



Lewiston-Altura Public Schools

POST-REFERENDUM SURVEY

Dear Community Members,

The District's three referenda questions were unsuccessful this past November. As a result, the school board is faced with tough decisions to address a significant budget deficit and critical facility updates. As we work through the process of next steps for the District, we want to gather feedback from you.

We will look to this survey to answer the following:

- ✔ How do we address our operational budget challenges?
- ✔ How can we best address our schools' critical building needs?
- ✔ What are our community's long-range school facility priorities?

Please take a few minutes to complete this important survey.

Sincerely,

Gwen Carman, *Superintendent*

WE ARE ASKING ALL VOTERS TO PLEASE RESPOND TO THIS SURVEY. PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN THE POST-REFERENDUM SURVEY IN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

ONLINE

Scan the QR code to the right with your phone camera or visit bit.ly/LASD_CommunitySurvey to complete the survey online.

PRINT

Download and print the survey at www.lewalt.k12.mn.us. Once complete, drop off or mail to **Lewiston-Altura Public Schools, 100 County Road 25, Lewiston, MN 55952.**

MAIL

Call **507-523-2191 + Option 4** to have a survey mailed to you. Once complete, drop off or mail to **Lewiston-Altura Public Schools 100 County Road 25, Lewiston, MN 55952.**

All responses must be submitted online or postmarked by January 26, 2024.

Scan the QR code below with the camera on your smart phone or visit the website link to complete the survey online.



bit.ly/LASD_CommunitySurvey

About You

Please tell us about yourself.

1 What is your age?

- 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-64 65+

2 Are you an employee of the District?

- Yes No

3 Do you have school-aged children?

- Yes No

If yes, what school(s) do they attend?

- Lewiston-Altura Public Schools Immanuel Lutheran (Silo) School Other
 St. John's Lutheran School Home School

4 Do you live in the District?

- Yes No Unsure

5 Please select all that describe you:

- Own a home in the District Own a business in the District Own agricultural land in the District
 Rent in the District Own commercial property in the District None of the above

6 Where do you live?

- Lewiston Utica Rollingstone
 Altura Stockton None of the above

7 What are your primary sources of information about the school district? Check all that apply.

- District website Social media Meetings
 Local newspaper Email Other
 Word-of-mouth District staff
 District newsletter Mailings

7 What do you like about the District?

8

What do you believe is the most serious issue facing the District?

9

How would you rate the District in the following?

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

- Great Good Fair Poor

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Great Good Fair Poor

COMMUNICATION/INFORMATION SHARING

- Great Good Fair Poor

CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

- Great Good Fair Poor



Election Feedback

Did you vote in the November 7, 2023 election?

- Yes No Choose not to answer

If you didn't vote, why:

- No time/too busy
 Forgot
 Unable to get to the polls due to illness/mobility
 Ballot didn't impact me/No kids in district
 Not interested in the issue
 Thought it would pass

Did you feel informed about the election?

- Very informed Somewhat informed Not too informed Not at all informed

Operating Levy Referendum Feedback

The November operating levy did not win voter approval.

An operating levy supports teaching and learning throughout the school district. The operating levy referendum question proposed to renew the school district's current referendum revenue authorization of \$52 per pupil unit and increase revenue by \$708 for a total referendum amount of \$760 per pupil unit.

Please provide feedback on the operating levy ballot question.

How did you vote on the \$760 per pupil operating levy?

- I voted "Yes" I voted "No" I did not vote Choose not to answer

If you voted "No," why? Check all that apply.

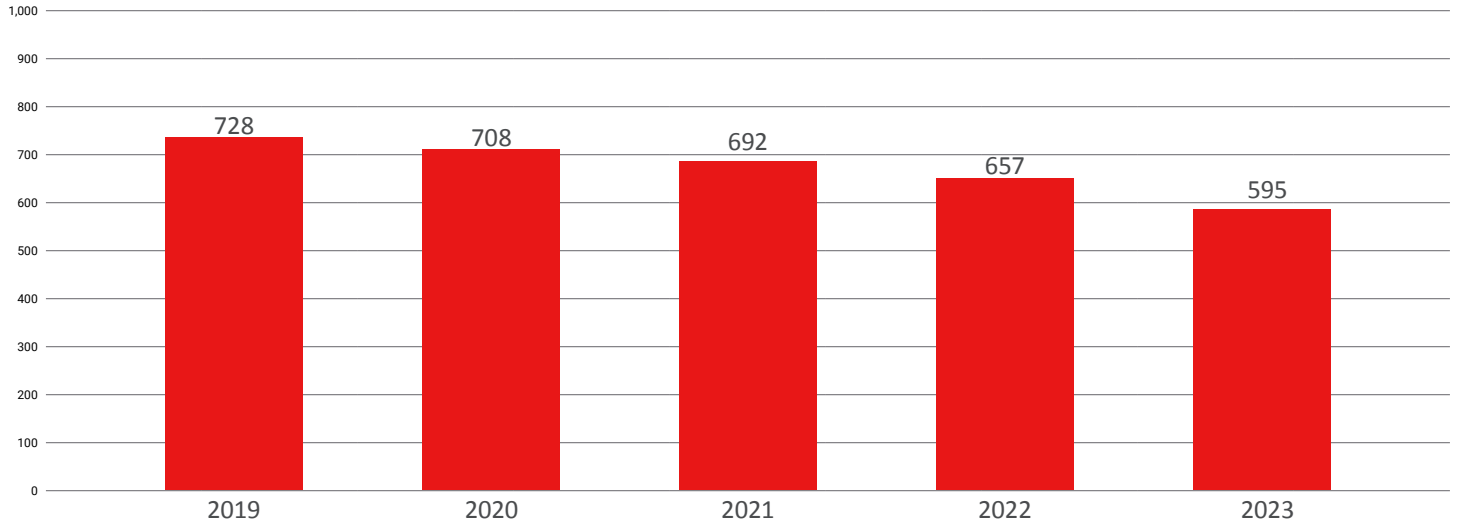
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too expensive/tax impact was too large | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not believe it is needed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feel there are areas the District can cut to save money and address the budget deficit | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't have kids in the District |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lacked trust in the District | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (if so, specify): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lacked information regarding what was being proposed | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feel the District should focus on the facility projects | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will never support any school referendum | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Question previous District spending | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concerned with current economy | _____ |

NEXT STEPS

The proposed \$760 per pupil operating levy would have generated \$415,000 per year to support the day-to-day operations of the District. **These funds were needed as the District is projecting a budget deficit of approximately \$700,000 for the 2024-25 school year.**

The deficit is the result of two primary challenges:

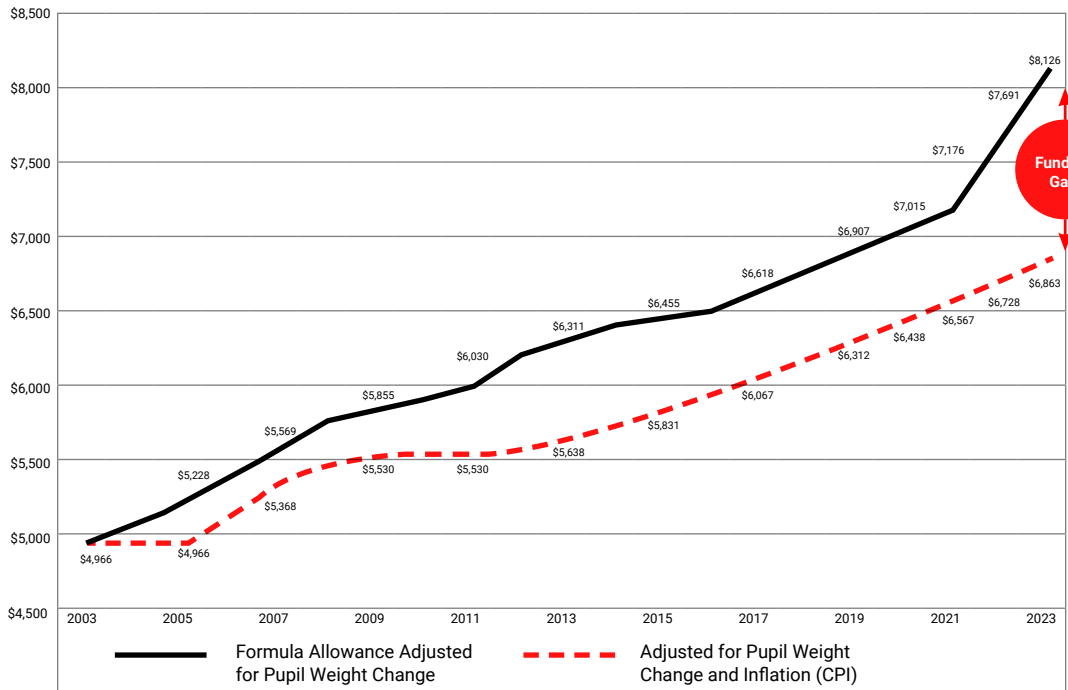
- **Decreased enrollment:** The majority of operating funds the District receives comes from the State. Those funds are based on the number of students in the District. As enrollment declines, so does the amount of funding. Unfortunately, operating expenses can't be reduced at the same rate or the District would have extremely large class sizes, inadequate support staff, and reduced program offerings.



- **While enrollment has been declining over the past five years, projections indicate that enrollment will stabilize in 2028 and beyond.**
- **With 133 fewer students today, the District received \$1.3 million LESS from the state in 2023 than it did in 2019.**

Reduced State Funding: The basic general education formula has not kept up with inflation for many years. The District receives \$1,263 less per student than they did 20 years ago. **This calculates to \$751,485 that the District did NOT receive this year to fund District operations.**

GENERAL EDUCATION FORMULA ALLOWANCE



\$1,263
PER STUDENT
DIFFERENCE, DUE
TO NOT KEEPING UP
WITH INFLATION!

As a result of the failed operating levy, and the need to balance the budget for the 2024-25 school year, the school board **will be making \$500,000 in reductions** and **looking to increase revenue** through increased fees (ex. admission to events, participation in co-curriculars, etc.).

These cuts will solve the challenges only through the 2024-25 school year, but no further, as expenses will continue to increase in the coming years.

<p>What advice would you give the District?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Run another operating levy <input type="checkbox"/> Continue making cuts to balance the budget <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/need more information
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If "not sure," what additional information would you like to receive?

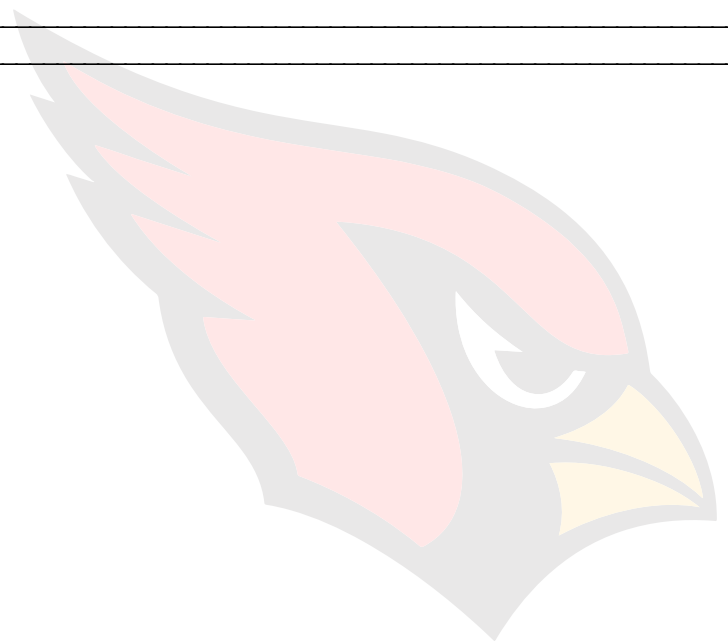
Budget Cuts

The District is facing a budget shortfall in the coming years. If voters do not support a future operating levy, the District must reduce expenses.

Which cost saving measures should the District do to meet their budget? Check all that apply.

- Increase class sizes to over 30 students per class
- Eliminate electives and course offerings
- Reduce the staff that support students with learning challenges
- Reduce advance placement and college credit options
- Further increase student fees
- Further increase ticket fees
- Cut clubs, activities, and athletic programs
- Reduce staff benefits
- Freeze salaries
- Reduce program and building budgets

Are there other ideas on how the District can save money?



Operating Levy Support

If voters do not support an operating levy, the District will need to continue making cuts. **We are concerned what additional cuts will mean to educating our students, retaining staff, and maintaining our facilities.**

The following options have been developed to address the operating budget deficit:

- OPTION 1:** Continue to cut programs and services.
- OPTION 2:** Ask voters again to support the \$760 per student levy, reductions will be needed.
- OPTION 3:** Ask voters to support an \$860 per student levy, future reductions will still be needed.
- OPTION 4:** Ask voters to support a \$960 per student levy to balance the budget, and maintain programs and services.

The following table shows the tax impacts for each option.

ESTIMATED PROPERTY VALUE	PROPERTY TAX IMPACT							
	OPTION 1: CONTINUE TO CUT		OPTION 2: \$760 PER STUDENT		OPTION 3: \$860 PER STUDENT		OPTION 4: \$960 PER STUDENT	
	ANNUALLY	MONTHLY	ANNUALLY	MONTHLY	ANNUALLY	MONTHLY	ANNUALLY	MONTHLY
\$100,000	No increase	No increase	\$109	\$9.08	\$124	\$10.33	\$140	\$11.67
\$150,000	No increase	No increase	\$163	\$13.58	\$186	\$15.50	\$209	\$17.42
\$200,000	No increase	No increase	\$218	\$18.17	\$248	\$20.67	\$279	\$23.25
\$300,000	No increase	No increase	\$327	\$27.25	\$373	\$31.08	\$419	\$34.92
\$400,000	No increase	No increase	\$435	\$36.25	\$497	\$41.42	\$558	\$46.50

Which option would you support?

- OPTION 1:** Continue to cut programs
- OPTION 2:** \$760 per student
- OPTION 3:** \$860 per student levy
- OPTION 4:** \$960 per student levy
- I'm not sure/need more information
- I will not support any levy

Bond Referendum Feedback

The bond referendum questions proposed critical building renovations and additions. Through an extensive facility analysis and community engagement process, the following critical needs were identified:

- Safety and security
- Aging infrastructure and worn finishes
- Outdated educational spaces
- Undersized gymnasium and no dedicated performance space
- Bus garage

Based on those needs, two bond referendum questions were proposed:

- Question 1 – Elementary and Secondary building needs and bus garage/\$26.645 million
- Question 2 – Remodel current gymnasium into auditorium; build new gymnasium, locker rooms, and concessions/\$12.540 million

Please provide feedback on each of the two bond referendum ballot questions.

How did you vote on the \$26.6M bond referendum question?

- I voted "Yes" I voted "No" I did not vote Choose not to answer

If you voted "No" to question 2 for \$26.6M, check all that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too expensive/tax impact was too large | <input type="checkbox"/> Did not support the music program addition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Did not support the improvements at the elementary school | <input type="checkbox"/> Concerned with current economy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Did not support the improvements at the high school | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not believe it is needed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frustrated the District closed the intermediate school | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't have kids in the District |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Did not support the building of a bus garage | <input type="checkbox"/> I will never support any school referendum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Did not support adding a multi-purpose room | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (if so, specify): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lacked trust in the District | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lacked information regarding what was being proposed | _____ |

How did you vote on the \$12.5M bond referendum question?

- I voted "Yes" I voted "No" I did not vote Choose not to answer

If you voted "No" to question 3 for \$12.5M, check all that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too expensive/tax impact was too large | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not believe it is needed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Did not support the additional gym at the high school | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't have kids in the District |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Did not support the need for an auditorium at the high school | <input type="checkbox"/> I will never support any school referendum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lacked trust in the District | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (if so, specify): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lacked information regarding what was being proposed | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concerned with current economy | _____ |

NEXT STEPS

The facility needs of the District are not going away. If the District is unable to secure a voter-approved bond, funds from the general operating budget will need to be used to address critical infrastructure and building system updates, reducing the amount of funding available for teaching and learning.

What advice would you give the District?

- Run another bond referendum
- Address facility needs through the District's general operating budget by continuing to cut staff, programs, and services for students.
- Not sure


If "not sure," what additional information would you like to receive?



Bond Referendum Support

The following table shows the tax impact for various referendum amounts. The District would like to know your level of support should they consider another bond referendum in the future.

PROPERTY TAX IMPACT							
TYPE OF PROPERTY	ESTIMATED MARKET VALUE	BOND REFERENDUM ESTIMATED IMPACT					
		\$20 MILLION BOND <i>Complete only critical needs projects.</i>		\$25 MILLION BOND <i>Critical building needs and some of the additions.</i>		\$29 MILLION BOND <i>November 23's \$26.6 million bond with inflation.</i>	
		ANNUALLY	MONTHLY	ANNUALLY	MONTHLY	ANNUALLY	MONTHLY
RESIDENTIAL HOMESTEAD	\$100,000	\$93	\$7.75	\$123	\$10.25	\$147	\$12.25
	\$150,000	\$179	\$14.92	\$235	\$19.58	\$280	\$23.30
	\$200,000	\$265	\$22.08	\$347	\$28.92	\$413	\$34.42
	\$300,000	\$437	\$36.42	\$571	\$47.58	\$679	\$56.58
	\$400,000	\$609	\$50.75	\$795	\$66.25	\$945	\$76.25
COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL	\$100,000	\$237	\$19.75	\$308	\$25.67	\$366	\$30.50
	\$250,000	\$670	\$55.83	\$873	\$72.75	\$1,038	\$86.50
AGRICULTURAL HOMESTEAD*# <i>(average value per acre of land and buildings)</i>	\$5,000	\$1.18	\$0.10	\$1.54	\$0.13	\$1.83	\$0.15
	\$7,000	\$1.66	\$0.14	\$2.16	\$0.18	\$2.56	\$0.21
	\$9,000	\$2.13	\$0.18	\$2.77	\$0.23	\$3.30	\$0.28
AGRICULTURAL NON-HOMESTEAD* <i>(average value per acre of land and buildings)</i>	\$5,000	\$2.37	\$0.20	\$3.08	\$0.26	\$3.66	\$0.31
	\$7,000	\$3.31	\$0.28	\$4.31	\$0.36	\$5.13	\$0.43
	\$9,000	\$4.26	\$0.36	\$5.55	\$0.46	\$6.59	\$ 0.55

*Ag2School Property Tax Relief Bill: Estimated tax impacts represent a 70% reduction due to the School Building Bond Agricultural Credit.
 Read more at: <https://www.house.mn.gov/comm/docs/ff0ef859-f36d-49a0-bd42-dcf861e1553c.pdf> 
 #Homestead examples exclude the house, garage, and one acre, which has the same tax impact as a residential homestead.

How much of a tax impact would you support through a bond referendum, assuming the projects included were acceptable to you?

- I would support a \$29 million bond referendum
- I would support a \$25 million bond referendum
- I would support a \$20 million bond referendum
- I would only support a smaller bond referendum
- I would not support any bond referendum
- I'm not sure/need more information

