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Do you know what's at stake with the referendum?

Mindy Nuhring Grand Rapids, MN
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I serve as a member of the ISD 318 school board, the Executive Director of the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, and a proud mother of three daughters. I am passionate about our wonderful community here in the Grand Rapids and Bigfork area.

Today, I am writing to inform residents about an important community decision. You have probably heard about the school district referendum on Nov. 7, but you may not know what is at stake. The election will set the course of many key decisions for our board over the next year and beyond.

If the referendum passes, it will allow our district to avoid budget cuts in the near future, stabilize our fund reserve, build back programs that were lost in previous budget cuts, and further invest in excellence. If the referendum fails, our district will face a challenging budget reduction target of approximately \$3 million.

Earlier this month, the ISD 318 school board discussed options we must consider if voters reject the referendum. The first option would reduce the number of buildings we operate, which may mean closing Cohasset Elementary while redistributing students to East Rapids Elementary and West Rapids Elementary. Another option would shift to a four-day school week. Alternatively, we could look at reducing student activities for grades 6-12. Finally, we could consider eliminating our district's academic and behavioral intervention program. Every scenario would mean more reductions in staff.

None of these options are desirable and all of them carry significant impact. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the school board to balance the budget, which will mean deeper cuts without additional financial support.

The plan would result in a tax increase for ISD 318 residents. If all three ballot questions pass, a home valued at \$200,000 in the district would see an estimated property tax increase of \$30.75 per month starting in 2024. A home valued at \$300,000 would see an estimated increase of \$46.75 per month.



Your participation in this election is crucial in guiding our district toward the best path forward. Please learn more at WeAre318.org and remember to cast your vote on or before Tuesday, Nov. 7.

Mindy Nuhring

Grand Rapids, MN

