

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR:  
My "why" for serving on the  
Lewiston-Altura School District Board  
Please Vote on or before Nov. 5.**



**A Message from Bree Maki, School Board Chair**

Serving on the Lewiston-Altura School District Board is an honor and privilege. This school district is near and dear to my heart.

My family has a long history at L-A, which started with my mom's family, and Cardinal Pride runs deep through generations before and after. I am the oldest of five children to parents that had many challenges with mental illness, financial insecurities, and other barriers that life presented them. I never felt "less than" in the public schools, I felt seen. I had a safe, healthy place to go each day to learn and grow. I am a thriving first generation college graduate for my family, but more importantly I was able to see my potential to do good things during my early years in L-A Public Schools.

I am also writing today to ask readers to learn about the upcoming referendum and become informed. Lewiston-Altura Public Schools face significant operating budget challenges and facilities needs that far exceed annual funding. This situation is caused by decreasing enrollment, state funding that has not kept up with inflation, and facilities that have not been improved through a successful bond referendum for over 28 years.

Some of the hard decisions the board has had to make this year include \$771,000 in budget cuts adjustments for the 2024-25 school year. We have high school students attending science classes in labs without working equipment. Elementary school students have trouble hearing their teacher because classroom walls do not reach the ceiling, and students at both schools do their best to learn in classrooms that are either too hot or too cold, depending on what systems are broken.

On Election Day in November 2023, the community did not approve an operating levy and turned down the two bond referendum questions. As a district, we got right back to work and gathered information from the post-referendum survey, community engagement meetings and Facilities Taskforce. We listened to the community and worked towards a plan that reflected most of the needs and has community support.

The board unanimously approved a two-question referendum for the November 5, 2024, General Election. Question one is a Levy to Learning, asking voters to consider the renewal of an existing \$52/student levy and increase of \$708/student annually, for a period of ten years (including inflation). This helps to keep the doors open and operating.

The second question is a \$19.95 million Bond for Buildings proposal to fund classroom upgrades, mechanical and electrical systems upgrades, and safety/security improvements. Much of the construction will update systems and finishes that are original, such as windows and doors.

The cost is shared by all property taxpayers and tax impact will be based on property taxes.

The district website and Facebook pages have information about the referendum. Contact a school board member to ask questions and learn more. Plan to vote on or before Tuesday, November 5.

**Levy for Learning. Bond for Buildings. Learn more at [www.lewalt.k12.mn.us](http://www.lewalt.k12.mn.us)**