



School District of River Falls  
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River Falls, WI 54022

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# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF RIVER FALLS

## BOND REFERENDUM

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### How will the proposed classrooms serve the District?

- Additional classrooms will accommodate current elementary schools that are at or near capacity.
- New and repurposed classrooms will meet the needs of the District's projected modest, but steady enrollment growth.
- Additional instructional space is located at elementary schools only because the middle and high schools have existing space options to accommodate growth.

#### How will collaborative spaces support students?

- Flexible break-out learning stations allow for innovation and creativity.
- Innovative learning opportunities such as "Maker Space" require updated learning environments.
- Robotics, Lego League, large science and technology opportunities require large scale spaces.
- Flexible spaces will allow for greater use of existing gyms by providing new places for Kids' Club and lunchrooms.

#### How will lights, artificial turf, and parking behind the High School be used?

- For academic physical education courses.
- For marching band.
- For baseball, softball, soccer, and football practice.
- For community use.
- For accessible parking at field events.

To The River Falls Community,

The School District of River Falls is a point of pride for our community. We are recognized for the academic preparation and achievement of our students, our embedded character education program, our extensive community education opportunities, and the community's support of education for all students.

While the foundation of our District is its dedicated teachers and staff, the District's physical buildings play an important role in students' educational opportunities. The School Board annually commits resources for the repair and upkeep of our District buildings. However, periodically the community needs to invest in renovations for its school buildings to keep them safe and effective learning places, able to support an evolving vision of educational excellence.

Please take time to read this informational mailing. It lays out the District's needs related to its physical buildings and offers a proposal for addressing them. The School Board's goal is to provide information so voters are able to make an informed decision regarding the referendum questions on the April 3, 2018 ballot. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Stacy Johnson Myers  
School Board President



## Personalized Learning

### FIND OUT MORE

- ▶ WATCH for more information in the mail
- ▶ VISIT our informational table at school functions
- ▶ VISIT the District website at [www.rfsd.k12.wi.us](http://www.rfsd.k12.wi.us)
- ▶ FOLLOW us on Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/RiverFallsSchoolDistrict](http://www.facebook.com/RiverFallsSchoolDistrict)

### WHO TO CONTACT

- ▶ Superintendent Jamie Benson
- ▶ PHONE: (715) 425-1800
- ▶ EMAIL: [referendum@rfsd.k12.wi.us](mailto:referendum@rfsd.k12.wi.us)

### PUBLIC FORUMS

Date	February 21	February 27	March 6	March 15	March 21	March 21	March 27
Time	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 AM	Noon	6:00 PM
Location	District Office	District Office	High School Library	Montessori	District Office	District Office	Meyer MS Library







## THE NEED

River Falls has seven school buildings of which several are over 45 years in age. These buildings require periodic investments to ensure they are safe and effective educational spaces. Although the District invests annually in maintenance improvements, we do not have the financial strength to address all facility needs. In 2011, voters approved a referendum question allowing for some maintenance, safety, security, and front entrance improvements in all schools. Still, there remain lingering needs from the two referendum questions that did not pass in 2011. These needs have intensified in our aging buildings. Additionally, enrollment growth and educational advancements cause capacity challenges and require new and different spaces for educating students.

## THE PROPOSED PLAN

After thoroughly studying a facility needs assessment, enrollment growth projections, and educational advancements, the School Board prioritized needs and correlated them to the community's willingness to support investment in our schools, as determined by a community survey. The School Board concluded it would be in the District's and community's best interest to take advantage of low interest rates and the retirement of existing debt in order to minimize the tax impact while advancing the effectiveness of District buildings.

There are four main goals of this referendum:

- 1  **Add elementary classrooms** to accommodate steady enrollment growth and overall capacity needs.
- 2  **Create collaborative spaces** in all schools (through a combination of new spaces and renovated spaces) that are flexible and able to support a variety of learning opportunities.
- 3  **Invest in aging facilities** with mechanical and infrastructure systems that are outdated and have surpassed their useful life.
- 4  **Exit the 1920/40s sections of the Academy Building** that are no longer in use, while preserving 1990s section as an elementary school. This plan would include measures to preserve historical woodwork and architectural "keepsakes" from the older portions of the building.

## THE DETAILS

- Add Classrooms**
- 4 at Greenwood, 1 at Westside, 1 at Rocky Branch, and 3 at Montessori
  - Special Education Space - All Elementary Schools
- Transform Collaborative Space**
- All Elementary Schools
  - Library Renovation at Meyer Middle School
  - Tech/Vocational Shop Area at High School
- Repair Mechanical, Roof, and Parking Lots**
- Sections at all Schools
  - Air Conditioning at Meyer Middle School
- Improve Community and Student Wellness**
- Running Track, Weight Room, and Pool at High School
  - Auditoriums and Tennis Court Improvements at High School and Meyer Middle School
- Upgrade District-wide Technology Infrastructure**
- Security, Routers, Switches, and Servers
- Update Food Service/Kitchen/Cafeteria**
- Equipment and Serving Areas District-wide

## SAMPLE BALLOTS

Q1 is focused on comprehensive District-wide facility improvements.

### SCHOOL DISTRICT QUESTION 1 Approval of School District Bond Issue

Shall the School District of River Falls, Pierce and St. Croix Counties, Wisconsin be authorized to issue pursuant to Chapter 67 of the Wisconsin Statutes, general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$45,860,000 for the public purpose of paying the cost of a District-wide school building and improvement program consisting of: improving, upgrading, renovating, remodeling and maintaining various school facilities including Greenwood, Rocky Branch, Westside and Montessori Elementary Schools, Meyer Middle School, River Falls High School and the transportation and maintenance buildings; constructing and equipping additions to Greenwood, Rocky Branch, Westside and Montessori Elementary Schools for classrooms, multi-purpose/flexible space and cafeteria/kitchen space; demolition of a portion of the Academy Building and portable classrooms at Westside Elementary School; upgrading technology infrastructure; site and athletic facility improvements; and acquiring furnishings, fixtures and equipment?

Removes the 1920s and 40s sections of the Academy that are no longer in use and too costly to renovate while preserving historical features and continuing education on the site in the 1990s section.

Allows for improving and maintaining various schools, adding elementary classroom spaces and collaborative learning spaces District-wide, exiting the older sections of the Academy, adding air conditioning to Meyer Middle School, and expanding access to our school facilities.

### SCHOOL DISTRICT QUESTION 2 Approval of School District Bond Issue

Shall the School Board of the School District of River Falls, Pierce and St. Croix Counties, Wisconsin be authorized to issue pursuant to Chapter 67 of the Wisconsin Statutes, general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$2,100,000 for the public purpose of paying the cost of school facility improvements consisting of the addition of artificial turf and lighting to outdoor fields, parking and other improvements?

Allocates funds for artificial turf for gym classes, marching band, baseball, softball, soccer, football, and the community's youth programs.

Voters will be given an opportunity to vote on a secondary question related to a flexible field, lights, and parking behind the high school.

## TAX IMPACT



### Question #1: \$45.86 M

Home Value	Additional Annual Cost	Monthly Cost
\$100,000	\$41	\$3.42
\$200,000	\$82	\$6.83
\$300,000	\$123	\$10.25

### Question #2: \$2.1 M

Home Value	Additional Annual Cost	Monthly Cost
\$100,000	\$9	\$0.75
\$200,000	\$18	\$1.50
\$300,000	\$27	\$2.25



## REFERENDUM PROCESS TIMELINE

February 2015

Community members developed a District strategic plan including the call for a facility master plan

May 2016

Formal enrollment projection report received by Board

January 2017

District commissioned comprehensive facility needs assessment

June/August 2017

Ad Hoc facility committee reviewed facility needs assessment

September 2017

Four community focus group sessions held for feedback related to needs/priorities

October/November 2017

Community survey to gather input from the community

January 2018

School Board finalized two referendum questions for April 3, 2018