

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
Learn the Facts about the
Levy for Learning
Please Vote on or before Nov. 5.**



A Message from David Baer, School Board Treasurer

I am writing today to encourage you to become informed about the upcoming Levy for Learning and Bond for Building referendum questions that will be on the Nov. 5 General Election ballot.

I currently serve as Treasurer of the School Board for Lewiston-Altura Public Schools. In this role, my goal is to represent the interests of all residents to ensure tax dollars are spent prudently to achieve the school district's mission.

I am a 1993 graduate of L-A Public Schools, a father of a L-A High School student, a resident of Lewiston, and the owner and operator of a 100-year-old family farm and a local business. I also spent 20 years as an Army Officer. I have a clear understanding of the history of our small town, and I am proud to call Lewiston home.

As your School Board Treasurer, I understand school finance and the school district's budget and I can tell you this, PreK-12 education is not funded adequately by the state and federal governments. Inflation has drastically outpaced school funding, especially for rural school districts and those with declining enrollment like L-A Public Schools. Until there is a change in the funding formula, school districts will be forced to depend on local taxpayers to fund basic operating expenses.

Basic operating expenses include everything that takes place "inside" the classroom to educate students. Examples of this include teachers and staff, curriculum and supplies, and extracurricular activities like Math League, that support academics and spark students' interest in lifelong learning.

Last year, the school district asked for an increase in the operating levy. It was narrowly defeated by 12 votes. I firmly believe that L-A residents support our schools. I think we needed to do more to communicate the need for additional operating dollars. We needed to be clear about the budget reductions and fee increases that would result from a failed referendum.

As a school board, we have worked hard over the past year to engage with residents and be transparent about the school district budget and overall financial situation. We have gone to residents with community meetings, we have attended public events to answer your questions, and we have made budget adjustments to align our spending with our resources. As an Army Officer, it was drummed into my head from the very beginning, "MISSION FIRST, PEOPLE ALWAYS". Our school board is trying very hard to do this very thing while making difficult decisions.

Financial stress is rampant across the country and right here. L-A Public Schools face the same stresses as you do at home. Schools form the foundation of our communities. Please ask us questions to learn the facts and make a plan to vote on or before Nov. 5 to make your voice heard.

The Levy for Learning is on the ballot on Nov. 5 and is vital to the success of our children.

Levy for Learning. Bond for Buildings. Learn more at www.lewalt.k12.mn.us