



APRIL 2  
**VOTE**

ONE COMMUNITY, ONE FUTURE

# REFERENDUM

## Q & A



## WHAT IS THE PROPOSED PLAN?

On Tuesday, April 2, 2024, residents of the Valders Area School District will vote on a \$1.3 million, 3-year operational referendum question. If the referendum is approved, VASD would use the funds to address operational needs across the entire district.

## WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF OPERATIONAL REFERENDUMS IN THE VALDERS SCHOOL DISTRICT?

Valders Area School District has only requested two operational referendums in the last 20 years.

- 2018 - This operational referendum was used to support the high school's transition to 1:1 technology. VASD taxpayers finished paying this referendum during the 2022-2023 school year.
- 2023 - This operational referendum failed during the spring 2023 election. We have looked at the necessary operational expenses and revamped this referendum to include the specific needs.

## WHY DOES VASD NEED AN OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM?

Out of approximately 432 school districts in Wisconsin, only about 30 have not asked for operational monies. Districts are needing to ask for additional funds from taxpayers through referendums because of

- Reduction in funding from State Aid
- Expiration of federal emergency relief funds (ESSER)
- Change in funding throughout the years - no per-pupil increase in recent years



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## WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSED REFERENDUM SUPPORT?

These potential needs were compiled by the operational referendum working group.

- **School Resource Officer (SRO)** - VASD is the only public school district in Manitowoc County that doesn't have an SRO. SROs are specifically trained to support mental health needs of students, as well as other situations that may specifically arise in the school setting. This position would also need approval from the Manitowoc County Board. However, we are hopeful that if the district has the money to support the position, the board will work with the district to create the position.
- **Math Interventionist** - VASD cut this position when the referendum did not pass in the spring of 2023. This staff member would work with students who were below grade-level to provide additional support for the students' math understanding. This extra support allows the classroom teacher to support the other students' needs and advancements. These documented interventions are necessary to provide the best support to students, especially in the case of a student qualifying for Special Education.
- **English Language (EL) Educator** - VASD currently has about 55 students that should receive EL services. This position was cut when the referendum did not pass last spring. Without this position, teachers and staff do not have the resources to bridge the gap.
- **Maintaining small class sizes, offerings, and staff levels** - We are so grateful that the voters approved the building referendum last spring. However, it is our concern that we will build these fantastic opportunities in our buildings and then not be able to afford to run the classes. Without additional funding, class sizes may need to be much larger than they are now, allowing for less classes to be offered to our students.
- **District-wide technology upgrades** - Since the previous referendum for technology has ended, the district needs to make additional upgrades to technology throughout the district. Staff are using projectors and SMARTBoards in the classroom that are more than 10-15 years old. Chromebooks used by teachers and elementary and middle school students are more than five years old and need to be replaced.
- **Explore opportunities to support student behavior needs** - The referendum working group agrees that there needs to be behavioral support for students. However, the working group would like to conduct some additional research on the best method to approach this need.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
PLEASE VISIT:**

[valders.k12.wi.us/district/vasd-referendum-2024.cfm](https://valders.k12.wi.us/district/vasd-referendum-2024.cfm)



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## HOW DOES THIS REFERENDUM DIFFER FROM THE REFERENDUM FROM SPRING 2023?

After numerous and robust discussions regarding community response, likelihood of passage, district needs, and necessity to make budget reductions without a referendum, the working group has asked the school board to reduce the referendum from \$1.5 million to \$1.3 million and reduce the length of time from 5 years down to 3 years.

## WHAT WILL THE 2024 REFERENDUM QUESTION SAY ON THE BALLOT?

The ballot will read:

“Shall the School Board of the Valders Area School District be authorized to exceed the revenue limit under Section 121.91 of the Wisconsin Statutes beginning with the 2024-25 school year through the 2026-27 school year on a non-recurring basis by \$1,300,000 each year for the purpose of paying District operating expenses including funds for a school resource officer, a math interventionist, an English language coordinator and to maintain and improve staff, improve and upgrade district technology and to explore opportunities to support student behavior needs as provided in the foregoing resolution?”

## WHAT IS MEANT BY REVENUE LIMITS?

The amount of revenue a district can raise from state aid and local property taxes is restricted by state statutes. This restriction has been in existence since 1993.

## WHAT IS THE DISTRICT PROPOSING?

Our resolution authorizes the Board to exceed the revenue limit for \$1.3 million per year, beginning with the 2024-2025 school year and ending with the 2026-2027 school year.

## WHAT COULD BE THE IMPACT OF A FAILED REFERENDUM?

While the working group is optimistic that the referendum will be approved by our voters, it is still important to know the implications of a second failed referendum.

- The school board would need to make some difficult decisions about how to make additional cuts in the budget. Many cuts have been made in the last 5-10 years, but the district cannot continue to deplete the Fund Balance to operate from year to year.
- Based on current wording in state legislature, Valders Area Schools would be at risk of losing additional funding from the state of Wisconsin if our voters would again vote “no” to this referendum.

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## HOW CAN THE COMMUNITY FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION?

The operational referendum working group, in collaboration with the school board, will have the following opportunities for community members to learn more.

- Frequently asked questions and more information will be listed on the Valders Schools website.
- Listening sessions will be scheduled in February and March for community members. Please watch for more information regarding dates, times, and locations for these sessions.
- Presentations will be given to the PTA, senior groups, town and village boards, and other local stakeholders. If you are a leader of a local group and you would like a presentation, please contact Dr. Hunt or other member of the operational referendum working group to schedule a presentation.

## MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP INCLUDE

**Chloe Cigler**, Reading Specialist & district parent, VHS Class of 1994

**Makenna (Bieberitz) DeBauche**, 2nd grade teacher, VHS Class of 2018

**Connie Denk**, Middle School & High School English teacher & district parent, VHS Class of 1987

**Dr. Deb Hunt**, District Administrator

**Rachel Lensmire**, Middle School & High School Mathematics teacher, VHS Class of 2010

**Mike Lenzner**, School Board member & district parent, VHS Class of 1996

**Jane Linzmeier**, Middle School & Athletics secretary & former district parent, VHS Class of 1985

**Becka Oswald**, Middle School Special Education teacher, VHS Class of 2004

**Travis Schisel**, School Board member & district parent, VHS Class of 1997

**Kelly Schwoerer**, High School Student Services secretary & former district parent, VHS Class of 1984

**Keri Wendling**, 5th Grade Mathematics teacher & district parent, VHS Class of 1995

**Tim Woodcock**, Middle School & High School Art teacher, VHS Class of 1980

Please contact Dr. Hunt or an member of the working group  
with additional questions you might have!

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