



Get the Facts

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools | Operating Levy

Success - Support - Safety

On November 5, Prior Lake-Savage Area School district residents will be asked to vote on an operating levy referendum proposal that would bolster the district's financial stability, maintain what we have and allow us to invest in academic programs and services directly aligned with our new Strategic Plan, which was developed with community input.

What is an operating levy referendum?

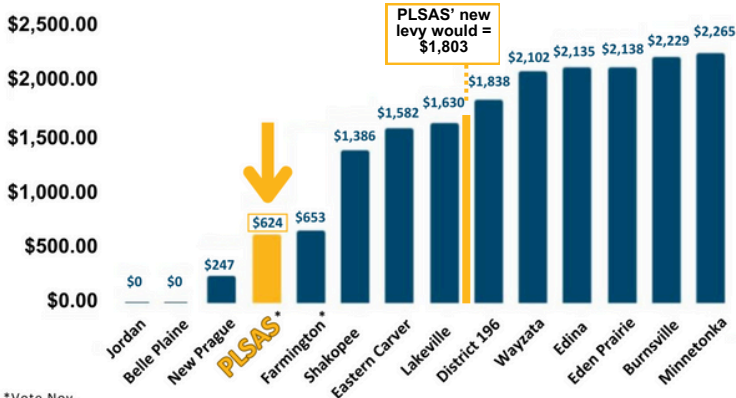
An operating levy generates revenue for school districts and requires voter approval. Operating levies provide funding for the district's daily operational expenses, covering the shortfall between state and federal funding and the expectations expressed by many in our community.

Why now?

Like many other school districts in Minnesota and nationwide, PLSAS is facing significant budget challenges due to rising costs, unfunded mandates, and declining enrollment, which reduce available revenue for student needs.

- **Rising Costs:** Inflation increases prices for goods and services, impacting our budget.
- **Unfunded Mandates:** New state regulations increase expenses without adequate funding.
- **Declining Enrollment:** Fewer students result in reduced revenue.
- **Inadequate State Funding:** Shortfalls in state funding create a significant gap. If state funding had kept pace with inflation since 2003, we would have received over \$9 million more last year.

Voter-approved operating levy comparisons (2023/24 per student)



PLSAS' current operating levy is one of the lowest in the area, which means our district has less money than neighboring districts to operate our schools and provide competitive programming for students.

What's on the ballot?

The district's goal is to sustain and enhance academic programs and services for our students. To support each student's growth and success, we propose the following enhancements:



Enhancing academic excellence that increases student performance and outcomes

- **Teaching Specialists:** Add specialists in every building to collaborate with teachers and ensure district-wide instructional coordination, elevate academic rigor and provide support for students who need it.
- **Spanish Immersion Programming:** Increase staffing support to align the Spanish curriculum across all grade levels.
- **Maintaining Class Sizes:** Ensure that class sizes remain consistent to support individualized student needs and effective learning environments.



Increasing staffing for behavior intervention and student support

- **School Counselors:** Introduce school counselors to elementary schools, and add an additional counselor at Prior Lake High School, to align with our middle school staffing.
- **School Psychologists:** Add two school psychologists to assist in addressing behavioral and academic needs across the district.



Expanding career pathway programs

MN Center for Advanced Professional Studies (MNCAPS):

- Expand career pathway programs based on student demand.
- Increase space to accommodate more students.
- Strengthen partnerships with the local business community.



Strengthening safety and security at all schools

- **Classroom Security:** Update and standardize classroom door locks for quick emergency locking.
- **Perimeter Security:** Improve security with additional surveillance cameras and security film on entrance windows.
- **High School Security:** Construct a more secure lower-level entrance at Prior Lake High School.

Referendum Oversight Committee

If approved, the district will establish a Referendum Oversight Committee tasked with monitoring the implementation of levy measures.

Impact if the levy is not approved by voters

If the operating levy is not approved, the district is projected to have a budget shortfall in the 2025-26 school year and beyond, resulting in the need to make significant annual budget reductions, which are likely to include the following:

- Closing one or more elementary schools, resulting in boundary changes
- Increase in class sizes
- Reduction in staffing and personnel expenditures across the district resulting in reduced services and student supports
- Move MNCAPS to a district facility
- Reduce programs for students including:
 - Limit Spanish Immersion to K-5 only
 - Reduce secondary electives
 - Reduce Laker Online staffing
 - Eliminate middle school activities
 - Eliminate MNCAPS pathway(s)
- Reduce student access to educational technology
- Increase fees for community facility use
- Close pool at Twin Oaks

How we spend our money

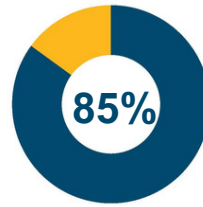
Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools spends most of its budget in areas that directly affect students. Nearly 80% of the budget is spent on areas related to teaching and learning, including salaries and instructional supplies. 12% of the budget is spent on purchased services such as transportation, gas and electricity and 5% goes to pay for capital expenditures such as equipment and maintenance and 3% is spent on central administration and principals.



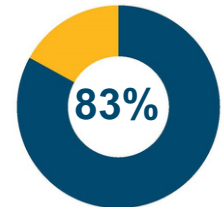
Ongoing budget reductions

Monitoring the budget is a critical and ongoing process for the district. Since the 2019-2020 school year, we have used about \$5 million dollars from our fund balance - similar to a savings account - to balance each year's budget. For the 2024-25 school year, we cut about \$4 million and used more of the fund balance to cover increased costs.

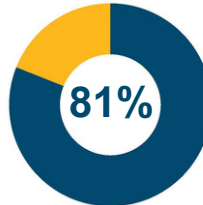
Community opinions are positive



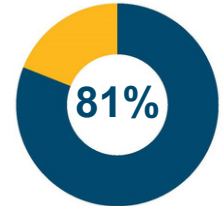
Rate PLSAS teachers as "excellent" or "good"



Rate the quality of education as "excellent" or "good"



Are proud of PLSAS and would recommend the district to friends



Trust the PLSAS Board to do what is right for children in our district

2024 Community Survey

Tax impact

The proposal on the ballot will ask voters to revoke the district's existing levy of \$623.97 per student and replace it with a new levy of \$1,803 per student with an inflationary factor. Based on enrollment projections, the new levy would provide approximately \$10.8 million additional dollars for the first year with an inflationary factor included for years 2-10. The tax impact on a \$445,500 home would be an additional \$45 per month.

Voting information

Polls will open from **7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.** on **Election Day, November 5**. Polling locations are based on where you live. **Early voting begins September 20**. Call 952-226-0010 with any voting questions or visit www.mnvotes.org

Learn more

- Visit www.plsas.org/referendum
- Email input@plsas.org
- Call 952-226-0814