



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Nancy Kunkler

Email: nkunkler@wbsd-schools.org

Phone: (262) 335-5459

Tax Rate Adjustment Does Not Change Tax Impact of WBSD Facilities Referendum New video and school transition details released

West Bend — The West Bend School Board approved the 2024-2025 West Bend School District budget and property tax levy during its meeting on October 21.

The Department of Public Instruction provided final financial information to all public school districts on October 15. After this information was received, the tax levy was \$41,115,023 and the mill rate was calculated at \$5.12 per \$1,000 of fair market property value. The final mill rate of \$5.12 is a decrease from the rate of \$5.20 for the 2023-2024 school year.

A preliminary tax levy and mill rate were approved by the electors at the annual meeting on September 23. Both were preliminary because the final state aid and related information were not yet available. During the annual meeting, the estimated mill rate was \$4.85.

There is no change in the tax impact of the facilities referendum. If the West Bend School District referendum is approved, the increase to the tax rate remains the same at \$1.02 per \$1,000 of fair market value. The combined total school tax rate for 2024-2025 will be \$6.14 per \$1,000 of fair market property value for 2024-2025, if approved.

The \$1.02 of the total school tax rate will be used to repay the principal (\$106.25 million) and the interest (estimated to be \$59.2 million, which assumes a 4.75% borrowing interest rate and a loan repayment term of 20 years) for a total of \$165.45 million for principal and interest.

For comparison, in September 2024, Tax-Exempt “AA” rated general obligation bonds currently have an interest rate of 3.95% which would save approximately \$13 million in interest if borrowed at the lower rate. Preliminary tax impact estimates are based on 2% annual market property value growth.

Facilities Referendum Video

The West Bend School District is offering another way to learn details of the 2024 facilities referendum through a video. The video can be viewed on Youtube at <https://bit.ly/4dXMaXS> or on the website at wbsdreferendum2024.org.

School Transition Details

As the November 5 referendum approaches, the results will impact some transitions within West Bend schools in terms of grade configuration and school closures. The primary objective in the referendum pass or fail scenario is to reduce the number of transitions for students, ensuring a stable and supportive learning environment as the district makes necessary changes to facilities.

If the referendum passes, beginning in the 2027-2028 school year, grade levels across the district will be realigned.

- Silverbrook Intermediate will transition into a K-5 elementary school
- Badger Middle School will serve grades 6-8
- Jackson Elementary will be rebuilt and Decorah, Fair Park, and Rolfs will close

To prevent multiple transitions for our current third graders, those students will remain in their elementary school through their fifth-grade year (2025-2026 and 2026-2027), bypassing a move to Silverbrook. Once Decorah and Fair Park are closed, elementary students will attend schools based on new boundaries that will be established.

If the referendum fails, school closures will be accelerated by one year. In this case, Decorah and Fair Park will be closed after the 2025-2026 school year. To avoid multiple transitions, the current fourth graders will remain at their elementary schools for fifth grade (2025-2026 school year) before transitioning to Badger.

The West Bend Joint School District #1 is proud to serve students and their families from the city of West Bend, villages of Jackson and Newburg, and townships of Barton, Polk, Trenton, Jackson, West Bend, and Addison. We strive to ensure that every student is given the opportunity to reach their potential through academics, the arts, and co-curricular activities. Within our community-based 4K program, Head Start program, five elementary schools (K-4), one intermediate school (5-6), one middle school (7-8), and two high schools (9-12), families can expect a caring, inclusive learning environment that supports the development of the whole child. Visit www.west-bend.k12.wi.us for more information.

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