

Addressing Financial Needs in the School District of Wisconsin Dells



Although the School District of Wisconsin Dells offers a top-notch educational experience that prepares students for the next stages of their lives, we face financial challenges because of the way the State of Wisconsin funds public schools:



November 8 Referendum

District residents will vote on a referendum on Tuesday, November 8, 2022. An approved referendum would allow the district to exceed the revenue limit by \$1.2 million per year for the next four years.

Wisconsin schools operate under a state-imposed revenue limit that restricts the amount of money they can receive each year. The outdated formula the state uses means the School District of Wisconsin Dells does not receive enough revenue to adequately fund its programs and services.

- ◆ **The School District of Wisconsin Dells is locked into a low-revenue limit:** Our district's revenue limit has always been lower than most other districts. This is because when revenue limits were created by the state in 1993, low-spending, frugal districts like ours were locked into a very low limit.
- ◆ **Revenue limits have not increased enough:** Although revenue limits are adjusted every two years as part of the state budget process, the School District of Wisconsin Dells' revenue limit lags behind increasing costs, largely because of inflation.
- ◆ **Our revenue has increased faster than our revenue limit:** Revenue limits are based on a three-year rolling average. This means that it takes three years for the district's revenue limit to catch up to increases in student enrollment. As a destination district with a growing enrollment, this has created financial challenges as we incur the costs for new students.
- ◆ **The needs of our students have increased dramatically:** Just like most other districts in the state, our district has seen increased costs over the years, especially in the areas of special education and mental health. The funding our district receives is insufficient to cover the expenses of state and federally mandated services.
- ◆ **Costs for things such as running our buses and heating our schools continue to rise,** as do other expenses that are out of the district's control.



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sdwd.k12.wi.us/ref2022

If approved by voters, the operating referendum will see a fall 2022 levy equal to the fall of 2021.

In fact, the mill rate will drop from \$7.76 in 2021-22 to an estimated \$6.77 in 2022-23.