



Bemidji Area Schools has an existing referendum that will be ending at the end of the 2024-2025 school year if not renewed. **Renewing this referendum will not increase taxes year to year, it will instead extend the current levy authority out an additional ten years.**

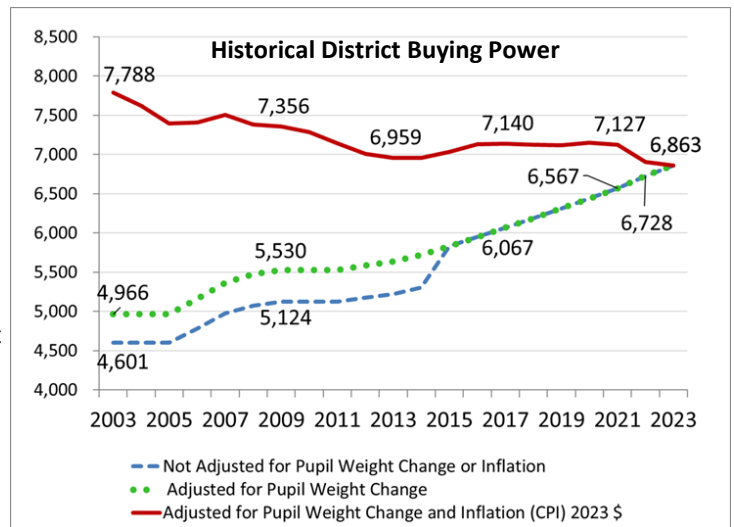
Why are we considering using board authority to extend this referendum?

It is necessary. The reason that schools have increasingly relied on operating referendums is due to state aid not keeping up with inflationary pressures over time. The chart on the right shows the buying power of state aid over the course of the last 20 years. **School buying power has decreased since 2003 by 925 dollars per student.**

Maintains and does not increase funding to schools. The current referendum provides nearly **1 million in revenue** for the district which helps to close some of this gap.

Preserves Programs and Services. Our district is working very hard to balance the structural imbalance in our current budget and we believe that this can be done with existing resources. We cannot without major reductions in programming, balance our budget without the renewal of this referendum.

It is fiscally responsible. The board has the authority to renew the existing referendum for an additional ten years at the same amount, not increasing taxation. This saves the cost of running a special election which can cost anywhere from \$20,000-50,000.



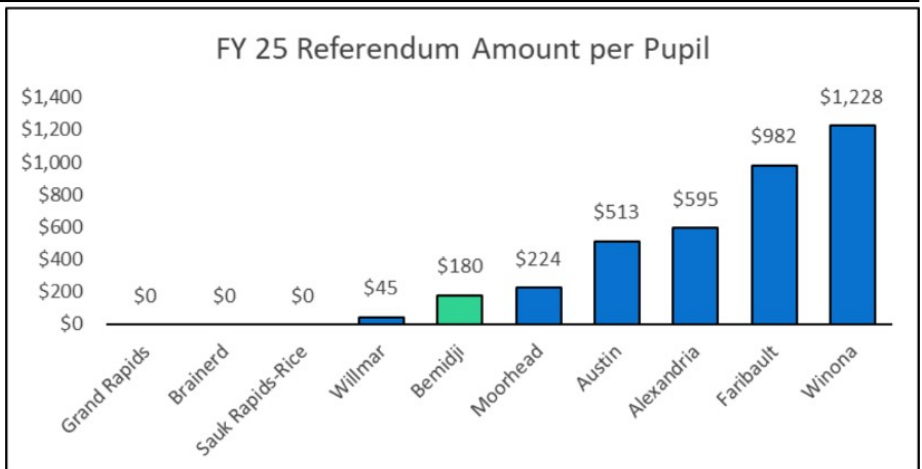
The school board does not take this authority lightly and welcomes your input. A series of public listening sessions has been established in order to present the issue to taxpayers and give you a chance to speak.

How do we compare to other districts from a school taxation perspective?

The average referendum for MN schools is at \$705 per student. Bemidji's referendum per student is \$180.

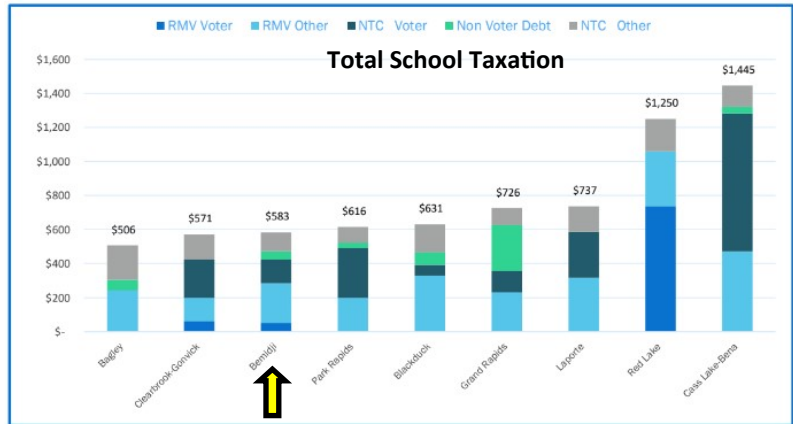
Renewing our operating referendum would maintain our operating referendum at \$180 per student which places us about mid pack for comparable schools.

Bemidji Area Schools loses over a million dollars a year in transportation due to our geographic size which puts us at a disadvantage financially compared to other districts.



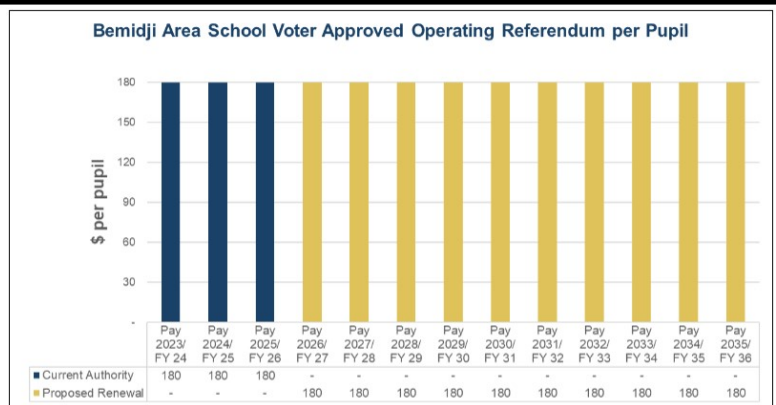
How does Bemidji Area Schools compare to area schools in total school taxes?

Based on a \$250,000 valued home, Bemidji is on the lower side of school taxation. This information includes our current operating referendum, which means that we will continue to be in the lower school taxation category.



What would taxation look like if the operating referendum is extended using board authority?

Renewing our operating referendum simply extends the \$180 per pupil funding for schools and does not increase funding. The blue portion of the graph represents the current impact to tax payers, the yellow portion shows what taxation would look like with a renewal of this referendum.



What does the structural budget picture look like for Bemidji Area Schools ?

When one time covid funds are removed, the district has been experiencing around a structural shortfall.

	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Operating Revenues	\$54,877,241.00	\$53,557,037.00	\$58,384,134.00	\$64,642,051.00	\$62,064,876.00	\$67,020,780.00
Operating Expenditures	\$54,345,464.00	\$55,096,748.00	\$58,412,190.00	\$60,896,070.00	\$60,383,684.00	\$65,735,651.00
Covid Funds Used (included in revenue)				\$5,969,107.00	\$3,652,263.00	\$5,863,663.00
Structural Status	\$531,777.00	-\$1,539,711.00	-\$28,056.00	-\$2,223,126.00	-\$1,971,071.00	-\$4,578,534.00

How am I able to learn more about this and what opportunities will I have to voice my opinion?

State statute requires that the school district holds one public meeting prior to using board authority. Bemidji Area Schools wants to be fully transparent with the public that we serve. In doing so, we are offering three opportunities for public participation. During these public meetings, we will go over the reasons for the levy, hold a question and answer session, and allow public comment on this process.

Public Meeting Dates

December 12, 2023- Northern Elementary School

6:30pm in the Gym

January 16, 2024 - Horace May Elementary School

6:30pm in the Gym

January 18, 2024 - Bemidji High School

5:30pm in the Lumberjack Room

Contact Information: If I have questions who do I contact?

Jeremy Olson, Superintendent

Cell phone: 218-407-9645

Email: dr_jeremy_olson@isd31.net