

Community Link

Referendum Issue

The Newsletter of the School District of Lodi

March 2022

Referendum Message from the Board of Education President

Please take a few minutes to read the referendum information available in this issue of the *Community Link*, or you can view it by going to the School District Website and clicking on the **REFERENDUM 2022 TAB**. And please share this information with everyone you know, because we want everyone to understand that the referendum in April is structured to allow us to continue our outstanding educational opportunities by:

- Retaining and growing our EXCEPTIONAL teachers and staff;
- Delivering our rigorous and relevant curriculum - maintaining our diverse programming in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign language;
- Continuing to provide numerous instructional options across grade levels including project-based learning through the Ouisconsin Charter School (OSC);
- Investing in career technical education (CTE) and nurturing the whole student initiatives;
- Continuing 1:1 technology via Chromebooks, iPads, and interactive Clevertouch screens;
- Maintaining K-12 STEAM programming - through our Discovery Centers and STEAM Labs in the high school, middle school, elementary school and primary school - including coding, robotics, and a fabrication lab;
- Supporting extensive Advanced Placement (AP) classes at the high school;
- Investing in business programming, apprenticeships, and community business connections;
- Retaining our international educational opportunities with Thailand, Germany, and Costa Rica;
- Delivering broad music and fine arts programming along with our Performing Arts Center;
- Maintaining our indoor and outdoor physical education, life skills, and financial literacy;
- Investing in CAD, Construction, Manufacturing, and engine mechanics;
- Providing FFA, animal, agriculture, and greenhouse with aquaponics opportunities;
- Continuing exceptional athletics and inspirational coaching;
- Providing remarkable forensics, mock trial, and various other student activities;
- Maintaining extensive summer school programming options for our students.

We really do have so much to offer our students and community for a district of our size!!! Additionally, we would like to continue this innovative approach to learning as we move forward into the future by investing in our community created Strategic Plan – one that will nurture every student’s potential for growth and opportunities - socially, mentally and academically - in a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment to create the innovative problem solvers we need in our community.

H. Adam Steinberg
School Board President

Message from the Board of Education Treasurer

There is no better time than now to come together for the benefit of our students, paving the way for a better future. Our students deserve continued resources to ensure their success after the pandemic has passed. With the current \$1.7 million non-recurring operational referendum coming to an end, we are asking for a new 5 year non-recurring referendum of \$5.98 million, which has an operational component of \$3.85 million with the balance to be used towards critical building & grounds maintenance and technology upgrades. We anticipate this will lower the mill rate by \$0.11.

School funding coming from state resources continues to be restricted by the underfunding of special education, state mandated revenue caps and increasing property values in our district. In addition, we are now seeing inflationary pressures that are causing rapid price increases in transportation, services and supplies. We also need to offer competitive wages and benefits to our support staff, teachers, and administrators and without a referendum we will not be able to accomplish this. Operational excellence is one of our strategic planning pillars and we need to have a plan for the future in terms of maintaining our infrastructure and providing a quality public education at a reasonable cost.

Every student, every day deserves the resources required to provide this quality public education that enables them to rise to the best version of themselves. If you haven't already attended a referendum information session, or viewed the online information located on the District's website, I encourage you to do so.

"Bright futures start here"

Julie McKiernan
Treasurer, Board of Education

Why another Referendum?

In 2016, district taxpayers approved the current five-year non-recurring referendum of \$1,700,000 per year. This referendum expires at the end 2021-2022, the current fiscal year.

State Aid reductions and stringent revenue limits imposed by the State have severely limited the District's ability to fund educational programs and daily operations. The 2016 referendum provided funding to maintain the district's exceptional educational staff and quality educational programming. Over the past five years, the District has been able to accomplish its priorities. Unfortunately, the same budgetary limitations face the District now in 2022, as they did in 2016. Further, costs for labor, utilities, educational materials, insurance, and maintaining our existing buildings continue to outpace the revenue limits imposed on the District by the State.

The fact that we have to again ask our tax payers for help in supporting and maintaining existing programs and facilities are the outgrowths of less state support and increasing costs.

In order to achieve the priorities set for the District by the community through the strategic planning process the District needs to:

- Maintain and enhance our current level of instructional, career and technical education, STEAM, and extracurricular programming.
- Continue to work on creating a sense of belonging and focus on the emotional and physical well-being of each student.

- Focus on attracting and retaining staff.
- Address needed, timely building and facility updates and improvements.
- Update the district's technology infrastructure, computers and software.

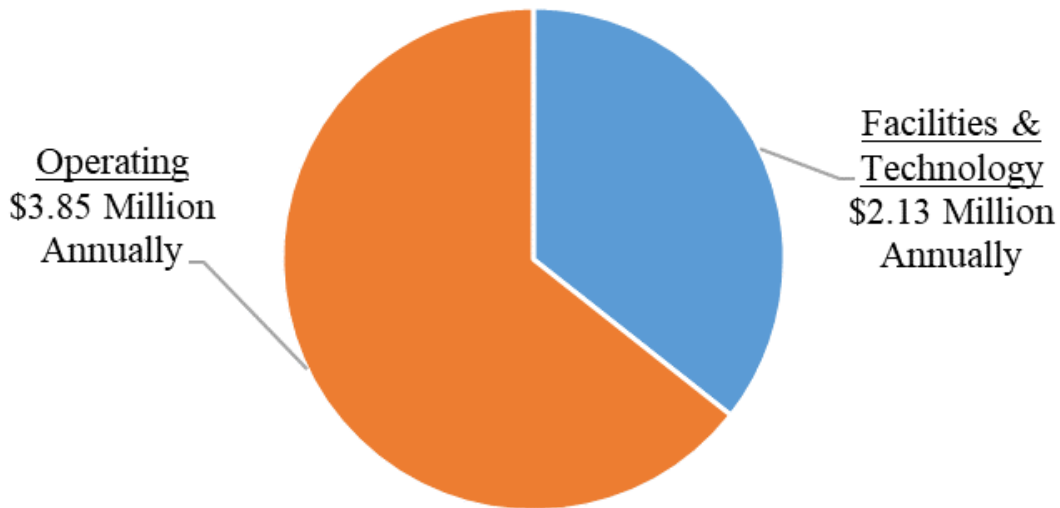
The five year (\$5.98 million per year) non-recurring referendum is based on the financial analysis provided by the District's financial advisor R.W. Baird Public Finance, as well as input from the community (via the strategic planning process), the Board of Education, the District's administration, and the staff.

Referendum Question

"Shall the School District of Lodi, Columbia and Dane Counties, Wisconsin be authorized to exceed the revenue limit specified in Section 121.91, Wisconsin Statutes, by \$5,980,000 per year for five years, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year and ending with the 2026-2027 school year, for non-recurring purposes consisting of maintenance and technology upgrades, maintaining and supporting instructional and extracurricular programs, and maintaining career and technical education offerings?"



2022 Referendum, \$5.98 Million Annually

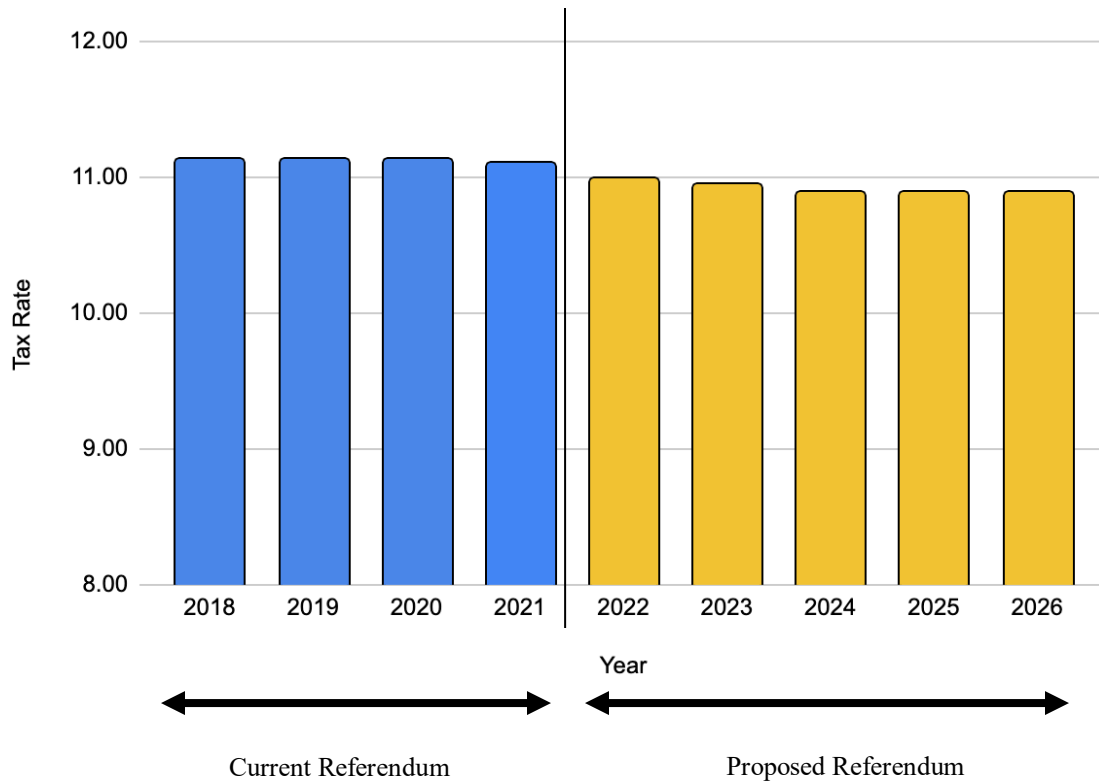


The district is replacing a \$1.7 million referendum which expires at the end of the current fiscal year. Further, the current budget is at a deficit of approximately \$700,000 due to such factors as limited funding from the State Budget. The following is a list of expenditures the district plans to utilize referendum funding for:

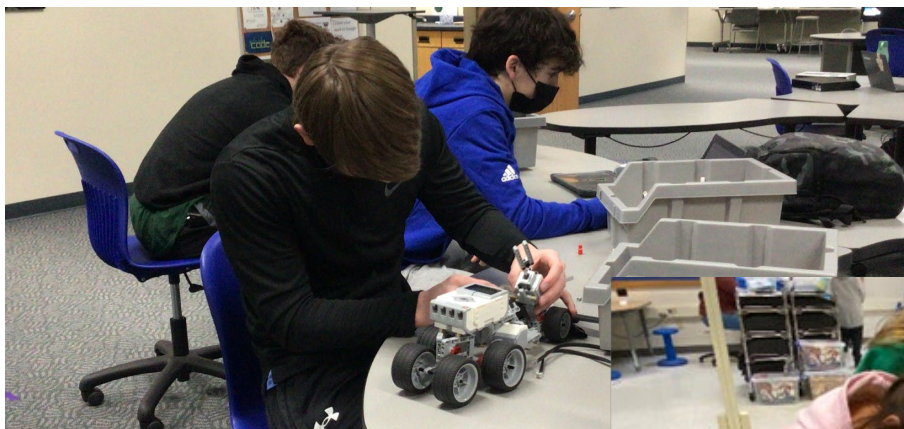
<u>Operational Need</u>		<u>Current Facility Upgrades include</u>	
\$145,000/year	Staff FTE Increases	\$5,450,000	HS & LES Roof Replacement
\$575,000/year	Salaries	\$1,450,000	Technology Upgrades
\$110,000/year	Staff Benefits	\$1,010,000	HS & MS Chiller Replacement
\$50,000/year	Retirement Increase	\$475,000	MS & LES/OSC HVAC Controls
\$250,000/year	Contracted Services	\$1,000,000	HS Track Improvements
\$200,000/year	Budget Increases	\$620,000	Parking Lots/ES Playground
		\$30,000	HS PAC upgrades



Impact on Taxes



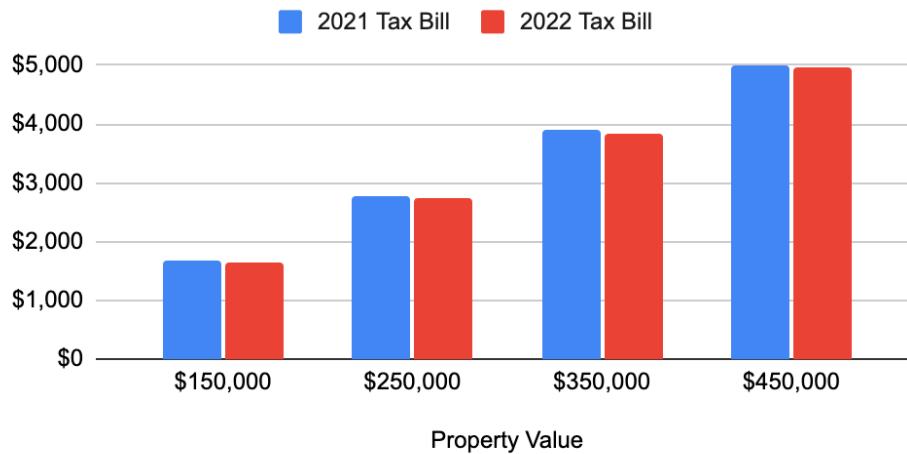
It is projected that if the April 5, 2022 referendum question passes, the Mill Rate will decrease from 11.11 Mills in 2021-2022 to 11.00 Mills in 2022-2023. In the remaining four years of the proposed referendum, 2023-2024, 2024-2025, 2025-2026, the Mill Rate is projected to decrease even further to 10.95 or less.



What does this mean?

A typical Lodi homeowner with an average valued property of \$250,000, could see a decrease in his or her December 2022 tax bill of approximately \$25-\$28, given current variables all remain the same. It is important to understand that municipality re-evaluations and reassessments, home sales, housing upstarts, new developments, and other factors are out of the control of the School District of Lodi or the nine municipalities which the district consists of. These factors could significantly impact this projection.

2021 Tax Bill and 2022 Tax Bill (School District Portion)



School District Estimated Referendum Tax Impact			
Property Value	2021 Tax Bill	2022 Tax Bill	Variance
\$150,000	\$1,667	\$1,650	-\$16.50
\$250,000	\$2,778	\$2,750	-\$27.50
\$350,000	\$3,889	\$3,850	-\$38.50
\$450,000	\$5,000	\$4,950	-\$49.50

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LODI
OPERATING REFERENDUM

VOTE
APRIL 5
PREPARING OUR STUDENTS WITH LODI PRIDE

GET OUT *and* VOTE

Learn more: lodi.k12.wi.us

How We Fund Public Schools In Wisconsin

School funding in Wisconsin is largely a partnership between the state and local property taxpayers. Only one out of nine dollars comes from other sources like federal grants and fees (see the Wisconsin School Funding pie chart below).

In general, state school aid is based on the premise that property value per resident student is the best way to measure a district's ability to fund its schools. The lower a district's property value per student, the more state aid it receives.

For example, Waunakee schools get about \$1,500 per student more than Lodi because so many families with school-age kids live there. Increasing the number of students decreases the value per student, generating more state aid.

When people say school funding is "broken," what they mean is that they do not believe value per student is the best way to measure a community's ability to fund schools. Changing the funding formula would require agreeing on a new measure, a big part of why it has not changed in decades.

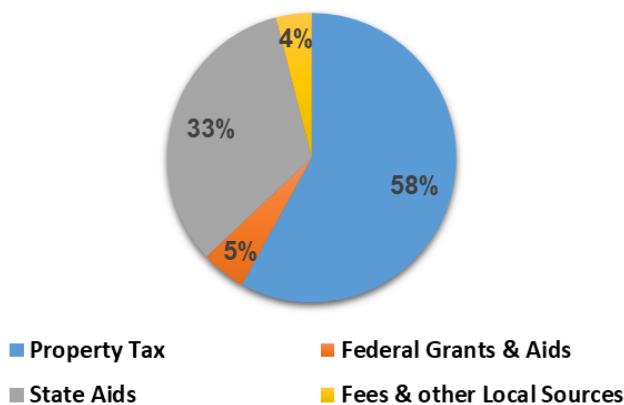
The state limits, or "caps," how much revenue we can collect between state aid and property taxes. State aid is the amount of money under the cap that we do not have to tax for. The district's property tax is just our revenue limit minus our state aid.

From 1993 to 2010 the revenue limit had an annual increase tied to inflation. If this had kept up, districts would have gotten increases of about \$285 per student each year since 2010. Instead, the total per-student increase allowed over the last 10 years has been approximately \$112, or an average of \$11.20 per student per year.

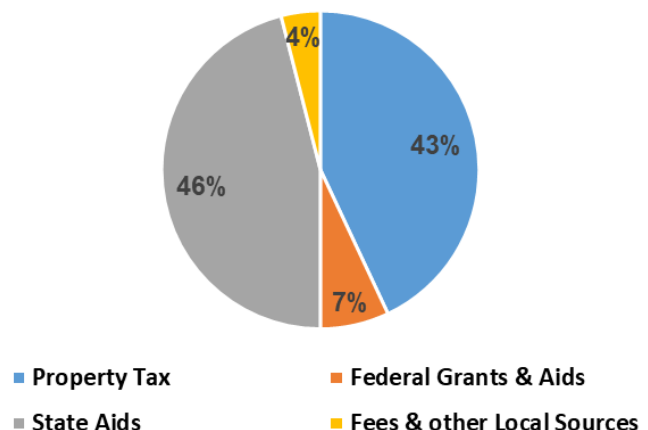
Further, Legislators also provide a "per pupil categorical aid", a state aid schools receive which is outside the revenue cap. The state's current Biennial Budget (2021-2022 & 2022-2023) provides a \$0.00 increase, for each of those two years. Keeping up with ongoing operating cost increases such as wage, insurance, heat, electricity and other typical operating costs is challenging when revenue increases are limited to little or no increase.

Referendums are becoming the "new normal" in school funding. Since 2016, there have been 298 non-recurring or recurring operational referendums passed by the 426 school districts in the state. Nearly three-quarters of all referendum questions asked to school district constituents have passed. We will see if that trend continues statewide on April 5.

Lodi Revenues



Wisconsin School Funding



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

The School District of Lodi is asking community members to vote on a non-recurring referendum question (\$5.98 million/year for each of the next five years) at the April 5, 2022 election. The following are commonly asked questions about the upcoming referendum.

What is on the April 5 Ballot?

The School District of Lodi's Board of Education is proposing a non-recurring referendum of \$5.98 million/year for each of the next five years, which consists of combined annual amounts of \$3.85 million for operations and \$2.13 million for maintenance and technology upgrades.

Why another Referendum?

In 2016, district taxpayers approved the current five-year non-recurring referendum of \$1,700,000. This referendum expires at the end 2021-2022, the current fiscal year.

What is the current starting salary for a teacher in Lodi compared to other area districts?

Last year, CESA 5 Administrator Jeremy Biehl conducted a statewide survey on starting teacher pay. The School District of Lodi ranked 37th lowest of 262 school districts responding, placing us in the 14th percentile on starting teacher wage. Of the 35 school districts that make up CESA #5, Lodi has the second lowest starting salary at \$38,000.



What is the Estimated Impact to Taxpayers?

If the referendum passes, next year's "school district mill rate" is projected to decrease from 11.11 to 11.00 (a .11 mill decrease from the previous year).

While it is very difficult to predict how this mill rate decrease will impact every property owner in each of the nine (9) different municipalities that make up our district, we can assume that if all variables remain the same, a homeowner with a property valued at \$250,000, could see a decrease in their tax bill of \$25.00 next year. However, we cannot guarantee every homeowner in our district, with a similar property in value, will all realize the same result.

We are also projecting that in the following years, district property owners will continue to see slight decreases in their tax bills, again if all the variables remain the same.

There are many factors that are out of the District's control which contribute to tax bill fluctuations. A primary factor is property valuation, including some of the following: municipality reassessment, equalized value adjustment, home sales and improvements, TIF district establishments, land zoning & conversion (agriculture to residential developments), etc.

Last year an equalized valuation adjustment in the Town of Lodi increased the total value by 16%, which had a significant impact on individual property owner's taxes. This was done by the State Department of Revenue and was completely out of the control of the District and the Town of Lodi.

Next year, we understand that continued development of the Tanamirah Ridge Development in the Village of Dane as well as the City of Lodi reassessment will all impact property values, which could in turn impact taxes for property owners in those municipalities.

What the District does know is if the referendum passes, the District will levy an additional \$5.98 million which will be spread amongst the 9 municipalities which make up our district.

How is it possible to ask for a \$5.98 million annual non-recurring referendum and have the tax rate go down?

This is possible because the Board of Education has intentionally kept the mill rate flat at 11.13 over the past several years, with the 2021-2022 mill rate at 11.11. The Board has accomplished this by utilizing a debt service pay down mechanism called defeasance. Defeasance is levying more than the annual debt service payment to prepay debt principal, thereby saving the district taxpayers interest on debt and also reducing the total number of payments on the life of that debt. The Board of Education has saved the district over \$2.5 million in interest by using defeasance and has also reduced the total debt cycle by approximately two years on the 20-year loan for the new primary school, all while keeping the mill rate flat. If the taxpayers approve the 2022 referendum, the Board of Education no longer plans to utilize defeasance, as the mill rate (base revenue cap, plus the referendum) is projected to stabilize at around 11.00 mills or less over the next several years.

What if the referendum does not pass?

The District will likely utilize some one-time cost savings measures, such as short-term borrowing or liquidating much of its fund balance, to help maintain current academic programming. The district will also need to consider reducing as many as 15-20 staff positions, which include teachers, educational assistants, administrators and support staff. This will result in increased class sizes and potentially elimination of educational and co-curricular programs as well as making it even harder to retain and attract high-quality staff. Maintenance and technology projects and upgrades will continue to be deferred or put on hold, which could result in failing building systems, slower internet speeds, more instances of system shut downs, and greater frustration for students and staff.

What is the lifespan of the Lodi Elementary/OSC Building?

The useful life of the Lodi Elementary/OSC building roof has expired and is in need of replacement, according to professional building consultants CG Schmidt. With a new roof, this building could functionally support students, academics and co-curriculars for the next 20 years.

Is it really necessary to redo the track? Is there a plan to put artificial turf inside the track?

The existing track and field facility is beyond its useful life and requires annual repair in order to host competitions. Further, there is no plan to put artificial turf inside the track at this time due to it being cost prohibitive.

Due to poor drainage underneath the surface of the track, the surface of the track shifts after each winter season resulting in cracks, tears, heaving and sinking. Ultimately runner safety and track functionality are compromised.

The best time to improve the field inside the track with underdrainage and reseeding is while the track itself is under renovation. Therefore, our consultants are recommending both be done together.

What is the current cost per pupil in the School District of Lodi. What was it five years ago?

The per pupil cost to educate a student in the School District of Lodi was \$14,730 per student in 2020. Compared to the 35 other school districts in CESA #5, Lodi ranks in the middle of these districts with the 17th highest cost per pupil. The cost per pupil five years ago was \$13,765 per student which ranked Lodi 10th highest in CESA #5 in 2016.



Voting Information April 5, 2022 Polls open 7 am – 8 pm

Municipality	Clerk	Phone Number	email	Voting Location	Voting Absentee In person
Town of Arlington	Becky Struck	635-4808	ArlingtonTownOf@gmail.com	Arlington Town Hall 200 Commercial St. Arlington, WI	March 22 – April 1 By appointment
Town of Dane	Angie Volkman	575-3365	townofdaneclerk@gmail.com	Dane Town Hall 213 W. Main St. Dane, WI	March 22 – April 1 By appointment
Town of Dekorra	Holly Priske	635-2014	dekorra@centurytel.net	Dekorrra Town Hall W8225 County Rd JV Poynette, WI	March 22 – April 1 Call for hours and/or appointment
Town of Lodi	Kristi McMorris	592-4868	twnlodi@twnlodi.com	Lodi Town Hall W10919 County Rd V Lodi, WI	March 22 – April 1 Mon-Fri 8:30am-4:30pm
Town of Roxbury	Lisa Meinholz	643-8281	RoxburyClerk@merr.com	Roxbury Town Hall 7167 Kippley Road Sauk City, WI	March 22 – April 1 By appointment
Town of Vienna	Kathleen Clark	846-3800	tovclerk@centurytel.net	Vienna Town Hall 7161 County I DeForest, WI	March 22 – April 1 Mon-Fri 9am-3pm
Town of West Point	Taffy Buchanan	592-7059	townclerk@townofwestpoint.us	West Point Town Hall N2114 Rausch Road Lodi, WI	March 22 – April 1 Call for hours/appointment
Village of Dane	Teresa Hughey - Groves	849-5422	clerktreasurer@villageofdane.org	Dane Village Hall 102 W. Main Street Dane, WI 53529	March 22 – April 1 Mon-Fri 8:30am-4:30pm and by appointment
City of Lodi	Brenda Ayers	592-3247	bayers@cityoflodi.us	Lodi City Hall 130 S. Main St. Lodi, WI	March 22 – April 1 Mon-Fri 7:30am-4pm

Want to vote absentee by mail?

Any qualified elector who registers to vote is eligible to request an absentee ballot.

Go to: <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/> to request an absentee ballot.

US Postal Service recommends to mail your ballot back at least one week before to make sure it arrives by 8pm on April 5, 2022

How can I learn more?

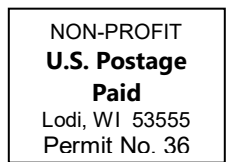
Check out our website: <https://www.lodi.k12.wi.us/referendum-2022>

**Referendum Presentation
Lodi Primary School LMC
1300 Sauk Street, Lodi
March 15 ~ 6 PM**

**Informational meetings:
Coffee with the Superintendent
March 19 ~ 9 to 10 am
@ the Buttercream Bakery
112 S. Main Street, Lodi**



School District of Lodi
115 School Street
Lodi, WI 53555



Postal Customer

Website:
www.lodi.k12.wi.us