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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **October 18, 2022**

Tax Impact of Capital Referendum to Be Lower Than Expected for School District of Onalaska Residents

Additional state aid leads to considerable drop in projected tax impact

ONALASKA, WI — Due to an increased amount of state aid certified on October 14th, the overall tax impact of an approved capital referendum will be \$60 per year for every \$100,000 of property value – considerably lower than the previously projected \$174 per year.

An approved capital referendum would allow the district to issue up to \$75 million in general obligation bonds to cover the costs of several key facility projects. These include a comprehensive renovation of Onalaska Middle School and several of the highest-priority projects identified as needs for Onalaska High School.

“We are pleased to share with our community that the capital referendum, if approved by the majority of voters this November, will have a much lower tax impact than originally expected,” said Ann Garrity, Board of Education President. “This is great news for our district and the taxpayers who support our schools. We look forward to continuing to engage our community around our district’s needs and the solutions on the ballot on November 8.”

In addition to the capital referendum question, voters will also decide on an operational referendum question. Residents have approved a continuous series of operational referenda for the School District of Onalaska since 2006—with the last approved vote taking place in 2018. If approved, the district would be able to exceed its state-imposed revenue limit annually from \$4.6 million to \$5.4 million, over five years starting in the 2023-24 school year. This is necessary to sustain programs and services while addressing rising expenses related to inflation and uncertain funding support from the state. Based on current assumptions, an operational referendum can be passed without increasing the tax levy from the 2021-22 rate.

For more information on the district’s operational and facility needs, the community-led process to address these needs, and the proposed solutions on the ballot November 8, visit <https://www.onalaskareferendum.org>.

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