

WILDCAT PRIDE

INVESTING IN OUR *Future.*

2021 REFERENDUM
New London-Spicer Schools



FAST FACTS

2021 REFERENDUM GUIDE
VOTE NOVEMBER 2



"We won't be a successful school if we are not investing in our teachers. Our older children have had a topnotch education and I want to make sure my daughter, who is still in school, receives the same."

Chasity Durnodt

parent, Executive Director The Link,
New London resident

WE ARE PROUD OF OUR SUCCESS.

New London-Spicer Wildcats are known across the state as top performers not only in the arts and athletics but also in academics. We face challenges head on and work together for the benefit of our schools and our community. We saw this spirit even during a global pandemic. We owe much of our success to our proactive community members and our dedicated staff who rose to the occasion and keep giving back. **Maybe that is why in spite of everything, we even saw an uptick in graduation rates this year. In fact, enrollment at NLS has been steady with over 1,500 students since 2018.**

We have much to be proud of, but our district is struggling to make ends meet.

- **Inadequate state funding increases** Revenue sources are limited and state funding is not keeping pace with inflation.
- **Savings account is drained** The cost of federally mandated programs, such as special education, keep increasing, but revenues do not, and our savings account is drained. Without additional revenue, budget cuts will continue.
- **No operating levy** Our district, unlike most of our neighboring districts, does not have a voter-approved operating levy in place to help fund our programs.

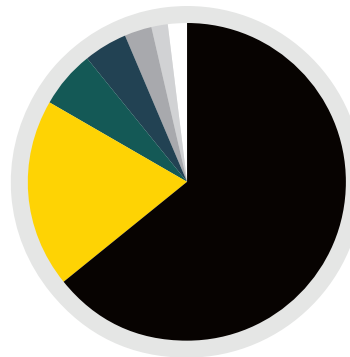
WHY NOW?

Since 2006, we've made significant cuts to our budget, reducing programs, people, and salaries by \$2.2 million. But our situation has not improved.

- 2019-22, the district cut \$1.5 million
- 2022-23 proposed cuts total another \$935,475

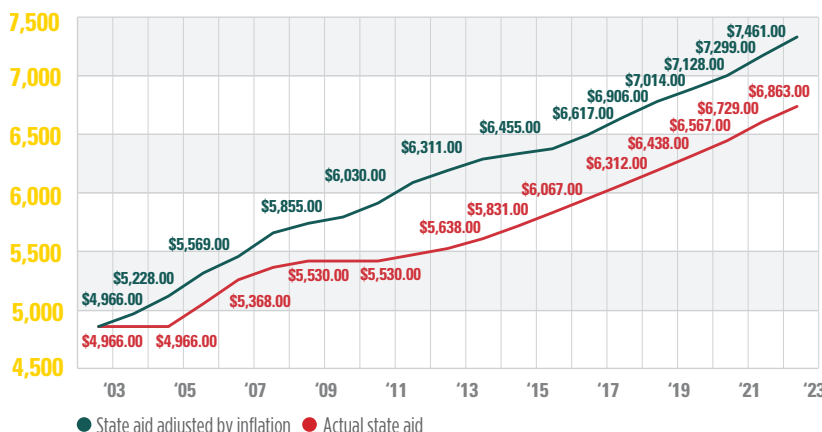
Budget cuts directly impact our students by eliminating programs and activities, increasing class sizes, and significantly reducing the number of experienced teachers and staff. This jeopardizes the quality of education our children receive and their preparedness for life after graduation.

More significant budget reductions are on the horizon without additional revenue.



TOTAL REDUCTIONS SINCE 2019

- 64% Teachers \$976,026.01
- 19% Support Staff \$288,851.26
- 6% Accounting
- 4% After School
- 3% Transportation
- 2% Tech
- 2% Programs



STATE REVENUE INCREASES DO NOT KEEP PACE WITH INFLATION

If state aid had increased at the rate of inflation, schools would have received \$7,461 per student this year. **Instead, schools will receive \$6,863 per student, a difference of \$598 per student.**

New London-Spicer has about 1,530 students. If state aid kept pace with inflation, that would result in nearly \$1 million in additional state funding in one year, and many millions over previous years, eliminating the need for constant budget cuts.

WHAT IS THE PLAN?

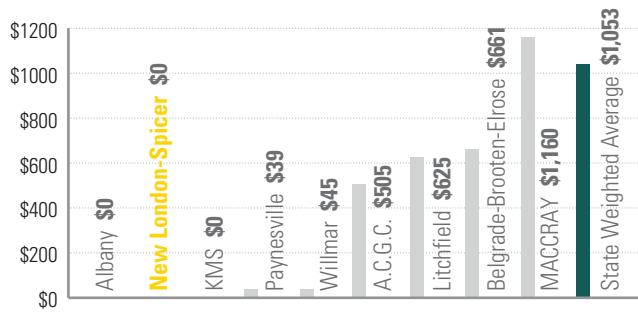
Investing in our future

After a long public process, we listened to community members who said last year's referendum was confusing and expensive - and we heard you. The New London-Spicer School Board voted unanimously to put forward a two-question operating levy referendum to voters on the November 2, 2021 ballot. It's a simplified request that increases revenue by \$3.1 million **less** over 10 years than last year's referendum question.

QUESTION 1 Asks for an increase from \$0 to \$1,020 per student – to provide revenue for everyday operations including teaching and learning, programming, and student supports.

QUESTION 2 Asks for the operating levy to increase each year by the rate of inflation.

VOTER-APPROVED OPERATING LEVY COMPARISON



Source: MDE Operating Referendum Phaseout January 2020

HOW WILL THE MONEY BE SPENT?

If voters approve the plan, the funds would provide for:

Struggling students and mental health Paraprofessional staff will be available to help struggling students, as will counselors and other resources for students facing mental health challenges. Addition of interventionists to assist with academic needs.

Real-world experiences and college prep Programs such as Agriculture, Welding, Personal Finance and other Career and Technical Education options will be maintained to provide real-world experiences for students, as will courses that provide students with college credits like College in the Schools.

Keeping staff, maintaining class size We'll avoid cutting teachers and staff which will allow us to maintain current class sizes, meaning students get more time with teachers.



65% Keeping staff, maintaining class sizes
25% Struggling students and mental health
15% Real-world experiences and college prep

HOW DO WE STACK UP COMPARED TO OUR NEIGHBORS?

New London-Spicer does not have a voter-approved operating levy – meaning we receive \$0 in per pupil spending from taxpayers. Six of the nine districts in our area do, averaging \$337 per pupil. **The state average operating levy is \$1,053 per pupil.** New London-Spicer residents pay the lowest total school taxes of any neighboring school district.

"I didn't realize that NLS is among the districts with the lowest residential school taxes in the area. We need to meet the standard for our kids."

Nikki Thein, parent, New London resident

WHAT WILL IT COST ME?

The cost to the taxpayer on an average home value of \$200,000 would be **\$308 annually - or less than \$1 per day.**

An operating levy referendum impacts residential properties as well as agricultural properties (home, garage and one acre only), but does not impact recreational properties.

less than
\$1.00
a day.

TAX IMPACT ON THREE HOME VALUES

Home Value	Year	Month
\$150,000	\$231	\$19
\$200,000*	\$308	\$26
\$250,000	\$386	\$32

How did you pay for the turf and performing arts center?

Although both were completed in spring of 2017, they were paid for using separate funding sources. The November 2015 bond levy paid for the new performing arts center along with other much-needed facility improvements. The running track and synthetic turf field were paid for through a lease levy designated for educational space improvements. The track was unsafe and the field turf was replaced at the same time. Synthetic turf increases the field's usability. It is used daily by physical education classes and for community use in addition to practices for many other sports besides being home to varsity and junior varsity games.

SURVEY SAYS

In a community survey, more than **75% of residents** with an opinion gave the school district an A or B rating compared to **44% nationwide.**

BE AN INFORMED VOTER

When and Where do I Vote?

VOTE: Election Day is Tuesday, November 2.

Visit the district website for polling place information.

REGISTER: online at mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/VoterRegistration.

Need More Information?

Visit: www.nls.k12.mn.us/2021referendum

Facebook: www.facebook.com/New-London-Spicer-School-District-345

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