

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
Strong Schools,
Strong Communities
Please Vote on or before Nov. 5.



A Message from Sarah Sommer, School Board Vice Chair

I love this community. My husband has been a lifelong resident, and we CHOSE to raise our family here. I have served as a school board member for eight years. My husband and I plan to keep our roots planted here for years to come while our kids hope to return to Lewiston-Altura one day raise their own families.

Cardinal Strong is my way of life. I believe that investing in Lewiston-Altura Public Schools ensures the future of our small towns – Lewiston, Altura, Utica, Rollingstone – and townships.

Our schools:

- Give us an identity, a sense of place and belonging. Together, we are all Cardinal Strong.
- Provide the first formal learning experience for most children, alongside their parents in ECFE classes, or going solo for the first time in preschool.
- Teach the academic standards which prepare all children for career, college and lifelong success.
- Together with youth sports, recreation, and enrichment programs help children find their spark for healthy, lifelong activities.
- Are the largest local employer. Many teachers and staff live in the greater community and funnel their earnings to the local economy in fuel, groceries and household items, insurance, even a vehicle purchase. And those that travel here daily to serve our students also support the local economy in fuel and convenience purchases, restaurants, and school events and fundraisers.

Lewiston-Altura Public Schools is facing significant budget challenges and facilities needs that far exceed annual funding. My fellow school board members and I, all voted unanimously to ask voters to consider two questions – a Levy for Learning and Bond for Buildings – in the November 5 General Election.

The district needs success on both questions to have financial stability and avoid statutory operating debt by fiscal year 2028. The Levy for Learning is crucial for quality learning. Without it, major budget cuts will negatively impact student success. The Bond for Buildings addresses urgent facility repairs. Without it, operating funds for learning will be diverted to cover building repairs.

An investment in our schools is an investment in our communities. Our schools bring people of all ages together – we see this in action at football games, school plays, and concerts. Decades of research says that investing in schools leads to increased economic growth for communities.

I want to see a bright future for our greater community. The district needs success on both referendum questions to have financial stability. Strong schools equal strong communities.

Please learn more about the referendum before you vote in this year's General Election. I am willing to answer questions directly or you can go to the cardinalstrong.net website for detailed information about the needs, proposed solutions, and a tax impact calculator to determine your personal investment.

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