



**OUR STUDENTS.  
OUR COMMUNITY. OUR FUTURE.**  
WISCONSIN DELLS SCHOOLS OPERATING REFERENDUM

**Operating Referendum Question**

“Shall the School District of Wisconsin Dells, Sauk, Adams, Columbia, Juneau and Marquette Counties, Wisconsin be authorized to exceed the revenue limit specified in Section 121.91, Wisconsin Statutes, by \$619,108 for the 2021-2022 school year; by an additional \$970,832 (for a total of \$1,589,940) for the 2022-2023 school year; by an additional \$1,031,603 (for a total of \$2,621,543) for the 2023-2024 school year; by an additional \$950,323 (for a total of \$3,571,866) for the 2024-2025 school year; and by an additional \$1,318,534 (for a total of \$4,890,400) for the 2025-2026 school year and thereafter, for recurring purposes consisting of maintaining existing programs and services?”

**Why is the District Asking for an Operating Referendum?**

This referendum asks District residents to approve the resolution for additional dollars above the state-imposed revenue limit. The combined effect of projected declining (elementary) enrollments, increasing fixed operational costs, and revenue limits create future budget deficits over the next five years. If the District is required to make cuts to offset the deficits, it will be unable to maintain existing programs and services for students as aligned with the District’s strategic plan. Rather than compromising the quality of education and experiences provided by the District by solely reducing expenditures, the Board of Education is seeking community support to maintain programs and services.

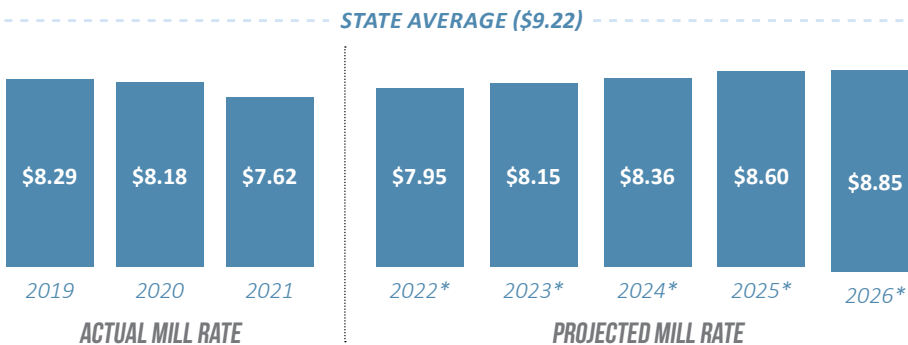
When the District was conducting its information campaign to consider the construction of the new WDHS, the District indicated that it would look to conduct a November 2020 operating referendum. Due to the pandemic, the District opted to delay an operating referendum until April of 2021. The community is beginning to see signs of the pandemic lessening its impact on the world with renewed optimism for multiple sectors of our local economy including agriculture and our state-leading tourism industry.

**This operating referendum would allow the District to:**

- **Keep elementary & middle school classes at current sizes.**
- **Maintain vital student services, such as counseling as the District serves students in the midst of a pandemic, as well as maintain valued electives that develop life-long skills.**
- **Retain qualified teachers and staff—who, for the past year, have largely gone above and beyond to deliver high-quality services during the pandemic. Whether virtual or in-person learning, our SDWD employees remain focused on the success of each and every student.**

**Projected Mill Rate**

The graph below shows the District’s historical mill rate, as well as the projected rate if the April 2021 operating referendum were approved. **The current mill rate is \$7.62, which is the 45th lowest mill rate out of 368 Wisconsin K-12 districts and well below the state average of \$9.22 for the 2020-21 school year.** The District is proposing a referendum that will provide the necessary services and keep the mill rate well below the state average even in the fifth year of the referendum.



\*The District has taken a conservative approach to projecting future equalized valuation growth rates using 1.5% for 2022 and 2.0% growth for all other years. The past three-year average has been 2.98%

**2022 Fiscal Year**

\$100,000 PROPERTY VALUE	
Annual Impact	\$32.50
Monthly Impact	\$2.70
Daily Impact	\$0.09

\$200,000 PROPERTY VALUE	
Annual Impact	\$65.00
Monthly Impact	\$5.41
Daily Impact	\$0.18

\$300,000 PROPERTY VALUE	
Annual Impact	\$97.50
Monthly Impact	\$8.12
Daily Impact	\$0.27

\*Median home price: \$220,000

**EVEN WITH PASSAGE OF THE OPERATING REFERENDUM, THE DISTRICT WILL BE IN THE LOWEST QUARTILE IN THE STATE.**

## WHEN AND WHERE DO I VOTE?

The referendum election will be held on April 6, 2021, between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., at the following normal polling locations.

**City of Wisconsin Dells**  
Wisconsin Dells Municipal Building, 300 La Crosse Street

**Town of Jackson**  
Jackson Town Hall, 398 State Road 82

**Village of Lake Delton**  
Village of Lake Delton, 50 Wisconsin Dells Parkway, Lake Delton

**Town of Lewiston**  
Lewiston Elementary School, W11195 Highway 127

**Town of Delton**  
Delton Town Hall, 30 Wisconsin Dells Parkway, Lake Delton

**Town of Lyndon**  
Lyndon Town Hall, W1797 County Road J

**Town of Dell Prairie**  
Dell Prairie Town Hall, 763 County Road K

**Town of New Haven**  
New Haven Town Hall, 330 Golden Court

**Town of Dellona**  
Dellona Town Hall, E8062 County Road H

**Town of Newport**  
Newport Town Hall, N9236 Town Hall Road

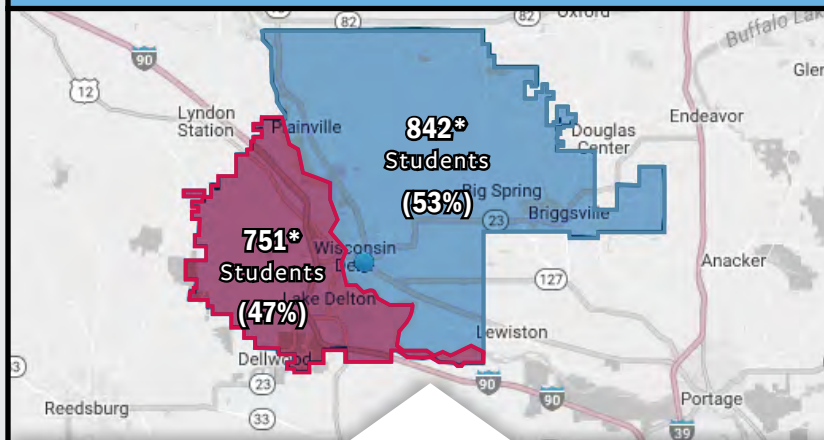
**Town of Douglas**  
Douglas Town Hall, N436 County Road A, Briggsville

**Town of Springville**  
Springville Town Hall, 3143 State Road 13

## Projected Budget Shortfalls

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Revenues	\$22,479,457	\$22,021,200	\$21,647,105	\$21,482,622	\$20,974,949
Expenditures	\$23,098,565	\$23,611,140	\$24,268,648	\$25,054,488	\$25,865,349

Additional Deficit	\$(619,108)	\$(970,832)	\$(1,031,603)	\$(950,323)	\$(1,318,534)
Cumulative Deficit	\$(619,108)	\$(1,589,940)	\$(2,621,543)	\$(3,571,866)	\$(4,890,400)



## GEOGRAPHY & BOUNDARIES

### Geographic Area:

- 186 square miles

### Counties & Municipalities:

- Adams: Towns of Dell Prairie, Springville, Jackson and New Haven
- Columbia: City of Wisconsin Dells, Town of Newport
- Juneau: Town of Lyndon
- Marquette: Towns of Douglas and Lewiston
- Sauk: Village of Lake Delton and Towns of Delton and Dellona

\* Does not include open enrollment students

## What if the Referendum Doesn't Pass?

The District is seeking the approval of this operational referendum and wouldn't bring this forth before the electorate unless it were absolutely necessary to maintain services aligned with the District's strategic plan. If this does not pass, there will be some difficult and emotional decisions to make. Additional reductions in services for special area courses such as art, music, physical education or low enrollment career and technical education courses would be a part of these decisions. The consolidation of elementary schools and reconfiguration of the middle school would all be items the District would have to take up in the future.

## HOW HAS THE DISTRICT BEEN HANDLING COVID-19 CHALLENGES?

COVID-19 has obviously proven to be an *immense obstacle* for everyone to navigate. However, while some districts in the state have opted to offer only a virtual instruction model, early on in the pandemic we here in Wisconsin Dells recognized the potential for severely decreased student engagement and subsequent reduced student learning outcomes. Because of this, the School District of Wisconsin Dells forged ahead and opted to do our best to maintain in-person learning, while carefully following CDC recommended guidelines. Despite taking necessary measures, on two occasions when our COVID-19 data saw an uptick, the District paused and pivoted to virtual instruction when necessary. We're proud to say the District, along with a great deal of parental support, has managed to maintain in-person learning for all students the vast majority of the school year thus far!

*Stay informed!*

Visit [sdwd.k12.wi.us](http://sdwd.k12.wi.us) for more details, or contact District Administrator, Terry Slack at (608) 254-7769.