

# Why Every Parent Should Vote Yes on March 16

By Lisa Daily, Kindergarten, 5th and 12th Grade Parent



Over the last month, I have become Referendum Girl, or maybe Super Referendum Girl. I've flown around Sarasota with a trunk full of informational flyers, decked out in a fluorescent green VOTE YES shirt, putting vanity aside and wearing a red hat with an apple on it. Maybe you've seen me.

I'm just a parent, like you. And like you, I'm pretty grateful for the schools that we have in Sarasota, particularly for Pine View. I'm also grateful that my kids are getting the fantastic education they're getting, without me having to write out a \$17,000 tuition check every year for each kid. I'm really (really) grateful about that part.

Having lived in other parts of the state, I'm acutely aware of how lucky we are to have the Sarasota County school district. After all, Florida schools are generally ranked among the worst in the nation. According to the Miami Herald, Florida is 47th (or 39th, depending on which measure you use) in the country in terms of school funding, and Education Week Magazine gave Florida an "F" in terms of our students' college readiness.

Add to that the fact that a think tank at Johns Hopkins found that Florida was among a few states whose low high school graduation rates put Florida in a "crisis category". And according to another report, Florida has among the highest high school drop-out rates in the nation (1 in 4). It gets even worse: Less than 44% our state's tenth graders are reading at grade level.

But not in Sarasota County. Since the 1 mill tax passed eight years ago, we've seen record graduation rates of 86%. Our drop-out rate is just 2.1%. 95% of our elementary schools and 86% of our middle schools are rated "A". In fact, 84% of all the schools in our district are rated "A" or "B". Our FCAT scores were in the top 10 in the state, and our FCAT essay writing scores were in the top 3 in the state. (Not to mention the fact that we've had a 30-point elementary school gain since the referendum passed in 2001.) And the cherry on top: our SAT scores have increased by 19 points in reading and 23 points in math. Pine View, as you probably know, is consistently ranked as one of the top schools in the nation.

Even with the 1 mill tax we've been paying for the last 8 years, (which works out to about \$147 per year for the average family – about the cost of a Starbucks coffee once a week), we still pay lower taxes in Sarasota County than 51 of Florida's 67 counties – including Manatee.

But if you, our parents, don't get out and vote, and our mill tax isn't renewed, the district will lose \$38 million, which equals 500 teachers. With 55 schools in our district, that kind of cut would be absolutely devastating. A disaster. (Cont. on next page)

78% of the referendum money pays for our teacher salaries (which are already in the bottom 25%

**PV PARENTS IN VENICE, OSPREY, NORTH PORT & ENGLEWOOD:**

**PVA needs your help to pass the referendum! We need:**

- 1) Great locations for big signs, especially in North Port and Englewood.**
- 2) Parents and friends to wave signs and help get out the vote**

**Email Scott Pinkerton at [southcountycbs@gmail.com](mailto:southcountycbs@gmail.com) to help!**

# ***PVA NEEDS YOUR HELP TO GET OUT THE VOTE***

**Passing the referendum on March 16 is critical for our kids, Pine View, and the school district. We need the help of every parent.**

**Here's how YOU can help!**

## **Sign Waving Shifts ~ Corner of US41 & Bay Street:**

Monday - Friday, March 1 - 5  
Monday - Friday March 8-12 and  
Monday & Tuesday (Voting Day!) March 15 & 16.

Mornings: 7:30 - 9:15 am ~ Afternoons: 4:30 - 6 pm

This is critical for community support. You can volunteer for a single shift, a couple of shifts, or the whole two weeks. (We need all the help we can get!!)

Bring/Wear: Your friends, your green shirt, a red hat if you have one, and a bottle of water. Your enthusiastic kids are welcome!

## **Pine View Phone Bank**

Friday, March 5th 6 - 9 pm  
7358 S. Tamiami Trail in Coral Cove Mall  
(across from Honda Dealership)

**\*\*\*This is a non-partisan event\*\*\***

*The space was kindly made available to us by a Pine View parent, Rita Ferrandino.*

Bring: Yourself, your friends, your cell phone. Refreshments will be provided.

***To volunteer for any event or to ask questions, please contact Lisa Daily 941-894-6837 or email [lisa@stopgettingdumped.com](mailto:lisa@stopgettingdumped.com)***

nationally). Thanks to the mill tax, we've been able to hire and retain the best teachers – 63% have a Master's degree or higher, while the state average is just 39%. The rest of the money goes to fund things like guidance counselors, data & literacy coaches, art and music at our elementary schools, sports, and science teachers (since when is science optional?), plus the extra 30 minutes of class time each day.

We pay less, and we get more. (This, thanks to the Sarasota County School District -- a lean, mean, educating machine whose admin costs are just 4%, among the lowest in the state.) I'm sure it's no coincidence that Superintendent Lori White is a Pine View grad herself.

If we want more for our kids than the bottom of the nation, stripped-down, average Florida education, we have to pay for it and make it happen for ourselves.

This is why I'm wearing a bright green VOTE YES shirt and a funny hat until voting day on March 16. In fact, it's why every member of PVA will be wearing bright green VOTE YES shirts until voting day. We know how good we've got it here in Sarasota County. And more than that, we only need to look around the state to see just how bad it can get without the mill tax.

Vote. Wave signs. Call your fellow parents, and talk to your neighbors. But most of all, show your kids that their future is worth a lot more to you than the price of a few cups of coffee.

***Call me. I've got a bright green shirt in your size!***

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## **Pine View Early Voting Day is Saturday, March 6th**

**Vote early (March 1 -14) ~ Vote absentee ~ Vote YES on March 16**