



OPERATING REFERENDUM 2024

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Wisconsin funding for public schools has not kept up with inflation since 2010.

REFERENDUM PASSES



- ♦ **Current class sizes and staffing levels** remain consistent.
- ♦ **Teacher and staff pay becomes more competitive** with other Dane County districts.
- ♦ **Increased programming** and support for all students.
- ♦ Expanded **4K and early learning offerings**.
- ♦ More opportunities to **connect students with the trades**.
- ♦ **Maintain budgets** for current programs and operations.
- ♦ SPASD property taxes would **increase for three years and remain steady or decrease after**.



REFERENDUM FAILS TO PASS



- ♦ **Significant staff layoffs** of over 10% of the district's total staff. About 182 positions would need to be cut over the next
- ♦ Teacher pay remains **below the Dane County average**, giving other districts a competitive edge to recruit and retain staff.
- ♦ Students learn best when taught and cared for by the best staff. **Losing staff will make it harder to support students and improve student results.**
- ♦ **Significant cuts** to student programming and school and department budgets.
- ♦ SPASD property taxes **would not increase**.



The School Board and the district are bringing forward for community consideration a \$25 million recurring operating referendum phased in over five years.

\$25 million
phased in over five years

WE HAVE MOMENTUM AND ARE SEEING IMPROVED RESULTS FOR OUR STUDENTS.



The majority of our youngest learners leave our 4K program **meeting or exceeding** developmental expectations.



86% of our students in surveys report **feeling safe in their** schools.



Student results have improved across all screening data, with **significant improvement** among marginalized groups.



2-3rd-grade students have **significantly improved** in their ability to read grade-level texts.



REFERENDUM FUNDS WOULD BE USED TO MAINTAIN THIS MOMENTUM.

HOW WILL THE REFERENDUM IMPACT TAXES?

YEAR 1: For a \$300,000 home *in 2024:*



×



per
\$100k
of property value

→



=

\$90 /year
or \$7.50 per month

YEAR 2: For a \$300,000 home *in 2025:*



×



per
\$100k
of property value

→



=

\$174 /year
or \$14.50 per month

YEAR 3: For a \$300,000 home *in 2026:*



×



per
\$100k
of property value

→



=

\$168 /year
or \$14.00 per month

YEARS 4, 5 & BEYOND: No additional tax impact

Total tax impact after 5 years:

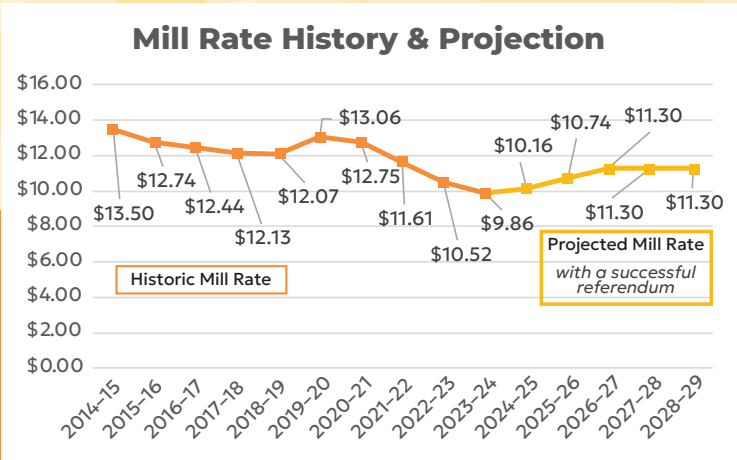
\$432

\$36 per month
\$8.50 per week



The referendum would provide our school district with up to \$25 million more for future budgets. This does not mean we'll add \$25 million each year. We'll only use what we need. In fact, taxes have gone down over the past four years, even after a successful referendum in 2022.

Our mill rate has steadily decreased since 2019–2020. With a successful referendum, the mill rate is expected to increase by \$1.44 per \$1,000 of property value after a five-year phased roll-in.





WHERE WOULD FUNDS GO?

RESPOND TO OUR STUDENTS' NEEDS

\$4 million

OUR MISSION: To inspire and prepare every child, every day, by providing relevant, engaging, and innovative learning experiences in and out of the classroom.



- ◆ Expanded access to 4-year-old kindergarten and early learning offering.
- ◆ Continuing to expand access to the trades and to career planning for high school students.



PROVIDE COMPETITIVE TEACHER & STAFF PAY

\$7 million

OUR GOAL: To recruit and retain the best staff.



- ◆ Increase pay and benefits for Sun Prairie teachers and staff to be competitive with other Dane County districts.
- ◆ Even with the lowest pay in the area, we have a 90% retention rate. Our district is a great place to work. We want to make sure our current teachers and staff stay with us and that new teachers and staff want to work here.



MAINTAIN DISTRICT OPERATIONS

\$14 million

OUR RESPONSIBILITY: To remain good stewards of our communities' investment in the finances and facilities of the district.



- ◆ Maintain current class sizes and staffing levels.
- ◆ Maintain budgets for current programs and operations.
- ◆ Continue to maintain district facilities for our students and community use.
- ◆ Wisconsin state funding for public schools has not kept up with inflation since 2010, even though the state has a \$2-billion budget surplus.

ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS

Is this referendum happening because the district spends too much or doesn't manage money well?

No. An outside group checks our district's finances every year, and we have a good record with no major problems. We also have a high AA bond rating, which shows we manage our money well. This referendum is needed because the state of Wisconsin hasn't given enough funding to public schools for over ten years.

Can't the district fix the budget shortfall by spending less?

Education is a people business. Schools need people to run, and 80% of our budget is for staff. Even if we cut all other expenses to \$0, we would still have to lay off staff to balance the budget without a successful referendum.

I don't have kids in the district. Why should I care about school funding?

Kids are our future. Good schools help students grow into informed and active citizens. Strong schools also help our community by boosting the local economy, attracting people and businesses, and protecting property values. When schools do well, our community does well too.

Is the problem that the district has too many administrators?

No. Our district isn't top-heavy. Out of 16 school districts in Dane County, we rank 13th in the number of administrators per student. Just like any team, our district does better with good leaders. Administrators help improve learning by guiding the district's goals, supporting staff, planning assessments, tracking student progress, and developing learning standards.

Thank you to our community for your past support of Sun Prairie Schools! We are committed to providing an outstanding value for invested dollars.

If successful, the school board is committed to not going to an operational referendum again through the 2028–2029 school year.

Learn more here.
sunprairieschools.org/ref2024



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

No student may be unlawfully discriminated against in any school programs, activities or in facilities usage because of the student's sex (gender identity, gender expressions, and non-conformity to gender role stereotypes), color, religion, profession, or demonstration of belief or non-belief, race, national origin (including limited English proficiency), ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, homelessness status, sexual orientation, age, or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability. Harassment is a form of discrimination and shall not be tolerated in the District. It is the responsibility of administrators, staff members and all students to ensure that student discrimination or harassment does not occur. (SPASD District Policy JB) If a student or parent/guardian would prefer to have this information translated into Spanish, please contact us at 608-834-6630. Si un estudiante, padre o guardian prefiere tener esta información traducida en Español, por favor contactenos en el 608-834-6630. If a student or parent/guardian would prefer to have this information translated into Hmong, please contact us at 608-834-6630. Yog tus me nyuam lub xiv los yog niam thiab txiv/tus neeg muaj cai saib xyuas tus me nyuam xav tau qhov ntawm ntawm no ua lus Hmoob, thov hais rau peb paub rau ntawm 608-834-6630.