**Another big election for school spending issues**

By WisPolitics.com

The spring election of 2024 was another winner for school spending issues, showing voters are willing to spend on education in their local districts.

Voters approved more than $956.5 million of the $1.4 billion on the ballot for school districts across the state in the April 2 spring election, according to a WisPolitics review.

That’s more than voters approved in the past three April elections, which ranged from about $530 million to $864.2 million, according to data provided by Wisconsin Policy Forum. But it’s still less than the $1.7 billion approved in 2020, which included a $1 billion referendum in the Racine Unified School District.

The $1.4 billion in school spending requests was the third-highest districts have sought in a single election since 2000, behind the more than $2 billion in November 2022 and $637.6 million on the ballot in 2023.

The biggest ask on the ballot was the $252 million referendum for the Milwaukee Public Schools district. That narrowly passed despite a more than $400,000 opposition campaign by the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce.

WisPolitics compiled a list of referendums that passed by using a combination of online county election results, a list of results provided by the Wisconsin Education Association Council and local media reports.

Some of the other big approvals included:

--$113.7 million for the New Richmond School district for additions, maintenance needs and renovations at Starr Elementary, Paperjack Elementary and New Richmond Middle School.

--And $62.5 million for the Freedom Area School District for districtwide facility improvements.

But voters rejected $102.3 million for the Mukwonago School District as 54% of voters opposed providing the funds to build a new middle school, demolish Park View Middle School and renovate elementary schools to create spaces for four-year-old kindergarten. That was the third-highest ask.

Other top rejections included:

--$54.5 million for Shawano School District for facilities improvements at Hillcrest & LEADS Charter School, Olga Brener Intermediate School, Shawano Community Middle School and Shawano Community High School. The referendum failed by fewer than 100 votes.

--$38 million for Osceola School District for an addition to Osceola Intermediate School, remodeling at the intermediate school and Osceola Middle School, and renovation or demolition of all or part of Osceola Elementary school and site restoration.

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