

**School District of River Falls
Finance and Facilities Committee meeting**

Monday, October 9, 2023 - 6:00 PM

District Office

852 E Division Street

River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

Educational Program Committee members: Alan Tuchtenhagen (Chair), Lindsey Curtis, & Cindy Holbrook

Agendas can be viewed at <https://www.rfsd.k12.wi.us/district/school-board.cfm> or at

<https://meetings.boardbook.org/Public/Organization/1447>

1. CALL TO ORDER - 6:00 p.m. in the District Office Conference Room

2. MANNER OF PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF MEETING

3. HEARING OF VISITORS OR DELEGATIONS

4. Review 2023-24 District Student Enrollment

2

Description: The Director of Finance & Facilities will provide the committee with a 2023-24 district student enrollment update for the 3rd Friday in September count.

Recommended Action: None, informational only.

5. Review Community Referendum Survey

8

Description: The Director of Finance & Facilities will provide an update on the Community Referendum Survey data.

Recommended Action: None, informational only.

6. Proposed/suggested items for the next regular and future Finance & Facilities meeting agenda(s)

Description: As always, committee members will be given the opportunity to suggest items for future committee and/or Board meeting agendas.

Recommended Action: As needed.

7. Schedule next Board/Committee meetings

Description: Upcoming committee meeting dates, times, and locations will be reviewed.

Recommended Action: Set the meeting schedule as follows:

Finance and Facilities Committee meeting, Monday, November 13, 2023, 6:00 p.m.

The meeting will be held at the District Office, 852 E. Division Street.

8. Consideration of adjourning to closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. sec. 19.85(1)(e), which permits convening in closed session for the purpose of deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session, to discuss the purchase of property. Roll call vote required.

9. CONVENE TO CLOSED SESSION

10. RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION AND AFFIRM ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION IF NECESSARY

11. ADJOURN

School District of River Falls

Open Enrollment History

Year	Transfers In	Transfers Out	Net Transfers	Revenue	Expense	Net Revenue
2016-17	164	58	106	\$1,103,515	\$367,470	\$736,045
2017-18	197	92	105	\$1,334,167	\$601,209	\$732,958
2018-19	183	104	79	\$1,249,330	\$747,039	\$502,291
2019-20	176	145	31	\$1,304,802	\$1,039,705	\$265,097
2020-21	177	176	1	\$1,405,418	\$1,281,554	\$123,864
2021-22	203	192	11	\$1,584,636	\$1,403,873	\$180,763
2022-23	199	174	25	\$1,608,862	\$1,433,045	\$175,817
2023-24*	199	184	15	\$1,652,299	\$1,622,980	\$29,319
*current estimates						10.9.23 F&F Committee
	2023-24					
Regular Ed Cost	\$8,618.00					
Special Ed Base Cost	\$13,470.00					
4K proration	0.6					

Open Enrollment "IN" per 3rd Friday Counts

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total
Baldwin	8	7	8	8	9	8	6	6	60
Chippewa Falls						1			1
Durand						1		1	2
Eau Claire						1			1
Ellsworth	30	31	30	33	38	45	57	50	314
Elmwood						2	2		4
Glenwood City	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	13
Grantsburg						2			2
Hudson	29	55	47	41	32	45	45	44	338
Menomonie								1	1
New Richmond	2	3		1	2	2		7	17
Prescott	45	55	52	56	53	55	54	54	424
St. Croix Central	27	28	29	25	28	25	24	28	214
Somerset	1		1	2	1	1	1		7
Spring Valley	16	12	11	6	7	9	8	7	76
Waterford UHS		1	1						2
Wilmont UHS		1							1
	160	194	181	173	172	199	199	199	
10.2.23									

HOMER - Homeschooling			
Year	Total Families	Total Children	
2023-2024*	33	62	
2022-2023	82	153	
2021-2022	82	156	
2020-2021	93	183	
2019-2020	52	104	
2018-2019	53	102	
2017-2018	55	118	
*Homer deadline is October 15, 2023.			
10.2.23			

School District of River Falls

2022-2023

3rd Friday in September Pupil Count

GRADE	RF4C	GW	RB	WS	Mont	MMS	HS	REN	Eschool	Total Headcount	OE IN	OE OUT	Adjusted Headcount
PK			13							13			13
4K	160									160	16	27	171
KG		75	55	83	34					247	10	14	251
1		61	85	59	28				1	234	14	13	233
2		61	71	61	35					228	10	17	235
3		66	62	66	29					223	11	11	223
4		75	68	73	32				2	250	8	12	254
5		54	72	66	16					208	10	7	205
6					16	245			2	263	11	11	263
7						245				245	11	13	247
8						248			4	252	14	4	242
9							302	2		304	11	12	305
10							267	11		278	27	9	260
11							256	19		275	20	9	264
12							285	19		304	25	15	294
Total	160	392	426	408	190	738	1110	51	9	3484	198	174	3460

Membership FTE				
Grade	Adj Head Count	Factor		Total FTE
PK	13	0.5		6.5
4K	171	0.6		102.6
KG	251	1		251.0
GR 1-12	3025	1		3025.0
	3460			3386

*Membership FTE is used for Revenue Limit Calculation

10.9.23 F&F Committee

**School District of River Falls
2023-2024
3rd Friday in September Pupil Count**

GRADE	RF4C	GW	RB	WS	Mont	MMS	HS	REN	Total Headcount	OE IN	OE OUT	Adjusted Headcount
PK			11						11	0	0	11
4K	161		13		18				192	21	21	192
KG		64	61	67	28				220	12	21	229
1		77	56	72	31				236	10	11	237
2		59	81	60	28				228	12	16	232
3		61	70	69	32				232	14	14	232
4		66	62	71	30				229	11	10	228
5		74	68	72	30				244	8	11	247
6					3	212			215	9	6	212
7						267			267	10	12	269
8						250			250	14	19	255
9							262	4	266	19	3	250
10							294	7	301	12	15	304
11							263	11	274	27	11	258
12							259	18	277	20	14	271
Total	161	401	422	411	200	729	1078	40	3442	199	184	3427

St. Bridget's	
PK	0
4K	27
KG	14
1	17
2	19
3	12
4	16
5	16
6	13
7	10
8	10
Total	154

RF4C Off Site	
Location	Head Count
Jacob's Ladder	52
LA 1	18
LA 2	30
Abundant Life	24
Child Center	18
University Preschool	19
Total	161

Membership FTE			
Grade	Adj Head Count	Factor	Total FTE
PK	11	0.5	5.5
4K	192	0.6	115.2
KG	229	1	229.0
GR 1-12	2995	1	2995.0
	3427		3345

*Membership FTE is used for Revenue Limit Calculation



Dear Families and Community Members:

We are grateful for the tremendous support the River Falls community provides our school district. Due to your support and investments, our students have significant learning opportunities and perform well, both in and out of the classroom. The River Falls School District consistently ranks in the top 25% of all Wisconsin school districts in terms of academic success.

While we are pleased with our district's performance, there are challenges ahead:

- School funding in Wisconsin is based on a formula dating to 1993 and does not keep pace with inflationary cost increases to operate our schools. Revenues will no longer cover our expenses.
- While the most recent state budget increased our per-student funding, it is also true that we remain the lowest per-pupil spending district in our region and state.
- Despite responsible financial management, our deficit is projected to grow to over \$3 million.
- Deferred facility projects not addressed in the previous referenda continue to grow in need.

We have carefully studied the budgetary and facility needs. We have identified several needs and now look for you to provide feedback so we can determine the community's level of support, as we finalize priorities to be included on a February 2024 referendum ballot.

The purpose of this survey is to gather community feedback to guide our planning process. All survey data is recorded by School Perceptions, an independent education research firm. Your responses will be confidential.

TAKE THE SURVEY IN ONE OF TWO WAYS

Option 1: To reduce mailing expenses:

Go to the survey website:

www.Feedback2000.com

Enter your survey code:



Option 2: If you do not have internet access, please return the survey to any school office, or mail it to School Perceptions, PO Box 607, Slinger, WI 53086.

Additional Surveys: The survey code can be used only once. To obtain additional surveys for other adults in your household, please call the District Office at (715) 425-1800 ext. 1104.

Please complete the survey before October 3, 2023.

To receive the survey in a different language or if you have a disability that makes it difficult to read, please contact the District Office. Survey results will be reported at a board meeting on October 16th and will be available on the District's website.

We are proud of our district's accomplishments, teachers, staff, and students. We are eager to continue providing high-quality educational opportunities for students and community members. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

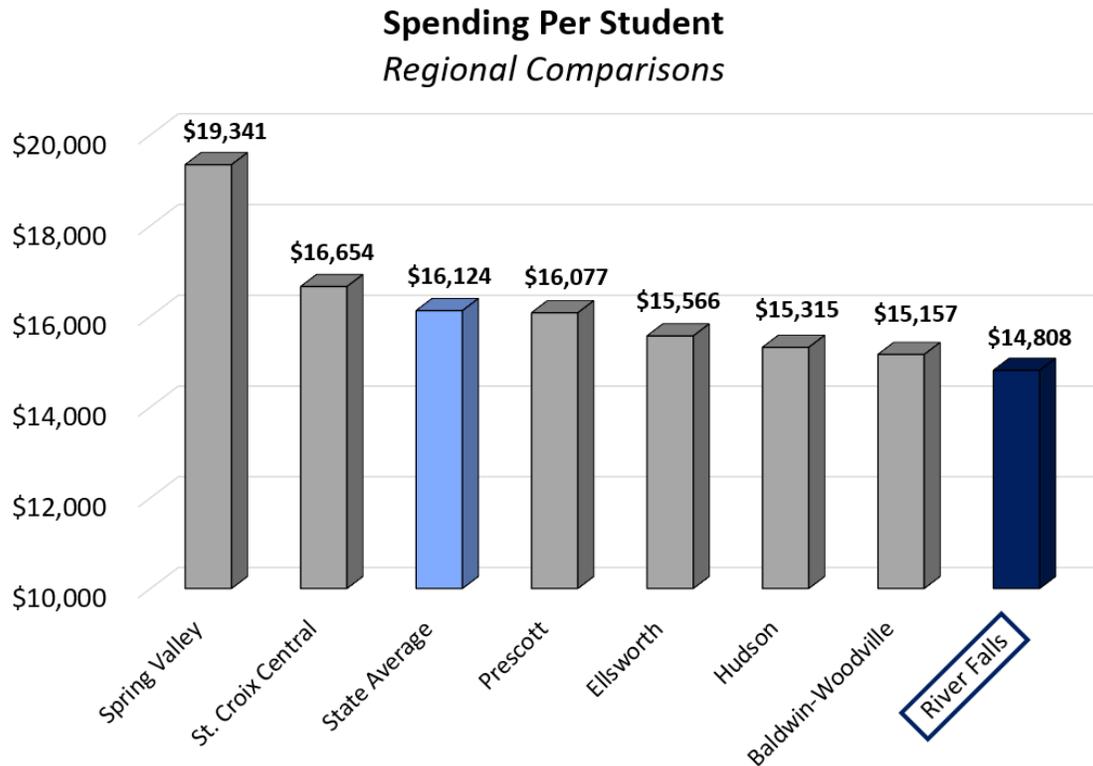
Jamie Benson
Superintendent

Stacy Johnson Myers
Board President

Mission Statement: *The School District of River Falls will inspire all students through challenging, meaningful, and engaging learning experiences, in a safe and collaborative environment.*

Funding Challenges

Although the most recent budget passed by the state increased school funding, the money we receive on a per-student basis remains near the bottom of all districts in Wisconsin. Based on the most current data available, the School District of River Falls ranked 333rd out of 421 districts in the state.



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction School Financial Services Data Warehouse

Referendum Funding

There are two types of referenda voters can approve to provide schools with additional funding.

1. A **capital (facilities) referendum** allows a district to issue debt (take out a loan) to pay for major facility improvements. This is the type of referendum River Falls voters supported in 2018.
2. An **operational referendum** allows districts to exceed the state-imposed revenue limit to fund daily operations. The School District of River Falls has not yet pursued this type of referendum in the past 25 years. However, 84% of other districts in Wisconsin have sought such support.

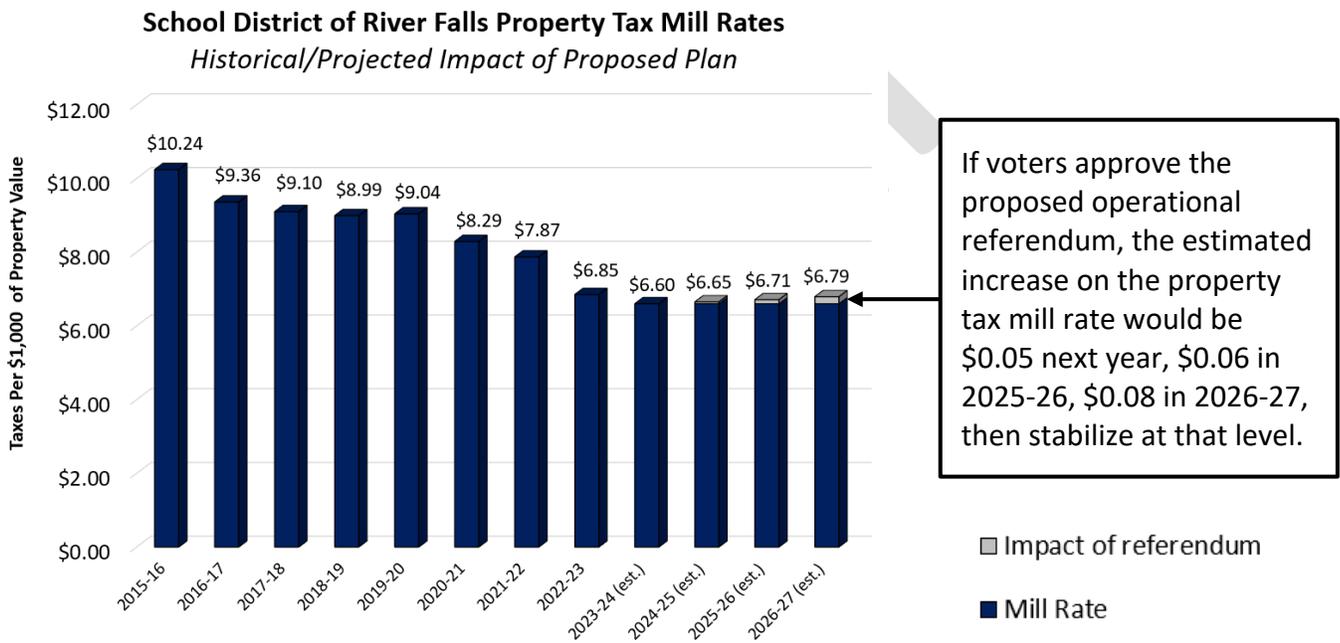
Funding for Operations

The District has been hampered by low revenue compared to most other schools in the state. As a result, we are projecting the budget deficit to grow to more than \$3 million over the next three years.

In February 2024, the School Board will be asking voters to consider an operational referendum that would provide \$1 million next year, \$2 million in the 2025-26 school year, and then \$3 million on an ongoing/recurring basis to pay for:

- ✓ **Current Programs and Services:** This includes all academic and co-curricular offerings, student support services, summer school, advanced high school courses, and maintaining class sizes.
- ✓ **High-Quality Staffing:** In order to attract and retain high-quality staff, we need to remain competitive in our region for staff wages and benefits. Our compensation is below average for teachers and some support staff groups in our regional comparisons.
- ✓ **Paying for Increasing Operational Costs:** This includes safety and security systems, curriculum materials, utilities, insurance, transportation, fuel, and technology.

The chart below shows the historical tax mill rates (which are used to calculate a school district's share of local property taxes). It also shows the estimated tax mill rate impact of the proposed operational referendum and reflects a 16% increase in property values this year.



Would you support the operational referendum as described?

Approval would result in an annual tax increase of \$5 for every \$100,000 of property value in 2024-25, \$6 in 2025-26, \$8 in 2026-27, and then stabilize at that level.

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Undecided
- Probably no
- Definitely no

Comments/suggestions/questions:

Cost-Cutting Options

If voters do not support the operational referendum, budget cuts will be needed. The District does not endorse or recommend any of the following, but we must consider all options.

<p>Should the District cut teachers and increase class sizes? (Current guidelines suggest 23-25 students for elementary grades and 27-30 students for middle and high school grades.)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<p>Should the District reduce middle/high school course offerings? (Electives, Advanced Placement, tech ed, foreign languages, agriculture, and career preparation)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<p>Should the District reduce elementary school “specials”? (Art, music, Spanish, and physical education)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<p>Should the District reduce middle/high school athletics and fine arts offerings? (Sports, musical, forensics, and marching band)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<p>Should the District delay technology upgrades? (Updating servers, wireless access, and computers)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<p>Should the District reduce spending on routine building maintenance? (Roofs, parking lots, mechanical systems, grounds, and building cleaning)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<p>Should the District delay curriculum updates? (Textbooks, classroom materials, and online resources)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<p>Should the District reduce student support services? (Academic support/student counseling, psychologists, social worker, and school resource officer)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<p>Should the District reduce transportation services? (Eliminating some busing services and increasing ride time)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure

Comments/questions/suggestions:

Facility Projects

These projects were not funded in the previous referenda and cannot be paid for in the annual budget.

<p>Safety, Security, and Building Systems We prioritize building maintenance and security at all levels, yet the annual budget restricts the ability to invest in all systems. Potential projects include improving building security, improving air quality/energy efficiencies, as well as upgrading generators, kitchen exhaust systems, and restrooms at multiple buildings. Estimated cost: \$22.4 million</p> <p>Would you support the safety, security, and building systems plan?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<p>School Forest Historically, students and our community had very limited access to the 70-acre school forest. In partnership with the Kinni River Land Trust, we gained better access. Volunteers are improving trails and restoring the prairie. This project would build a classroom, restrooms, and a gravel access road. Estimated cost: \$1 million</p> <p>Would you support the school forest plan?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<p>Transportation Maintenance Facility The bus maintenance shop (built in 1966) is too small and has electrical, plumbing, and structural problems. We operate 27 buses and have invested more than \$2.5 million in the fleet over the last 15 years. By owning our buses, we are more efficient and can provide better service. We would like to protect this investment by building a new maintenance shop with an office area and restrooms. Estimated cost: \$3 million</p> <p>Would you support the transportation maintenance facility plan?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<p>Multi-Purpose Indoor Facility Programming for physical education, athletics, intramurals, clubs, youth athletics, and broader community use is hampered by a combination of limited space, growing demand, and seasonal weather challenges. The high school wrestling practices are held in the middle school basement. This project would build a multi-purpose facility at the high school for both school and community use (including a wrestling practice space). Estimated cost: \$4 million</p> <p>Would you support the multi-purpose indoor facility plan?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<p>Stadium Currently, the District does not have its own stadium. Consequently, we cannot host regional track meets or marching band competitions. Varsity football games are played at the UW-River Falls field at a cost of \$2,500 per game. This project would build a stadium at the high school artificial turf site for all outdoor sports with a concession stand, restrooms, press box, and add bleachers. Estimated cost: \$4 million</p> <p>Would you support the plan to build a stadium?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<p>Renaissance Academy (REN) The District leases the REN alternative high school building to serve 60 students. We have the option to purchase the building, thus restoring over \$200,000 annually to our operating budget. Estimated cost: \$3.6 million.</p> <p>Would you support purchasing the REN building?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure

Comments/questions/suggestions about the proposed projects:

Funding Support for Facility Projects

The Board of Education and District leaders will establish a plan based on the community’s priorities and willingness to support the projects financially.

COST REVIEW	
Safety, Security, and Building Systems	\$22.4 million
School Forest	\$1 million
Transportation Maintenance Facility	\$3 million
Multi-Purpose Indoor Facility	\$4 million
Stadium	\$4 million
Purchase REN building	\$3.6 million
Total	\$38.0 million

ANNUAL PROPERTY TAX IMPACTS				
Capital referendum amount	\$26 million	\$30 million	\$34 million	\$38 million
Estimated average tax increase per \$100,000 of property value over the current tax rate	\$56 per year	\$61 per year	\$66 per year	\$71 per year
Assuming the projects funded were acceptable to you, what referendum amount would you support?		<input type="checkbox"/> I would support a \$38 million referendum. <input type="checkbox"/> I would support a \$34 million referendum. <input type="checkbox"/> I would support a \$30 million referendum. <input type="checkbox"/> I would support a \$26 million referendum. <input type="checkbox"/> I would only support a smaller referendum. <input type="checkbox"/> I would not support any referendum. <input type="checkbox"/> I’m not sure/need more information.		

Comments/questions/suggestions:

River Falls School District
852 E Division St.
River Falls, WI 54022

DRAFT

Please complete the survey before October 3, 2023.

This publication was produced for the residents of the School District of River Falls. Due to the overlap of postal routes, residents from neighboring school districts may receive this publication. Given the limitations of bulk mailing, this overlap was difficult to eliminate without significant cost. Thank you for your understanding.