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# School District of Shiocton February 2024 Referendum Myths and Facts

In February of this year, an anonymous letter was sent to all Shiocton residents via the United States Postal Service containing a personalized viewpoint of several referendum topics. The author included data that was incomplete and misleading. As the School District of Shiocton continues to explore options to improve the school district programs, instruction, and facilities, it is important to provide our community with accurate information to encourage productive conversations concerning our future.



**The school district "organized their armies" to gain support for the February 2024 referendum.**



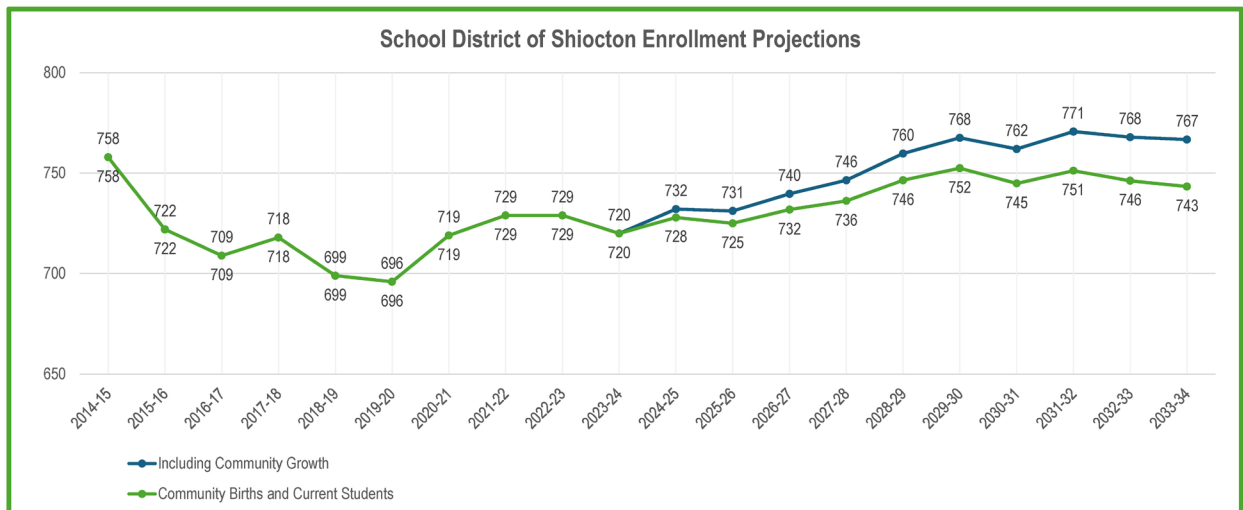
It is the responsibility and duty of school board members and school district administrators to provide information to the community allowing our citizens to make an informed vote. The school district and employees are not allowed by law to advocate for either a yes vote or a no vote.



**The school's enrollment has not grown over the last (10) years.**



In the capital referendum planning process, it is more important to be looking ahead than at the past. While it is true that Shiocton experienced a decline in enrollment up to 2019, since then, enrollments have begun to climb. It is through the offering of quality programs, instruction, and facilities that Shiocton will continue to grow as a district of choice for families and students in the years to come.



**✗ MYTH**

**Enrollment is the only thing that impacts the size and growth of a school.**

**✓ FACT**

Growth is not just quantitative but also qualitative. In just the past four years, the District has:

- strengthened its academic programming through curricular adoptions from Physical Education to Mathematics and, most recently, English Language Arts
- aligned our current curriculum and instruction to new State Standards in Science (NGSS), History & Social Science, and, most recently, Personal Financial Management
- added additional programming through increased courses in the trade areas
- added offerings through our extra-curricular programming, including Trap Shooting, MS baseball & softball, and, most recently, Dance
- increased staffing to meet the ever changing needs of children, from interventions to enhancements, from universal instruction to instructional enrichment
- strengthened our educators through professional development in curriculum and instruction or specific supports offered through programs such as Conscious Discipline, Restorative Practices, and, Science of Reading

**✗ MYTH**

**Many, many other public schools successfully operate their schools without receiving additional funds from taxpayers, and are able to manage just fine. Why can't Shiocton?**

**✓ FACT**

All Wisconsin school districts are bound by state law to live within their means, including Shiocton, by Wisconsin Act 16 implemented in 1993. The only option a school district has to raise operational or facility improvement spending is through community support of a referendum. The formula established by the State for funding of schools often does not keep up with the economic needs of a community and school district as evidenced by Shiocton's continued need to pass the operational referendums. This November 2024 election, these same needs for a referendum are also shared by almost 1/4 of the school districts in Wisconsin.

**✗ MYTH**

**The school district should budget differently to address all maintenance needs.**

**✓ FACT**

The capital project portion of a school district's annual budget in most Wisconsin school districts is not sufficient to address larger building maintenance projects. It could take a district time beyond the life of the building component - such as a roof - to save enough funds to cover larger project costs. For the past 5 years, Shiocton has dedicated nearly 10% of its annual budget to general or daily maintenance needs, as well as to preventative maintenance measures. Much like our own homes, larger projects like new roofs, replacing plumbing, rewiring the electrical service, etc. - are far too large a financial commitment to be afforded in an annual budget.

**✗ MYTH**

**The school district must be more fiscally responsible and be better stewards of our tax dollars.**

**✓ FACT**

Comparisons to other school districts' projects and referendum needs to be done carefully, especially when considering if dollar amounts are appropriate. Comparisons should be made to districts of similar enrollments and communities of similar size to Shiocton such as Bonduel.

Comparisons to a snapshot of other districts' referendums only in the past few years is inaccurate because Shiocton has been very responsible with spending on facilities over an extended period of time by avoiding major facility projects with only the fitness facility being the exception for almost 30 years. As indicated below, the referenced districts are asking their communities to support referendums more frequently than Shiocton. The comparison also takes community size into consideration.

Shiocton Facility Referenda			Neenah Facility Referenda			Seymour Facility Referenda			Bonduel Facility Referenda		
Date	Original Value	Current Value	Date	Original Value	Current Value	Date	Original Value	Current Value	Date	Original Value	Current Value
2/20/18	\$2,000,000	\$2,016,893	2/21/95	\$15,000,000	\$37,561,444	10/10/96	\$7,975,000	\$19,009,896	5/7/96	\$5,950,000	\$14,557,104
			11/5/96	\$6,900,000	\$16,387,260	2/16/99	\$3,950,000	\$8,986,580	4/1/08	\$5,800,000	\$14,190,118
			4/7/20	\$171,000,000	\$172,266,444	2/20/07	\$9,900,000	\$17,126,874	4/6/21	\$12,500,000	\$14,381,277
						4/6/21	\$6,550,000	\$7,535,789			
Total Referenda		\$2,016,893	Total Referenda		\$226,215,147	Total Referenda		\$52,659,139	Total Referenda		\$43,128,500
Students		721	Students		6,497	Students		1,800	Students		762
Cost Per Student		\$2,797	Cost Per Student		\$34,818	Cost Per Student		\$29,255	Cost Per Student		\$56,599
Eq. Val. District		\$535,899,114	Eq. Val. District		\$6,489,106,527	Eq. Val. District		\$1,367,972,464	Eq. Val. District		\$819,198,087
% of Eq. Val. District		0.38%	% of Eq. Val. District		3.49%	% of Eq. Val. District		3.85%	% of Eq. Val. District		5.26%

**✗ MYTH**

**The district is not considering the interest on the borrowing for the bonds.**

**✓ FACT**

Just like every homeowner who pays interest on their home mortgage, the school district will have to pay interest on the bonds for our projects. Because the school district and school board have been good stewards of your tax dollars, we have been able to secure an interest rate which would not exceed 4.5%. All calculations and tax impact projections presented to the community included all costs of the project and all costs of the borrowing including the interest.