



# VOTE

## NOVEMBER 3

### BARRON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

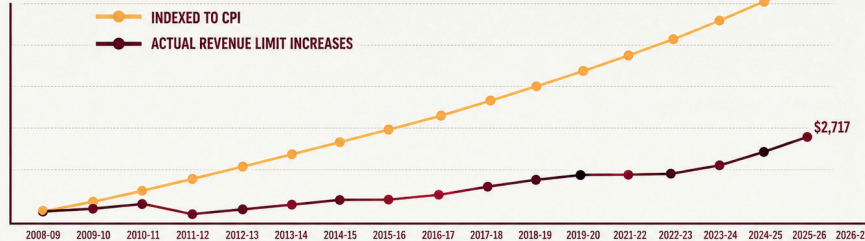
#### WHY AN OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM?

The graph below tells the story. This is not a Barron Area School District challenge alone. While the cost of educating students has steadily increased, state funding has not kept pace with inflation. As a result, nearly 9 out of 10 (88%) of Wisconsin school districts have turned to operational referendums to sustain the educational opportunities their communities expect and meet their financial obligations.



#### COMPARING CPI VS. SCHOOL REVENUE LIMIT INCREASES

CUMULATIVE INCREASE PER PUPIL



CUMULATIVE GAP:

**\$3,571**  
PER PUPIL  
SINCE 2009



Cumulative annual adjustments in general school district revenues per pupil lag inflation by nearly **\$3,600** since 2009.



**Sources:**  
Kava, Russ (September 12, 2025)  
Legislative Fiscal Bureau Memo re: Revenue Limit Per Pupil Adjustment Indexed to Inflation; WASBO Calculations

#### The proposed \$1.5 million operational referendum has two primary purposes:

- **Sustain our educational programs and services.** The referendum would help close the growing gap between state funding and the actual cost of operating our schools, allowing us to continue providing the high-quality programs and opportunities our students deserve without making additional reductions.
- **Attract and retain outstanding employees.** Great schools depend on great people. The referendum would allow Barron Area Schools to offer **competitive regional salaries and compensation** so we can continue to recruit and retain the exceptional teachers, support staff, and administrators who serve our students every day.

Based on our 'School Perceptions' survey from this past May, our community reported to us that programs such as career and technical education, youth apprenticeships, college credit opportunities, fine arts, elective courses, and extracurricular activities are important because they prepare students for successful futures and strengthen our local workforce and economy. We believe those opportunities teach invaluable **life skills** and are worth preserving.

Simply put, this referendum is about preserving the quality of education our community expects, meeting our financial obligations responsibly, protecting opportunities for students, and ensuring Barron Area Schools remains a strong school district for generations to come.



Responsible financial stewardship has always been our commitment. Before asking our community to consider an operational referendum, we carefully evaluated budgets, programs, staffing, and other opportunities to reduce costs while protecting the student experience. These efforts have included consolidating or eliminating administrative, central office, and supervisory positions, reassigning responsibilities among existing staff, and making other operational efficiencies, including reductions of 5 supervisory positions, 2 clerical positions, and 4 bus routes. Staffing levels have also been adjusted to reflect enrollment and programming needs while preserving student opportunities whenever possible. These difficult decisions have allowed us to prioritize resources for students. At this point, further reductions would increasingly impact the programs, opportunities, and support our students and families have come to expect.



In Wisconsin school finance, a “positively aided” district is a school district that receives state equalization aid to help fund its operations and debt costs. The amount of aid a district receives is largely based on property values within the district compared to student enrollment, and property values comparative to other districts in the state. Being positively aided is important for our school district and our taxpayers because it means the state shares the cost of school funding. When a positively aided district passes a referendum for building improvements, a referendum for operational needs, or if it is just the general annual operations of the district, the state equalization aid formula incorporates those costs into the aid formula to share in the cost of such initiatives. The Barron Area School District is 79% aided (as of 2025-26 revenue limit calculations). This means that for every \$1 of the school district’s general operating budget, or every \$1 of an operating or facilities referendum, the State of Wisconsin pays \$0.79 towards it, leaving the residual \$0.21 for our local tax levy.

The Board of Education and administration remain committed to maximizing the benefit of the district’s positive aid status for local taxpayers. This strong state aid position has allowed the district to fund important facility investments while continuing to reduce the mill rate over the past five years.

