

For Immediate Release

3/8/24

From: Charles Urness, Superintendent, School District of Jefferson

Date: March 8, 2024

RE: Explanation of Upcoming Operational Referendum

As Superintendent of the School District of Jefferson, I would like to take this opportunity to explain the difference between a capital referendum and an operational referendum under Wisconsin law. The other day, I received a question about this topic from a community member. If that person was curious, others are too and want clarification on what they will vote on come April 2nd.

The difference between a capital referendum and an operational referendum can be summed up with the phrase, "Bonds are for buildings, and levies are for learning." Let me explain.

A capital referendum focuses on bricks-and-mortar projects—new additions, renovations, infrastructure upgrades, etc. Funds from a capital referendum can only be used on physical capital improvement projects. You can learn more about our recent capital referendum by visiting this page (<https://www.sdoj.org/district/framing-our-future-facilities.cfm>) on the SDoJ website.

An operational referendum focuses on the district's operating budget—salaries, instructional programming, textbooks, technology, etc. Funds from an operational referendum can only be used to support the ongoing operational costs of the district. You can learn more about the operational referendum by visiting this page (<https://www.sdoj.org/community/operational-referendum-2024.cfm>) on the SDoJ website.

On April 2, 2024, the School District seeks voter approval for a four-year \$2.1 million per year non-recurring operational referendum. If passed, the funds would go directly to supporting high-quality instructional programs, maintaining student support and mental health services, upholding our level of safety and technology infrastructure, and retaining excellent teachers and staff. Because "levies are for learning," the operational referendum intends to maintain the superb learning opportunities our district strives to provide students daily. Every dollar of the operational referendum will stay in the School District of Jefferson and benefit our children directly, which also positively impacts the SDoJ communities.

I am happy to answer any additional questions on the differences between referendums or provide more detail on why the School District is seeking this four-year, non-recurring operational referendum. Please feel free to contact my office anytime via email at [urnessc@sdoj.org](mailto:urnessc@sdoj.org) or phone (920-675-1013). We have one more listening sessions in March at the Jefferson Middle School library at 5:30 p.m. on March 18.

To be sure, strong schools equal strong communities (and vice versa). Working together as a school-community partnership, we can secure the bright future our students deserve. Please vote on April 2nd.