

RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT APRIL 2, 2024, REFERENDUM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What construction projects will the referendum fund?

A: There are two referendum questions.

Referendum question #1 includes: renovations at the Elementary, Middle and High Schools; construction of safe and secure entrances/offices at the Elementary and Middle Schools; construction of an addition for a replacement gymnasium at the Middle School, to create a single River Valley School District campus; building infrastructure, site improvements, ADA accessibility updates and other associated work; and acquisition of furnishings, fixtures and equipment.

Referendum question #2 includes: school building project at the High School; construction of a performing arts center addition and a safe and secure entrance; remodeling and ADA compliance updates, including to the performing arts commons and stage areas; site improvements and other associated work; and acquisition of furnishings, fixtures and equipment.

Q: How much is the referendum?

A: There are two referendum questions.

Referendum question #1 is \$19,500,000.
Referendum question #2 is \$14,500,000.

Q: If the referendum passes, how much will property taxes increase?

A: Please refer to the information provided in the graph below:

FAIR MARKET PROPERTY VALUE	QUESTION I Improvements & Renovations		QUESTION II Performing Arts Center Addition		QUESTIONS I & II Combined	
	\$19,500,000		\$14,500,000		\$34,000,000	
	Annually	Monthly	Annually	Monthly	Annually	Monthly
	Tax Rate \$1.26 per \$1,000		Tax Rate \$0.92 per \$1,000		Tax Rate \$2.18 per \$1,000	
\$100,000	\$126.00	\$10.50	\$92.00	\$7.67	\$218.00	\$18.17
\$150,000	\$189.00	\$15.75	\$138.00	\$11.50	\$327.00	\$27.25
\$300,000	\$378.00	\$31.50	\$276.00	\$23.00	\$654.00	\$54.50

More information can be found on the district site: <https://www.rvschools.org/district/referendum-2024.cfm>

Q: How have the enrollment trends affected the proposed renovation?

A: Enrollment trends are indicating that class sizes have plateaued. By reconfiguring grades and closing the Plain building, we will utilize our current school buildings in Spring Green to create one campus which will allow us to use staffing and resources more efficiently.

Q: What will the School Board do with the building in Plain upon closing that school?

A: The Board plans to seek feedback from district residents, but would likely sell the building to offset costs.

Q: Will upgrades save us money?

A: Yes. Updated mechanical and plumbing systems as well as updated lighting will be more energy efficient. By closing the existing building in Plain, those building costs and costs for any duplicated services will be eliminated.

Q: What is the proposed construction timeline if the referendum passes?

A: The summer of 2025 will be a targeted date. For the 2025-26 school year, students/teachers would transition to a single district campus and grade structure would be reconfigured across the three school buildings in Spring Green.

Q: Will construction interfere with student learning?

A: No. The School Board has been working with Kraemer Brothers (construction) and FEH Design (architect) to develop a construction schedule. Renovations and additions will happen in a multi-phased approach while maintaining safety standards to prevent any disruptions to student learning.

Q: What happens if the construction bids for the projects come back higher than \$19.5 and \$14.5 million?

A: The Board of Education has several options available if bids come back higher than expected. One option is to direct the architects and engineers to review and critically analyze the construction plans to try and discover ways to make more economical options without sacrificing quality. A second option is to locate other funding sources such as grants and donations.

Q: Does the referendum include a budget for furnishings?

A: Yes. A furnishings and equipment allowance is included in the budget for these projects.

Q: Who can vote on the referendum?

A: Anyone who lives in the River Valley School District, is 18 years of age, and is registered to vote can cast a ballot on April 2. A person that is not registered to vote can register at their polling place on the same day of the referendum by providing proof of age and residence. Polling places are located throughout the district as we have 16 municipalities that are wholly or partially in River Valley. You need to vote at the polling place that is assigned to the village or town in which you live. Please seek information at this site: <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/Find-My-Polling-Place>

Q: How do I vote by absentee ballot?

A: If you are unable to vote in person on April 2, you can vote early by using an absentee ballot. You need to request an absentee ballot by contacting the municipal clerk of the village or town in which you live. Please seek information at this site: <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/Find-My-Polling-Place>

Q: How many votes are needed for the referendum to pass?

A: Each referendum question needs 50% plus 1 of the votes cast to be “yes” in order to pass. In recent years, many school referendums have been decided by less than 10 votes—this demonstrates that everyone’s vote is important!

Q: Can the district use money from this referendum to give teachers or staff a raise or pay employment related expenses?

A: No. These are two separate pots of money. Salaries are paid from the general fund. These funds would only be used for building renovations and improvements .

Q: Will this referendum cover future budget shortfalls for operating costs?

A: No. The River Valley School District will continue to seek funding for operating costs through future referendums.

Q: Will the renovation add additional classes or teachers?

A: No. Additional teaching positions will not be added due to these additions/renovations.

Q: What safety and security features will be included in the project?

A: Safe and secure entrances/offices will be constructed. Also, new communication alert systems will be included in the updates.

Q: How will these improvements provide our students with a better education?

A: Our current facilities fall short of the current standards for 21st-century learning environments. We have areas that do not meet accessibility and technology needs. Renovations to specific academic and elective areas will help to ensure that students are community, college and/or career ready.

Q: How will community members benefit from the updated facilities?

A: It is a goal to have our updated facilities provide additional opportunities for community use. Community members will gain access to the additional gymnasium at the middle school which would replace the one we would lose by closing the existing building in Plain. Furthermore, a performing arts center would provide a venue for community members to enjoy.

Q: Is the District exploring partnerships or private donations to help fund facility improvements?

A: Yes. The District is exploring partnerships and always welcomes private donations to support students, programs, services, and facilities to reduce costs.

Q: I don't have any students in school, so why should I support this referendum?

A: Small communities need strong schools, and strong schools help maintain strong property values. Supporting this referendum allows us to make the repairs and updates now. If we prolong renovations, that only means additional costs and higher taxes down the road.

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