



Referendum 2024

November 5, 2024

**What has changed in our
fiscal landscape?**

**Why do we have a referendum question on
the ballot?**

**How would these funds forward the School
Board's vision for the district?**



Vision

Recognized as a high-performing district of choice that reflects the cultures of our diverse community.

Mission

Inspire and prepare every child, every day, by providing relevant, engaging, and innovative learning experiences in and out of the classroom.

Our Commitment to Equity and Excellence Through Continuous Improvement



Culture of Educational Excellence



Student Experiences Goal

Educational experiences in Sun Prairie will be rigorous and aligned to standards. Exceptional experiences include student goal setting, active student participation in their learning, and multiple opportunities and means to demonstrate their learning.



Student Learning Environment Goal

The educational environment establishes the conditions where every child feels welcome and able to succeed. In order to create the necessary conditions for learning, educators create spaces where the classroom community accepts and supports the development of all students as people, where learning partnerships thrive between students and adults, and where there is an established culture of care.



Culture of Engagement and Inclusion



Community of Exceptional & Diverse Educators & Staff Goal

Strive to proactively recruit, retain, and engage diverse and exceptional talent.



Communications & Community Engagement Goal

Excel in how we collaborate and communicate with all careholders, and build relationships that promote positive outcomes for students.



Culture of Operational Excellence



Finance Goal

Prioritize the investment of our resources to support the educational experiences in and out of the classroom, the student and staff physical environment, and the teams serving our organizational mission.



Facilities Goal

Prioritize the investment of our resources to support educational experiences in and out of the classroom, the physical environment for students and staff, and the teams serving our organizational mission.



Sun Prairie Area
School District
Future depends on us...every child, every day.

2022-2027 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



Investments Have Yielded Results

Previous investments by the community in our schools have resulted in the following:

- Students feel safe in their schools. 4.0+ on a 5-pt scale
- Buildings are well maintained, and provide exceptional learning environments
- Staff retention is high. 90% in 2023-24.
- Staff satisfaction is high. Over 86% in 2023-24.
- Schools with higher needs are provided more resources through equitable funding and staffing models



Investments Have Yielded Results

Previous investments by the community in our schools have resulted in the following:

- Curricular materials are kept updated and collaborative curricular decisions are made using current research
- Students have access to cutting edge technology
- Robust communication channels have been established with the overall community to share information
- The district maintains a high bond rating of AA.
- Over 5,500 meals are served daily to address food insecurity

Vision

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Mission

Inspire and prepare every child, every day, by providing relevant, engaging, and innovative learning experiences in and out of the classroom.

Our Commitment to Equity and Excellence Through Continuous Improvement

What the community asked us to achieve on behalf of our students, families, and staff.



Student Learning Environment Goal

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Sun Prairie Area
School District

Futures depend on us...every child, every day.

2022-2027 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK





**A Bold Vision to Keep Our Commitments
and Keep the Momentum Going**

To continue striving toward that vision, the School Board has placed an operational referendum on the ballot

- **Capital Referendum**

- Used for building projects
- Funds are borrowed & paid back with interest

- **Operating Referendum**

- Used to fund ongoing needs of the district
- No interest payments because no borrowed funds
- Referendum amount is levied each year



Referendum Question is for \$25M Per Year Phased in Over 5 yrs



PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

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

\$4 million



STRENGTHEN COMPETITIVE STAFF COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

OUR GOAL: To recruit and retain the best staff.

\$7 million



STABILIZE OPERATING EXPENSES

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

\$14 million



PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

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

\$4 million

Through our diverse array of programming, our students are able to explore their passions and develop new skills to carry them beyond their time in school, all while building connections with their peers and our staff. The district's priorities include:

- supporting students' early learning
- redefining the high school experience for juniors / seniors
- meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student body

Academic Return on Investment

- Our 4-year-old kindergarten/early childhood programming (SP4K/EC) sets our students up for success.
- 80% of our students who go through the SP4K/EC program enter 5-year-old kindergarten meeting or exceeding developmental targets for their age group.



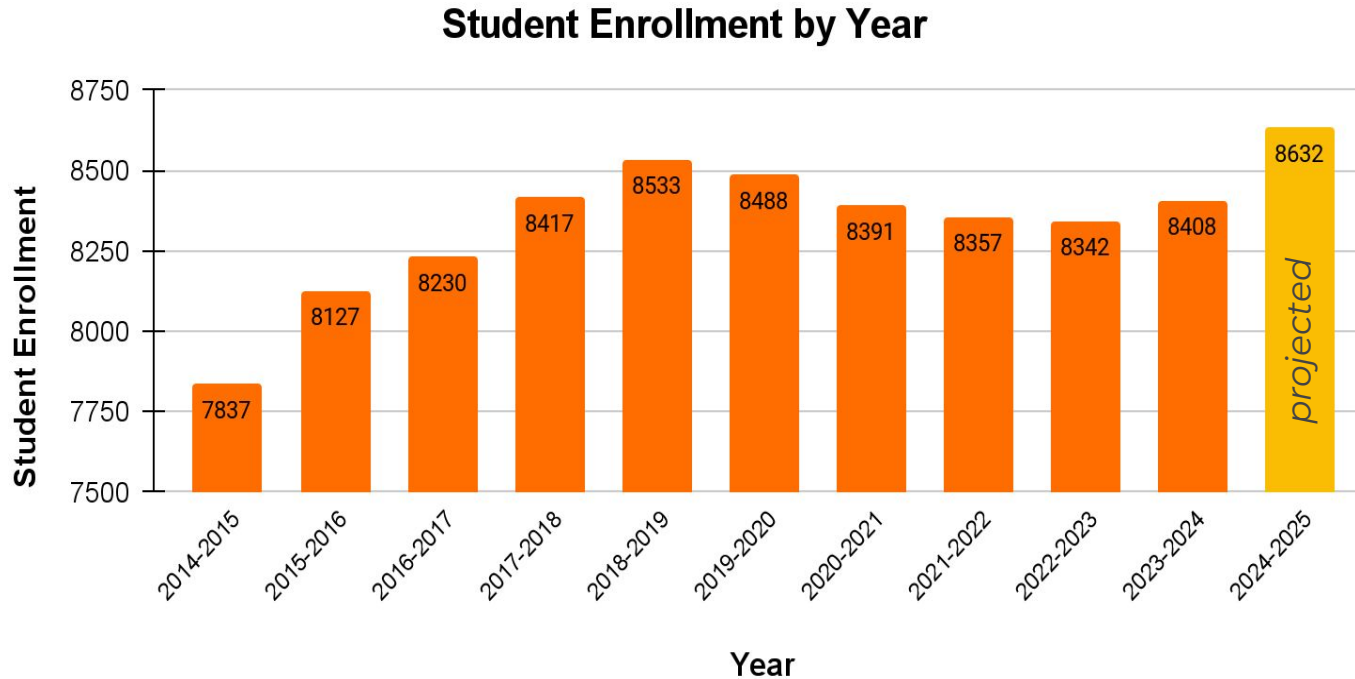
Academic Return on Investment

Our investment in high school courses that provide college credits to our students have offset \$1 million dollars in tuition costs directly to our students/families over the past two years.

	2022-2023	2023-2024	College Tuition Savings
Early College Credit Program/ Start College Now	\$51,123	\$55,913	\$107,036
Advanced Placement	\$208,000	\$263,500	\$471,500
Madison College- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Academy			\$432,000
2 Year Total in College Tuition Savings: \$1,010,536			

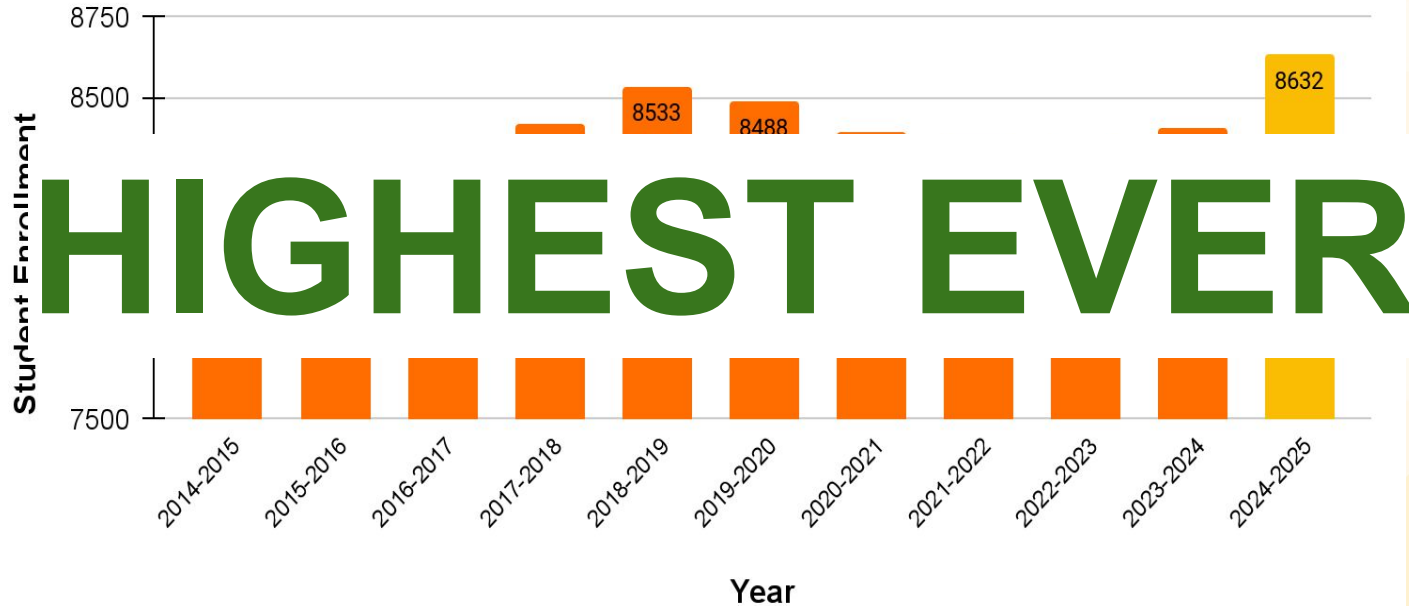


Overall Enrollment



Overall Enrollment

Student Enrollment by Year



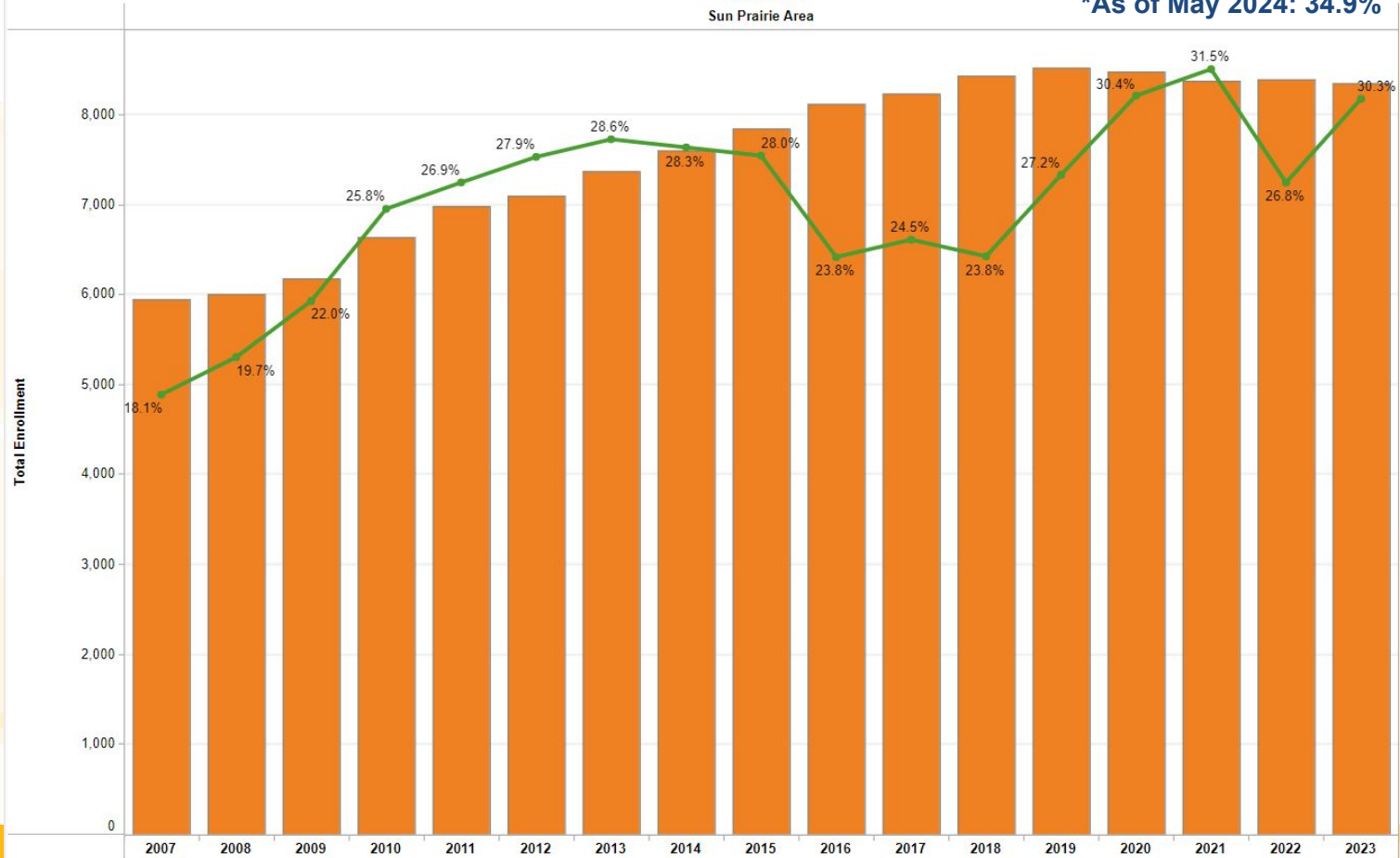
Free and Reduced Enrollment

Sun Prairie Area

Source: DPI

Sun Prairie Area

***As of May 2024: 34.9%**



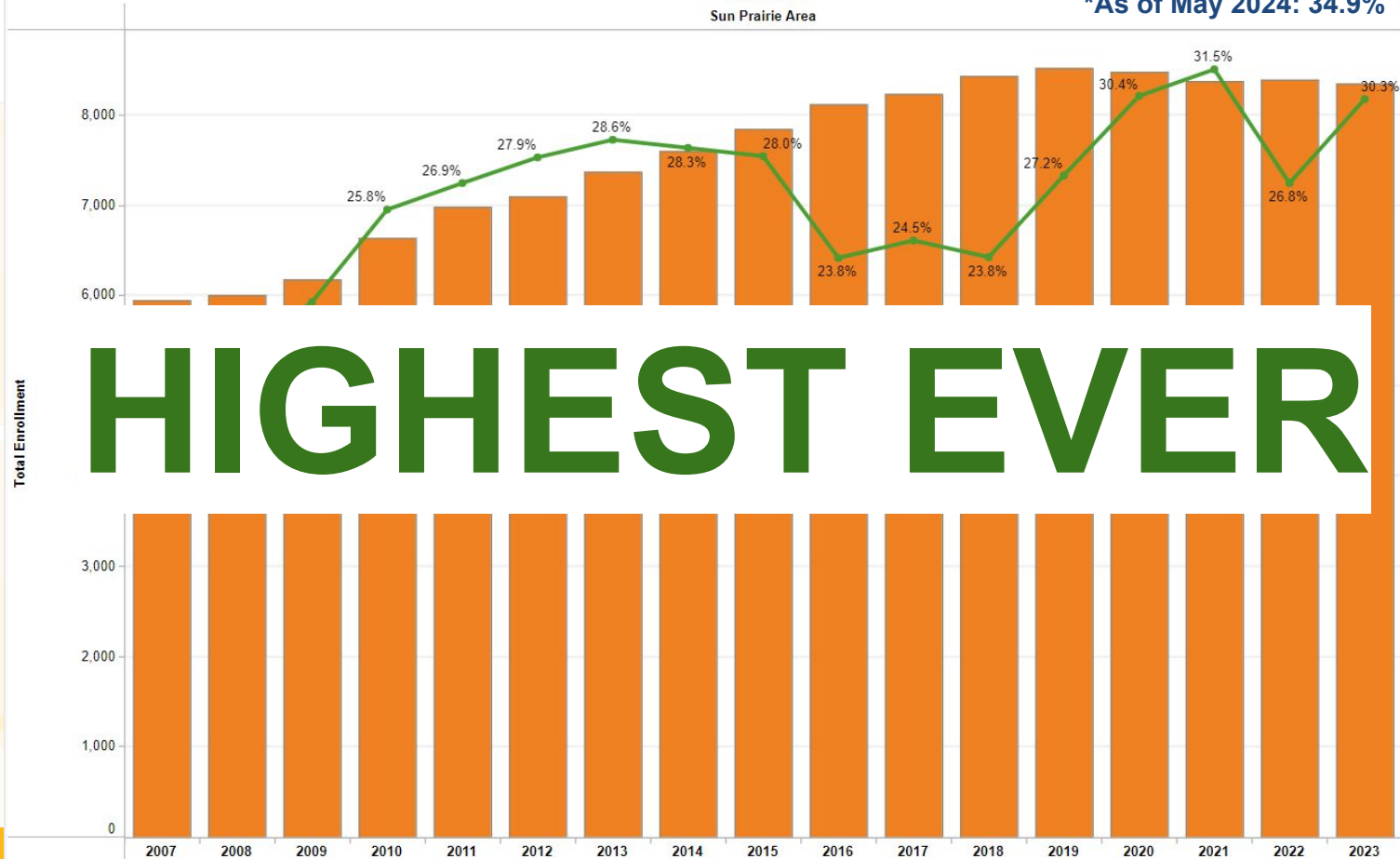
Free and Reduced Enrollment

Sun Prairie Area

Source: DPI

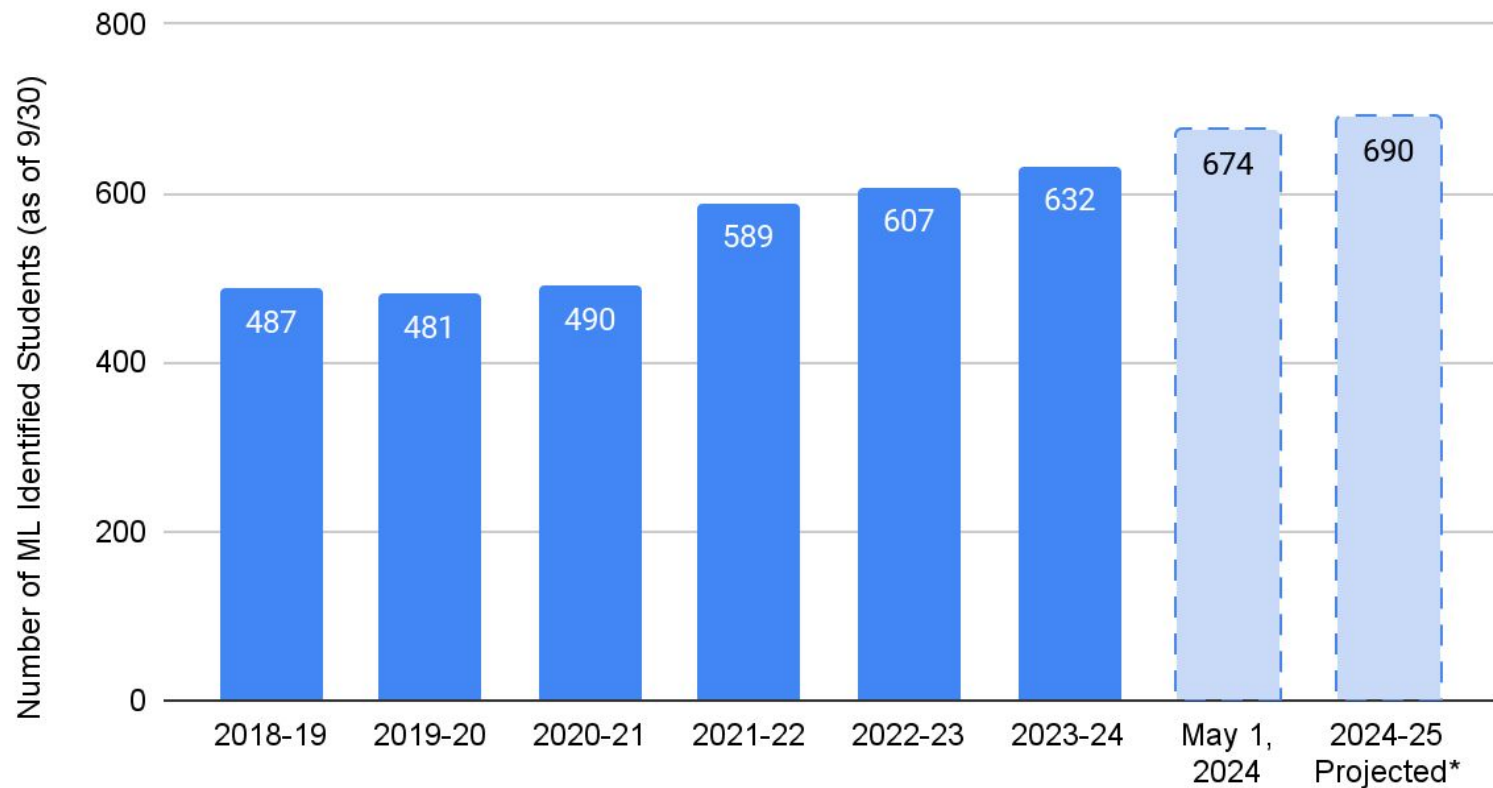
Sun Prairie Area

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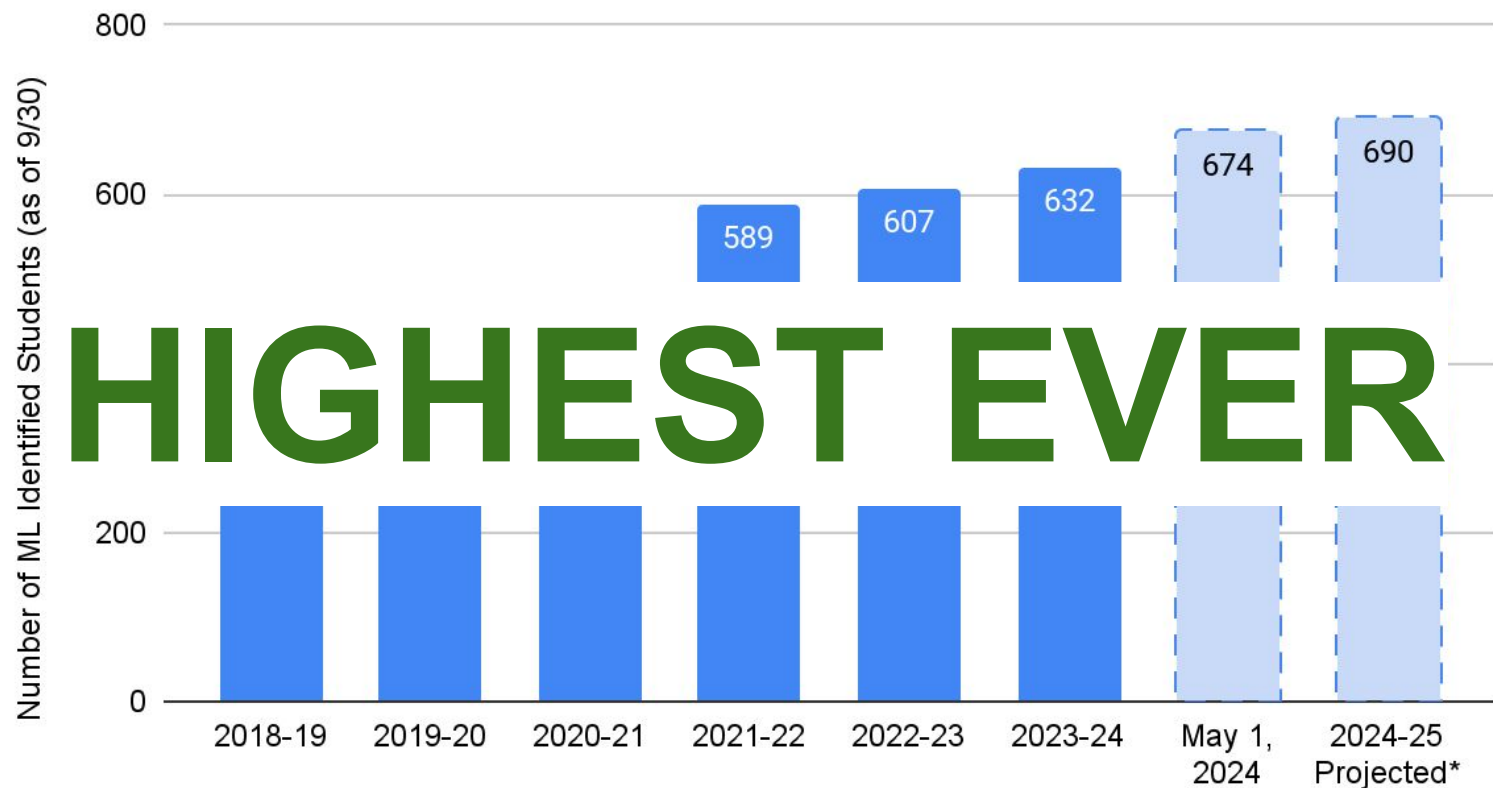


HIGHEST EVER

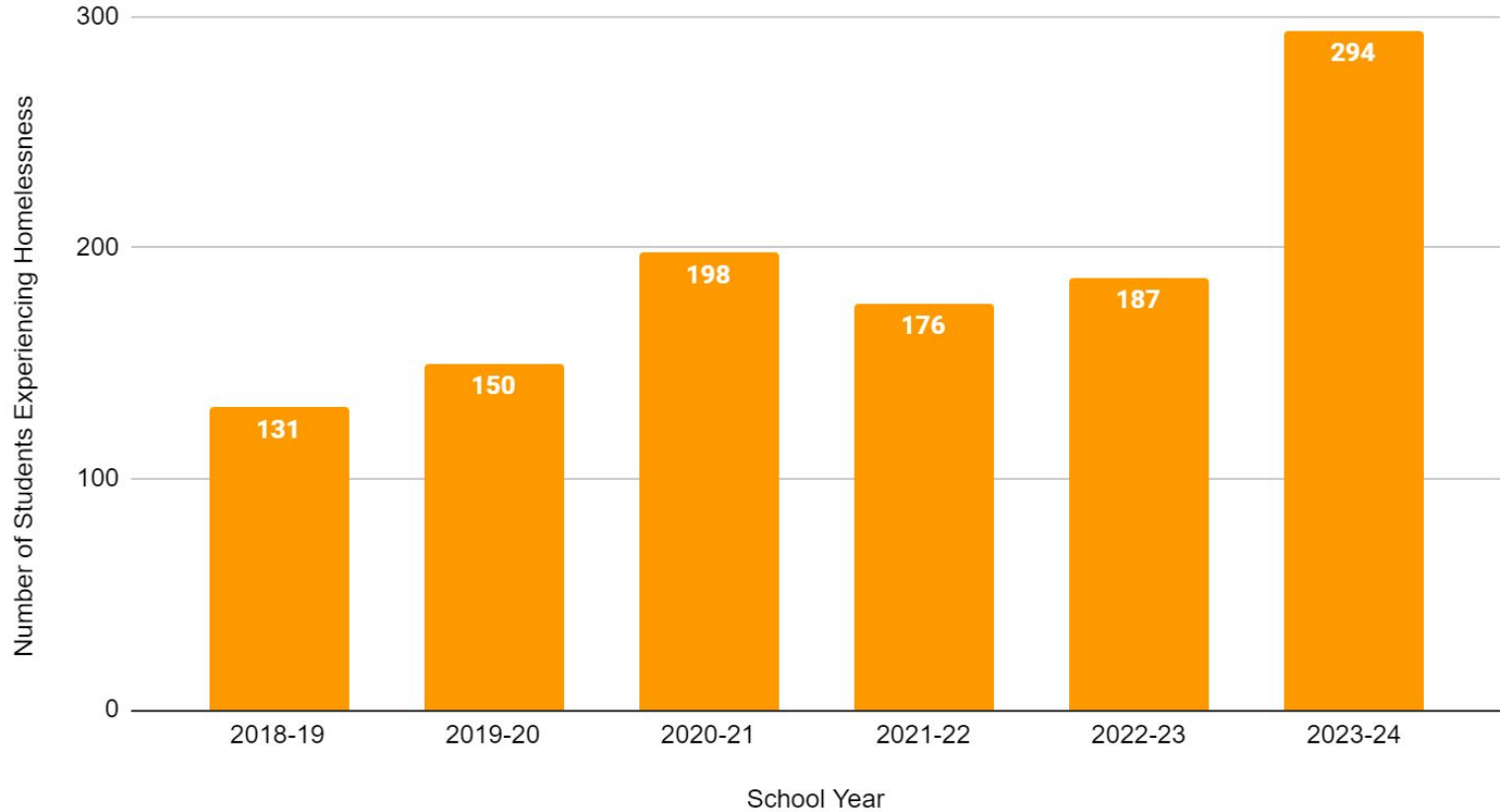
Historic Multilingual Learner Enrollment



Historic Multilingual Learner Enrollment



Historic SPASD Students Experiencing Homelessness



Historic SPASD Students Experiencing Homelessness





PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

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

\$4 million

The district's priorities include:

- supporting students' early learning
- redefining the high school experience for juniors / seniors
- meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student body

The district would allocate \$4 million in referendum funds to respond to our students' needs and continue to find ways to support every child, every day.



STRENGTHEN COMPETITIVE STAFF COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

OUR GOAL: To recruit and retain the best staff.

\$7 million

We know that our kids learn best when they are supported by the best staff.

Retaining and recruiting high-quality educators leads to better outcomes for students.

We retain and recruit the best staff when we have competitive pay and benefits.

Maintaining Competitiveness

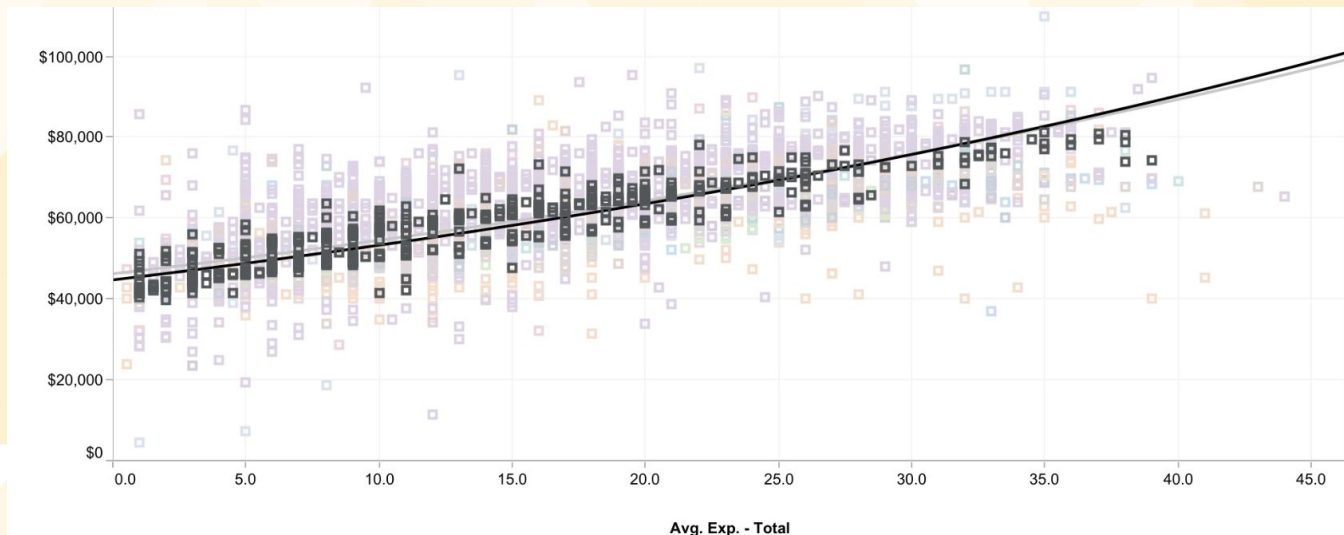
In 2019, Sun Prairie passed an operating referendum to increase teacher salaries to the Dane County average. Our district was in line with this average as recently as the 2021–2022 school year.

Sun Prairie

Each square is a teacher

Dark brown squares / trendline is Sun Prairie

2019 referendum resulted in salaries at Dane Co Average

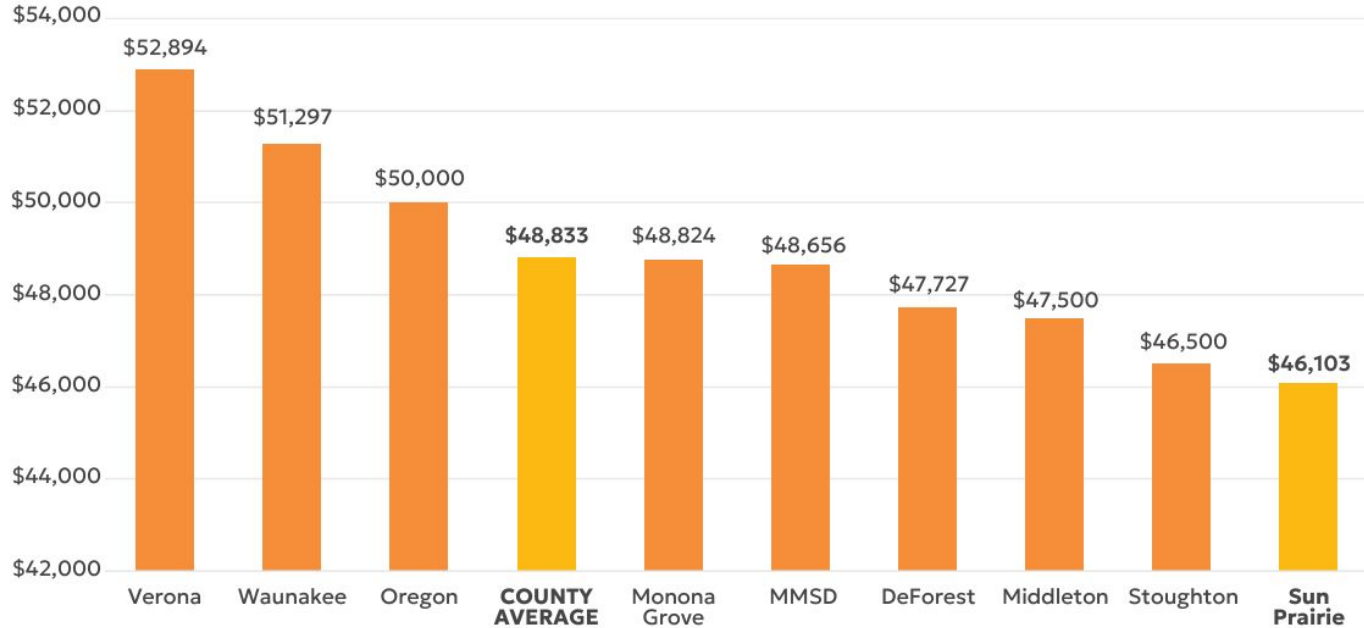


But, in the meantime, other Dane County districts have used operating referendum questions to increase teacher pay

Dane County Operating Referendums Since November 2020				
Dane County District	Referendum Date	Amount	Enrollment	Per Pupil Per Year
Deerfield	November 2020	\$500K/yr for 5 yrs	746	\$670
Madison	November 2020	\$33M/yr	25,247	\$1,307
Monona Grove	November 2020	\$3.7M/yr for 4 yrs	3,696	\$1,001
Waunakee	November 2020	\$2.12M/yr for 5 yrs	4,410	\$481
Marshall	April 2022	\$975K/yr for 3 yrs <i>and</i> \$975K/yr	915	\$1,066
Belleville	November 2022	\$999,999/yr	955	\$1,046
Middleton Cross Plains	November 2022	Avg of \$16.4M/yr for 4 yrs	7,059	\$2,319
Mount Horeb	November 2022	\$4.82M/yr	2,391	\$2,016
Oregon	November 2022	\$11.4M/yr (phased in over 3 yrs)	4,110	\$925
Sun Prairie	November 2022	\$9M/yr (phased in over 3 yrs)	8,411	\$1,070
Verona	November 2022	\$19M/yr	5,794	\$3,279
Waunakee	November 2022	Avg of \$3.33M/yr for 3 yrs	4,410	\$756
Cambridge	April 2023	\$2.4M/yr	909	\$2,640
Monona Grove	April 2023	\$13.8M/yr (phased in over 3 yrs)	3,696	\$1,245



2023–2024 Teacher Base Salary





STRENGTHEN COMPETITIVE STAFF COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

OUR GOAL: To recruit and retain the best staff.

\$7 million

Upon successful passage of the referendum, the district would immediately allocate \$3 million to increase pay for our current educators to bring the district above the Dane County Average.

This would increase the starting salary to \$51,402 for those with a Bachelor's degree and \$55,402 for those with a Master's degree.

The remaining \$4 million would be held to fund future compensation and benefits adjustments to remain competitive.



STABILIZE OPERATING EXPENSES

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

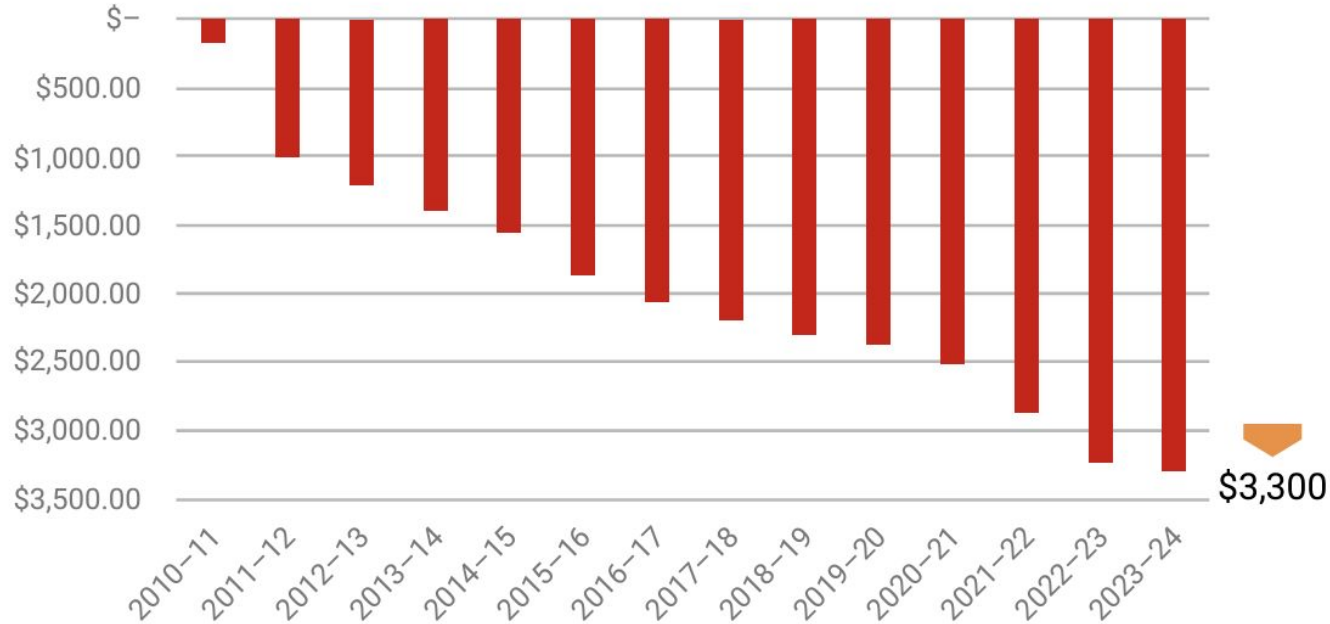
\$14 million

The district will experience a \$6 million budget deficit for the 2025–2026 school year. The deficit is projected to increase to \$14 million over subsequent years. Without additional revenue, the district will need to engage in significant budget reductions.

This is due to increases to our fixed costs while state funding has not kept pace with inflation.

Difference Between CPI and Actual Per-Pupil State Funding

CPI stands for Consumer Price Index, which can be used to track inflation over time.





**Wisconsin's
ranking has
fallen relative to
the nation on
per pupil
spending on
K-12 education**

11th in 2002
11% above national average



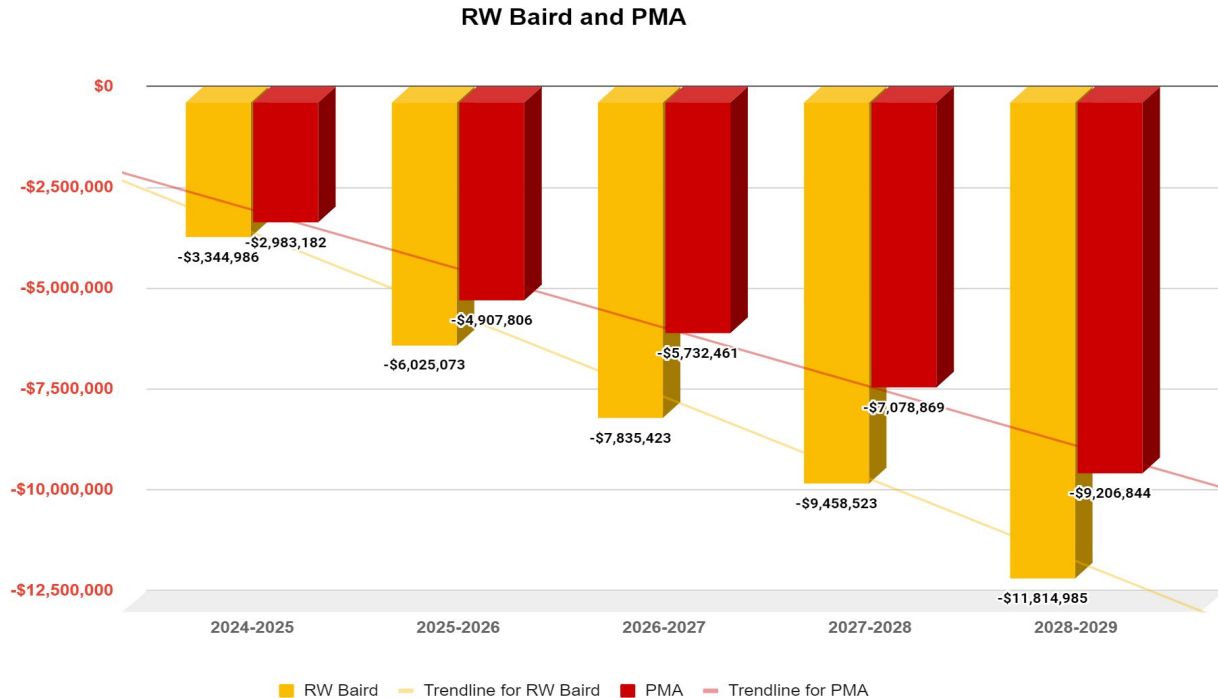
25th in 2022 **7.2% below**
national average

Wisconsin provides **disproportionately less funding to rural districts: 11th lowest** in the nation on state revenue to schools per local dollar (\$.82 versus \$1.18 nationally)



Sources: [2022 Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data](#), Summary Table 11, U.S. Census; [Why Rural Matters 2023](#)

Current Budget Forecast



Budget forecast does not assume reductions are made on a yearly basis to balance the budget - therefore the deficits show as cumulative



Without a Successful Referendum, What Might a \$14M Reduction Look Like?

For Illustrative Purposes Only		
Regular Staffing	Current Full Time Equivalency	Illustrative Staff Reduction
Overall Staffing Reduction Needed	1294	182
Estimated Personnel Reductions		\$12,691,000
Other Budgets		
Department Budgets	\$6,960,000	\$974,400
Athletics & Activities	\$1,400,000	\$196,000
Capital Projects	\$1,200,000	\$168,000
School Budgets	\$1,184,549	\$165,836
Summer School	\$1,100,000	\$154,000
Estimated Other Budget Reductions	\$11,844,549	\$1,658,236
Total Regular Staffing & Other Budgets		\$14,349,236

For illustrative purposes only.

Any reduction process would be developed with a strategic vision and would not be simple across-the-board cuts.



Sun Prairie is not Unique:

Wisconsin Operating Referendum Questions for Nov 2024

Dane County Operating Referendums in November 2024				
Dane County District	Referendum Date	Amount	Enrollment	Per Pupil Per Year
DeForest	November 2024	\$7.9M/yr	4,153	\$1,902
Madison	November 2024	\$100M/yr (phased in over 4 years)	25,247	\$3,961
McFarland	November 2024	\$5.25M/yr (phased in over 3 years)	2,390	\$2,197
Sun Prairie	November 2024	\$25M/yr (phased in over 5 years)	8,408	\$2,973
Waunakee	November 2024	Avg \$1.6M/yr for 2 yrs <i>and</i> \$9.1M/yr (phased in over 2 years)	4,410	\$2,421

The lack of state funding has forced many districts to consider operating referendum questions to balance the budget.





STABILIZE OPERATING EXPENSES

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

\$14 million

We have carefully managed our budget. Our tax rate is at its lowest point in more than 10 years. Our current tax rate is much lower than projected during the 2022 operational referendum. Our district has accomplished this through diligent budget stewardship.

The district would allocate \$14 million in referendum funds to maintain district operations and address the costs of fixed expenses without disruptive reductions to staff or student programming.

WHAT'S ON THE BALLOT?

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET TO EXCEED REVENUE LIMIT BY \$25,000,000 FOR RECURRING PURPOSES

BE IT RESOLVED by the School Board of the Sun Prairie Area School District, Dane and Columbia Counties, Wisconsin that the revenues included in the School District budget be authorized to **exceed the revenue limit** specified in Section 121.91, Wisconsin Statutes, **by \$25,000,000 beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, for recurring purposes consisting of expenses to provide for staff compensation and benefits, for educational programming, and to maintain operations.**



Referendum Question is for \$25M Per Year

Use of funds will be phased in over the next 5 years

2024-25 \$3M will be used to increase teacher compensation

2025-29 Remaining \$22M to be phased in over 4 years

The amount for phase in will depend on:

- State funding (biennial budget 2025-27 & 2027-29)
- Inflation
- Mill rate management



Mill Rate Explained

District Mill Rate moves up/down based upon the relationship between the total levy and equalized property values

- Total Levy ÷ Total Equalized Value = Mill Rate

Breakdown of 2023-24 Mill Rate:

- \$76,889,885 ÷ \$7,797,955,994 = \$9.86 per \$1,000 of value

Changes to total equalized value is divided into two primary categories:

- Increases to property value (increases in market rate)
- Net New Construction (properties paying taxes for the first time)



Mill Rate 5 Year History

SPASD Mill Rate for the Past 5 Years



The district's mill rate moves up and down based on the relationship between the total levy and equalized property values.

$$\text{Total Levy} \div \text{Total Equalized Value} = \text{Mill Rate}$$



Actual review of SPASD property tax

- The district reviewed the tax bills from a sampling of properties across the three largest municipalities
- We compared 2023 SPASD tax to 2020 SPASD tax
- **Average SPASD tax decreased over those three years**
- Please call Phil Frei, Director of Business & Finance if you would like your tax bill reviewed
- For your property information, see [Access Dane](#)



Historical & Projected Mill Rates

Mill Rate by Year



****If the proposed referendum is passed, mill rates are expected to increase by \$1.44 to \$11.30**



What does this mean for taxes?

PROJECTED TAX IMPACT OF THE REFERENDUM

1st Year, 2024 Tax Bill	30¢ per \$1,000 of property value	\$90 \$7.50 per month
2nd Year, 2025 Tax Bill	58¢ per \$1,000 of property value	\$174 \$14.50 per month
3rd Year, 2026 Tax Bill	56¢ per \$1,000 of property value	\$168 \$14 per month
After the 3rd Year	No additional tax increase from the referendum	

The total tax impact over the five year roll-in is
\$1.44 per \$1,000 of property value.
On a \$300,000 house, that is \$432 per year.

Total Increase
\$432 spread
over 3-5 years

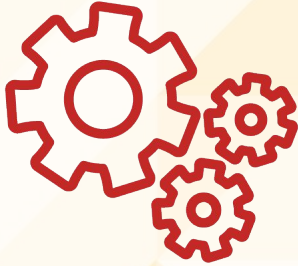
OUR PROMISES TO OUR COMMUNITY

1. The district will not seek additional operational funds for the duration of the five-year roll-in (through the 2028–2029 school year).
2. The district will not levy the full taxing authority if it is not needed.
3. The district will not use referendum funds to significantly expand staffing. Instead, these funds will support our current staff.
4. The district will continue in its commitment to improve results for students.



Thank You to our Community for your past support of Sun Prairie Schools!

Strong public schools:



Are an economic
engine for our
community



Make our community
a desirable place to
locate for both
business and
residential purposes



Protect property
values

***We commit to providing an outstanding value
for invested dollars.***

