

(1/22/25 – District Administrator’s Corner Article)

Last week, we wrote about the Board’s decision to close the school building in Plain and to reconfigure all grade levels in the remaining three buildings prior to the 2025-26 school year in the following manner:

- Current Elementary School building: Grades Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1, 2
- Current Middle School building: Grades 3, 4, 5, 6
- Current High School building: Grades 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

This week we are providing information about how the Board’s reconfiguration decision allowed the approval of cost reductions, which subsequently lowered the deficit amount as we prepare for the upcoming April 1, 2025, operational referendum (which we wrote about in a November article). Again, the referendum will ask voters for tax funding to maintain our current educational programs, class sizes, services, and co-curricular activities. These tax dollars will allow River Valley to keep what we currently have in place (classes/courses, programs, class sizes, staffing, and maintenance). The District does not plan to add new positions or programs with these referendum dollars. *These funds are not for new buildings or facilities.*

Cost reductions include the following: at the end of 2024-25, \$286,502 in various savings from the closure of the Early Learning Center in Plain and \$673,690 in savings from reduction in force of .75 Business Education Teacher, 1 Elementary Teacher (Regular Education), 1 Librarian, .75 Music Education Teacher, 1 Physical Education Teacher, 1 English Language (ELL) Teacher, 2 Secretaries, and 1 Speech and Language Teacher (Reduce Outside Contract) and the elimination of one bus route; and at the end of 2025-26, \$137,00 in savings from reduction in force of 1 Elementary Teacher (Regular Education) and 1 Cleaner when the current CMS contract expires.

These reductions are based on our strategic plan, which states “*Correlate District staffing to student enrollment numbers, student interests, and goals to maintain comprehensive educational programming and moderate class sizes.*” Since 2010, the District has followed this by reducing the teaching staff by 24.67%, while our enrollment has decreased by 23.95%.

With these cost reductions and the subsequent decrease in the deficit amount, the language for the upcoming April 1, 2025, referendum ballot was approved as follows:

### **REFERENDUM QUESTION**

*Shall the River Valley School District, Sauk, Iowa, Richland and Dane Counties, Wisconsin, be authorized to exceed the revenue limit specified in Section 121.91, Wisconsin Statutes, by \$4,150,000 for the 2025-2026 school year, by \$4,750,000 for the 2026-2027 school year, and by \$5,200,000 for the 2027-2028 school year for non-recurring purposes consisting of paying the costs of maintaining educational programs and maintenance of the District?*

This operational referendum will provide the revenue necessary to maintain what we currently offer at River Valley. The projected mill rates for the 2025-2028 operational referendum are: \$7.99, \$8.65, and \$9.34. These mill rates are conservative estimates as, historically, we have levied less than the projections. For example, for the 2022-2025 operational referendum, we projected the mill rates to be \$9.25, \$9.80, and \$10.29, but the actual mill rates were \$8.05, \$7.89, and \$7.35.

The River Valley School District remains committed to maintaining transparency and engaging with our community throughout this transition. We recognize the challenges these changes bring

and are grateful for your understanding and support as we work together to ensure a sustainable future for our students.

Please mark your calendars for the upcoming April 1, 2025, referendum and reach out with any questions or concerns. We are happy to meet with groups or have a cup of coffee and answer any questions. Your voice is essential as we strive to balance fiscal responsibility with providing the high quality education our students deserve. Thank you for being an active part of the River Valley School District community.

Sincerely,

Loren Glasbrenner, District Administrator, and  
Brian Krey, Business Manager,  
River Valley School District