des Moines City Clerk.²

34% < to be distributed to the Tri-County Regional Authority for funding regional quality of life facilities, recreational trails, science,

arts, cultural and historic preservation organizations, and regional tax equalization and transition payments to communities, pursuant to the terms of a joint agreement.

Johnston:

33% < to be allocated for property tax relief
33% < ³to be applied for additional property tax reduction, all as set forth on the additional property tax relief plan on file in the office of the Johnston City Clerk.²
34% < to be distributed to the Tri-County Regional Authority for funding regional quality of life facilities, recreational trails, science, arts, cultural and historic preservation organizations, and regional tax equalization and transition payments to communities, pursuant to the terms of a joint agreement.

Urbandale:

33% < to be allocated for property tax relief

33% < ³to be applied as follows:

a) 50% for upgrading and development of neighborhood and regional parks and trails.

b) 50% for street maintenance and construction activities.²

34% < to be distributed to the Tri-County Regional Authority for funding regional quality of life facilities, recreational trails, science, arts, cultural and historic preservation organizations, and regional tax equalization and transition payments to communities, pursuant to the terms of a joint agreement.

West Des Moines:

33% < to be allocated for property tax relief

33% < ³to be used for Capital Improvement Projects and Community Enrichment (Park, Recreation, Library and Human Services) Projects, all as set forth on the additional property tax relief plan on file in the Office of the West Des Moines City Clerk.²

34% < to be distributed to the Tri-County Regional Authority for funding regional quality of life facilities, recreational trails, science, arts, cultural and historic preservation organizations, and regional tax equalization and transition payments to communities, pursuant to the terms of a joint agreement.

Windsor Heights:

33% < to be allocated for property tax relief

33% < ³for additional property tax relief, parks and

recreation improvements or neighborhood development programs.²

34% < to be distributed to the Tri-County Regional Authority for funding regional quality of life facilities, recreational trails, science, arts, cultural and historic preservation organizations, and regional tax equalization and transition payments to communities, pursuant to the terms of a joint agreement.

Ankeny:

33% < to be allocated for property tax relief

33% < ³to be allocated for property tax reduction in accordance with the following plan: Revenues received shall be used for payment of apportion of the debt incurred through General Obligation Bond Anticipation Project Notes or General Obligation Bonds for the costs of acquisition of real estate and the construction, equipping and furnishing of a new Police Station, and for the remodeling, equipping, furnishing and expansion of Fire Station No. 1 and acquisition of real estate and construction, equipping and furnishing of a new Fire Station No. 2.²

34% < to be distributed to the Tri-County Regional Authority for funding regional quality of life facilities, recreational trails, science, arts, cultural and historic preservation organizations, and regional tax equalization and transition payments to communities, pursuant to the terms of a joint agreement

Unincorporated Polk County:

33% < to be allocated for property tax relief
33% < 3to tax relief and services that primarily benefit the citizens of unincorporated Polk County, including such services as rural libraries, secondary roads and public safety.

34% < to be distributed to the Tri-County Regional Authority for funding regional quality of life facilities, recreational trails, science, arts, cultural and historic preservation organizations, and regional tax equalization and transition payments to communities, pursuant to the terms of a joint agreement.

Thanks to Jeff Eckhoff of the Des Moines Register for allowing us to use some of his research.

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN IN AMERICA’S ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS

Robert C. Pianta (University of Virginia) has published a new report with the above title. He has stated “the most vital if overlooked fact about our schools: most teaching is mediocre, or worse”.

Mr. Pianta’s team studied 2500 classrooms in 400 school districts across the US. His data shows that the typical child in these classrooms has a 1-in-14 chance of learning in a rich, supportive environment. 3/4’s of all classrooms are “dull, bleak places, devoid of any emphasis on critical reasoning or problem solving”.

Instruction itself probably has more impact on learning and achievement gaps that

any other factor. The key, then, is not material or even, the study says, professional development. What must be done instead is to establish clear expectations for instruction, arrange for teachers to work in teams so they can meet and exceed those expectations, and to institute simple routines for honestly and continuously monitoring teaching to insure its effectiveness.

The study says “prominent researchers have concluded that about three years of effective teaching can result in a 35 to 50 percentile gain for students, especially for those who are low-achieving”.

Schools need to make reasonable, systematic efforts to monitor instruction, just as most of us are monitored in our jobs. Then, using the teams reinforce, refine, and spread those basic best practices throughout the entire building.

Plans, programs, and workshops do not ensure effective teaching as researchers in Tennessee and other states found out several years ago. Most teachers, regardless of these efforts, adapt their instruction to fit the local norms, just as workers do in other large organizations

District administrators and principals need to identify and disseminate effective instruction, and then let teams of teachers observe and refine good lessons and models of teaching, as they improve these on the basis of assessment results. Unfortunately, the study found that very few leaders did this.

2006 SALES AND USE TAX REPORT

YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2006

COUNTY	TAXABLE SALES	COMPUTED TAX	% OF TOTAL
BLACKHAWK	\$1,528,000,000	\$76,400,000	4.9%
DALLAS	\$674,000,000	\$33,000,000	2.1%
DUBUQUE	\$1,087,000,000	\$54,300,000	3.5%
JOHNSON	\$1,548,000,000	\$77,000,000	5.0%
LINN	\$2,926,000,000	\$146,300,000	9.4%
POLK	\$6,463,000,000	\$323,200,000	20.8%
SCOTT	\$2,283,000,000	\$114,200,000	7.3%
STORY	\$794,000,000	\$39,700,000	2.6%
WARREN	\$213,000,000	\$10,600,000	.7%
STATE OF IOWA	\$31,000,000,000	\$1,555,000,000	100.0%