

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ronald Rasmussen, Superintendent, School District of Wisconsin Rapids Phone: 715-424-6701 Email: ronald.rasmussen@wrps.net Website: www.wrps.net

School Board Approves Referendum Question for April 7 Ballot

WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI – January 12, 2026 – At its regular meeting on Monday, the School Board of the School District of Wisconsin Rapids approved a resolution to place a non-recurring operational referendum question on the April 7, 2026, ballot.

Based on feedback from the community survey conducted this Fall, the Board authorized a resolution asking voters to allow the district to exceed the state revenue limit by \$3,800,000 per year for five years, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year and ending with the 2030-2031 school year.

If approved, these funds will be used for daily operational purposes, including updates to technology, curriculum, and security, as well as maintaining current academic and educational programs. The action comes after months of planning and community input regarding the district's financial future; additionally, the previous voter-approved operating referendum from 2021 is set to expire.

Like many districts across the state, Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools (WRPS) faces a projected budget deficit due to state funding not keeping pace with inflation and rising costs in utilities, transportation, and staffing. Without renewed local support, the district projects a shortfall that would force significant reductions in staff and student services, as well as building consolidations.

"As a Board, our priority is to balance the needs of our students with the fiscal responsibility we owe to our taxpayers," said Board President John Krings. "The feedback we received from the community this Fall was clear: residents value our schools and understand the budgetary difficulties we face. This plan stabilizes our budget for the next five years while making budget reductions, and guaranteeing we can continue offering the high-quality education our community expects."

The proposed \$3.8 million largely replaces the expiring funding while addressing new inflation-related challenges. It specifically targets critical areas, including updating curriculum materials across all subjects (building on recent investments in English and Math), enhancing security software and cameras, and funding technology upgrades for Career & Technical Education.

"This referendum, in addition to implementing proposed budget reductions over the next five years, will allow us to protect the programs that help our students succeed while aligning our operations to our current enrollment," said Superintendent Ronald Rasmussen. "We have always worked hard to spend tax dollars wisely, but the reality is that the cost of educating students, meeting the expectations of our families, and keeping our schools safe continues to rise. This funding will allow us to maintain class sizes, retain high-quality staff, and secure the necessary tools and security updates our students need to succeed after graduation."

District residents will vote on the following question on Tuesday, April 7, 2026:

"BE IT RESOLVED by the School Board of the School District of Wisconsin Rapids, Wood and Portage 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 \$3,800,000 per year for five years, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year and ending with the 2030-2031 school year, for non-recurring purposes consisting of technology, curriculum and security updates, and to maintain academic and educational programs."

The District will provide additional information and host informational sessions leading up to the election to answer community questions. Residents can find more details, including background on the district's financial planning, at <https://www.wrps.org/district/planning-our-future.cfm>.