



PRESCOTT SCHOOL DISTRICT

1220 St. Croix Street Prescott, WI 54021

Dear Prescott Families and Staff,

On January 17th, the Prescott School Board will be voting on a crucial referendum question seeking an additional \$1.2 million in annual operating funds from district taxpayers. Following the board's discussion and consensus at its December 20, 2023, regular meeting, a referendum question is anticipated to be placed on the April 2, 2024 ballot.

This referendum is required to *sustain the excellence* that PSD has achieved academically as it will fund educational programs, performance, and personnel who have delivered:

- #1 in Academic Growth among Middle Border Conference
- Top 10% in math and reading achievement within the state of WI
- Top 15% in academic growth (based on DPI report card and statewide assessments).

In the current 2023-24 school year, over \$900,000 of our fund balance reserves have been used to address the decreased educational revenue from Madison vs. ongoing PSD expenses. Without the support of local taxpayers, these fund reserves will be completely depleted by the end of the 2027 school year. Prescott is not unique in its need for additional funding. Over 82% of all WI public schools have no other choice other than to ask local communities to pick up where legislative educational funding has fallen short. I encourage those who were unable to attend the December board meeting to listen to the referendum discussion [here](#). The School Board Review of various financial scenarios began at the 2-hour, 18-minute mark and continued through 2-HR, 27th minute.

As we prepare for the April 2, 2024 operating referendum, the School Board and Administrative team are working to reduce an additional \$650,000 from next year's budget. These initial cuts are difficult decisions and will impact individuals, programs, and student opportunities that we care deeply about. These reductions are made in good faith to demonstrate ongoing cost containment by the school board. If the April 2, 2024 ballot question is not supported, even more drastic reductions to staff and programming would be required: these reductions will have to include the breadth of programming, further reduce staff and services provided by the district, and increase class sizes and grade sections above Board current targets.

The additional \$1.2 million referendum revenue is necessary to ensure Prescott can continue to offer viable educational opportunities and the performance outcomes expected by our community. This request will increase our mill rate from \$7.70 to \$8.50 (well below historical levels) per \$1,000 of property valuation. For a \$400,000 home, this equates to an annual increase

of \$320 or \$27 monthly. “What we are asking the community for is enough money where it would raise the mill rate to the 2022-23 school year rate. I think that’s kind of an important story to tell,” President Mike Matzek.

Two years ago our community came forward to support the Facility Advisory Committee’s recommendation on infrastructure investments in our three older buildings and we were able to do this without increasing the mill rate as promised.

As Superintendent of Prescott Schools, I am confident our community understands the importance of strong public school education for all. The community has shared its high regard for our staff who are consistently delivering high-quality opportunities through an array of programs in academics, the arts, and athletics. I trust our community understands the necessity and importance of this April 2, 2024 vote.

Sincerely,

Rick Spicuzza

Rick Spicuzza, Ph.D.
Prescott Superintendent