

Superintendent's Corner

by Dr. John P. Ahlgrim, Superintendent of Schools



Get the Facts about the
Referendum Question at
www.d121.org/referendum

On August 17, the Board of Education approved a 60-cent operating rate increase question that will appear on the ballot June 28, 2022. A 60-cent increase would provide approximately \$13.25 million in additional revenue annually, with an estimated annual tax impact of \$200 (\$16.67 per month) per \$100,000 of a home's fair market value.

Increased funding would allow the district to preserve the eight-period school day, improve academic supports and mental health services, restore and protect activities and clubs, and restore and protect athletics. The rate increase would also allow us to lower student fees to rates comparable with other Lake County high schools.

A critical aspect of the district's referendum information efforts is to provide clarity and details regarding the impact to students with or without additional funding for the next two years.

There are several programs affected by the referendum question, including the length of our school day (eight-period day), academic and mental health assistance, activity programs, and athletic programs. **The information on this page focuses on preserving the eight-period day.**

Get the Facts About the Referendum Question: Investing in our Students

Preserving the 8-period school day

During the week of November 8, students began the course selection process for next year (2022-23 school year). Parents and students should be mindful of the potential reduction in course offerings if the district needs to implement a seven-period school day. This could have a significant impact on your student's academic plans.

As early as the 2023-24 school year, WTHS may need to move to a seven-period school day (in place of our current eight-period day) due to financial challenges resulting from our low funding.

Why is preserving the eight-period day important?

In a seven-period school day, all students will experience negative ramifications on their academic opportunities. Students will:

- Not remain as competitive for college and career opportunities.
- Miss out on current curricular two- to four-year programs or certification programs like: business, industrial tech, Project Lead The Way (PLTW), world language, and band.
- Restrict Lake County Technology Campus participation to senior students, even though the two-year programs are designed for junior and senior students.
- Lose opportunities to enroll in advanced placement (AP) and/or dual college credit classes.
- Lose the opportunity for multiple elective choices (for example, students will have to choose either: world language or band; PLTW or art, AP psychology or business).

In June 2021, the Board of Education approved a recommendation to reduce the required graduation credits from 22.5 to 18.5, effective for the class of 2022 and beyond. If the district were to move to a seven-period school day, the new graduation requirement of 18.5 credits would remain in place, as it will continue to be appropriate even with a decrease in course opportunities.

A successful referendum would also allow our district to maintain our current eight-period day for our students.

