

Dear Families and Community Members:

We have so much to celebrate in the Waunakee Community School District. Our district has ***exceeded*** or ***significantly exceeded expectations*** every year since Wisconsin began creating report cards in 2012, helping us become a destination district for families and businesses looking to relocate to the Dane County area.



To keep this momentum going, we need your input as we plan for the future.

- Waunakee voters approved a referendum in 2024 to support the retention of our high-quality staff. This funding expires on June 30, 2027.
- Sections of the high school are aging, worn, and are not designed to support modern learning spaces.

The District developed options to address these challenges, but **before we proceed, we want to hear your opinion**. To keep all feedback confidential, survey responses are collected by School Perceptions, an independent education research firm.

TWO WAYS TO TAKE THIS SURVEY

Online: (saves postage expense)

Go to:

www.SPFeedback.com

Enter your code:



Paper: Return to any school office or mail it to School Perceptions, PO Box 607, Slinger, WI 53086.

The survey code can be used only once. To obtain additional surveys for other adults in your household, please call the District Office at 608.849.2000.

Para pedir una copia traducida de esta encuesta en español, favor de llamar 608.219.2000, op. 2.

Survey deadline: April 27, 2026

If you need additional support to complete this survey, please contact the District Office. Survey results will be reported at a board meeting and available on our website.

Our students are amazing people whose talents shine every year in the classroom, on the stage, and in the vast arena of co-curricular opportunities. We would not be where we are without dedicated staff, engaged families, and a supportive community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Monica Kelsey-Brown

Superintendent

Carly Eaton

Board Clerk

Joan Ensign

Board President

Ted Frey

Board Director

Dawn Heinrichs

Board Vice President

Heather Murrar

Board Director

Mark Hetzel

Board Treasurer

Christopher Sonne

Board Director

*If you have questions about these important school topics, please consider attending one of our **information/Q&A sessions** on April 14th. They will take place from 10:00-11:00am (tinyurl.com/WCSD10AM) and 6:00-7:00pm (tinyurl.com/WCSD6PM) at the District Office (905 Bethel Circle).*

Committed to Children • Committed to Community • Committed to Excellence

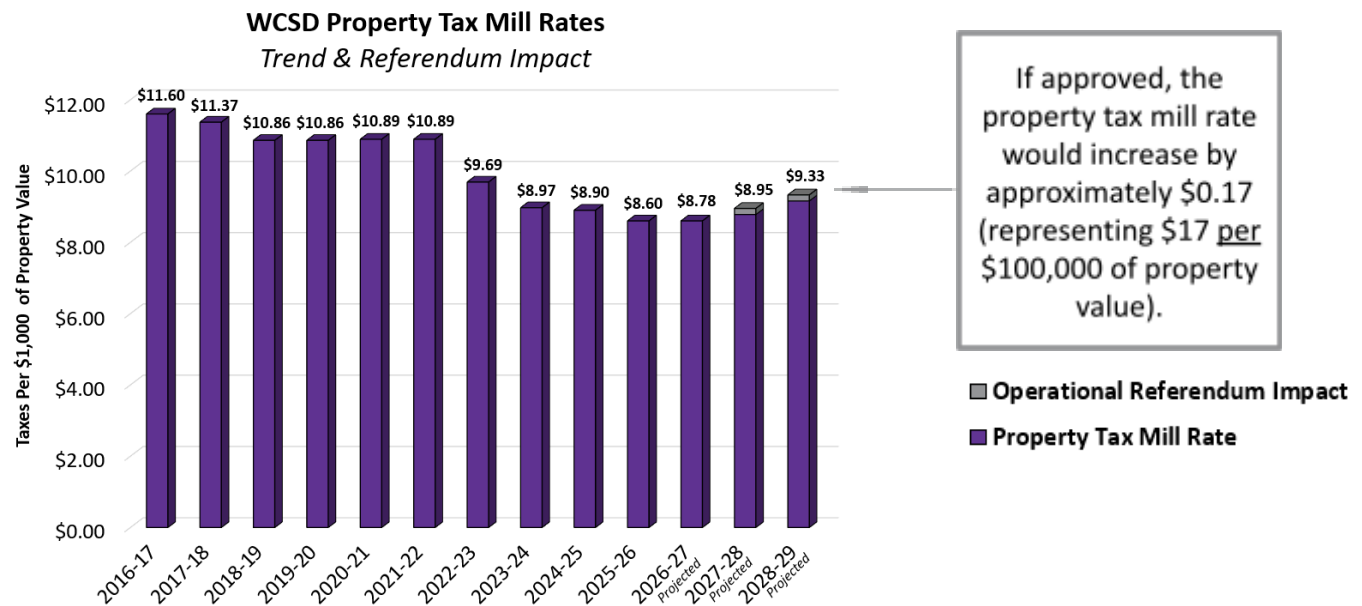
Financial Challenges

- Wisconsin law limits how much funding a school district can receive from state aid and local property taxes. The limit used to keep up with the rate of inflation. However, the state stopped making that adjustment in 2009. **If that had continued, Waunakee schools would have approximately \$15.5 million in additional funds this year (\$3,573 more per student).**
- At the same time, the cost of operating schools (including staffing, transportation, utilities, and student services) has continued to rise.
- Adding to these challenges, next year, \$2 million of funding approved by Waunakee-area voters will expire. These funds helped offset increasing costs and pay our staff more competitively with neighboring school districts.
- According to the most recent Department of Public Instruction (DPI) data, Waunakee has the **second lowest spending per student** among our Dane County peers.

School District	Per-Student Spending
Verona	\$19,476
Middleton-Cross Plains	\$17,160
Sun Prairie	\$16,966
Monona Grove	\$16,860
Regional Average	\$16,839
Stoughton	\$16,605
Mount Horeb	\$16,461
Oregon	\$16,398
Waunakee	\$16,106
DeForest	\$15,515

We are not alone in facing these problems. Over the last 15 years, 72% of Wisconsin school districts have asked their voters for additional funding through an operational referendum.

The District is asking voters to consider renewing our operational referendum at a slightly higher rate (\$2.1 million more each year for four years).



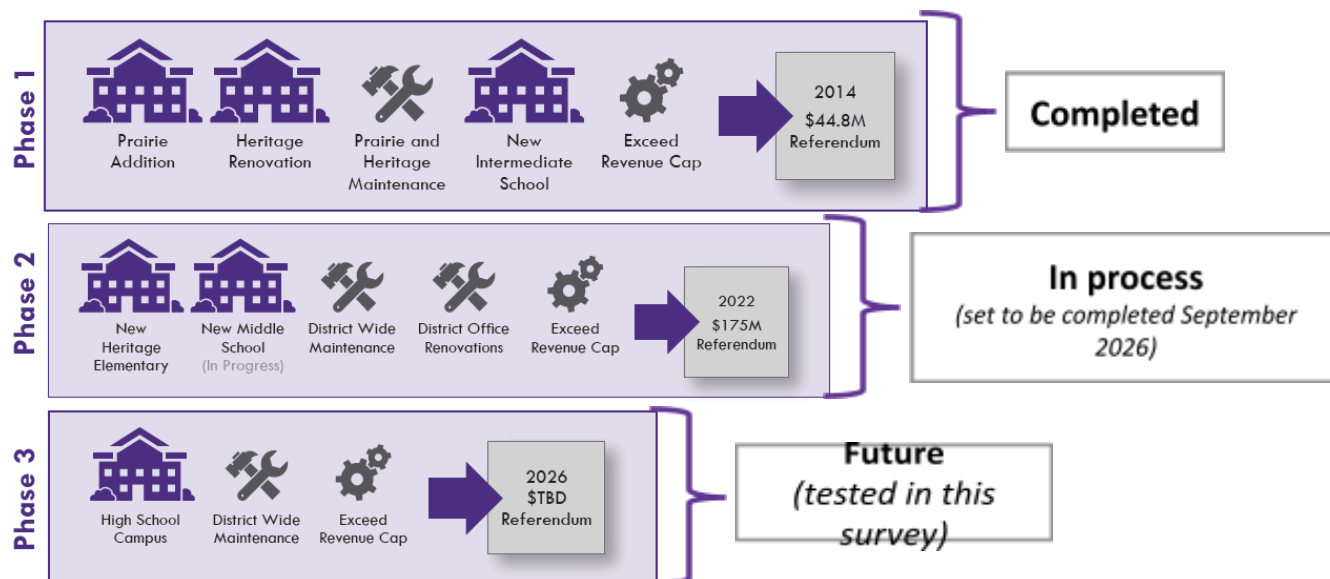
Would you support renewing the operational referendum at a rate of \$2.1 million per year for four years?

- ☐ Definitely yes
- ☐ Probably yes
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Probably no
- ☐ Definitely no

If you are undecided or do not support this referendum, what are the primary reasons?

Long-Range Facility Plan

Planning began in 2010. The three phases were as follows:



Facility Challenges

- The high school does not have enough classroom space. Beginning next year, high school students will use space at the existing middle school. To manage this in the short term, the Board will invest in technology and safety measures so students can travel safely between buildings. However, the long-term goal is that all high school students learn together in the high school building.
- Portions of the high school are more than 55 years old and have had limited updates since they were built. The layout makes it difficult to support modern learning environments.
- The library sits in the center of the building with little natural light and limited space for student collaboration, research, and group learning.
- Family and Consumer Education (FACE) classrooms are outdated and do not have the proper equipment and layout.

In addition, the District lacks appropriate space to serve students receiving alternative education and special education services, as well as our wellness clinic. These programs are planned to eventually relocate to the existing middle school.

To pay for these improvements, the District would need to pursue a capital/building referendum. We need to ensure we pursue this last phase when the community is ready, while balancing the fact that, the longer we wait, the more expensive projects are likely to be. Our goal is to balance these realities while ensuring that our students can learn in safe and functional classrooms.

Should the District pursue a capital/building referendum in November 2026 to address the issues above?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure
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Comments/suggestions/questions:

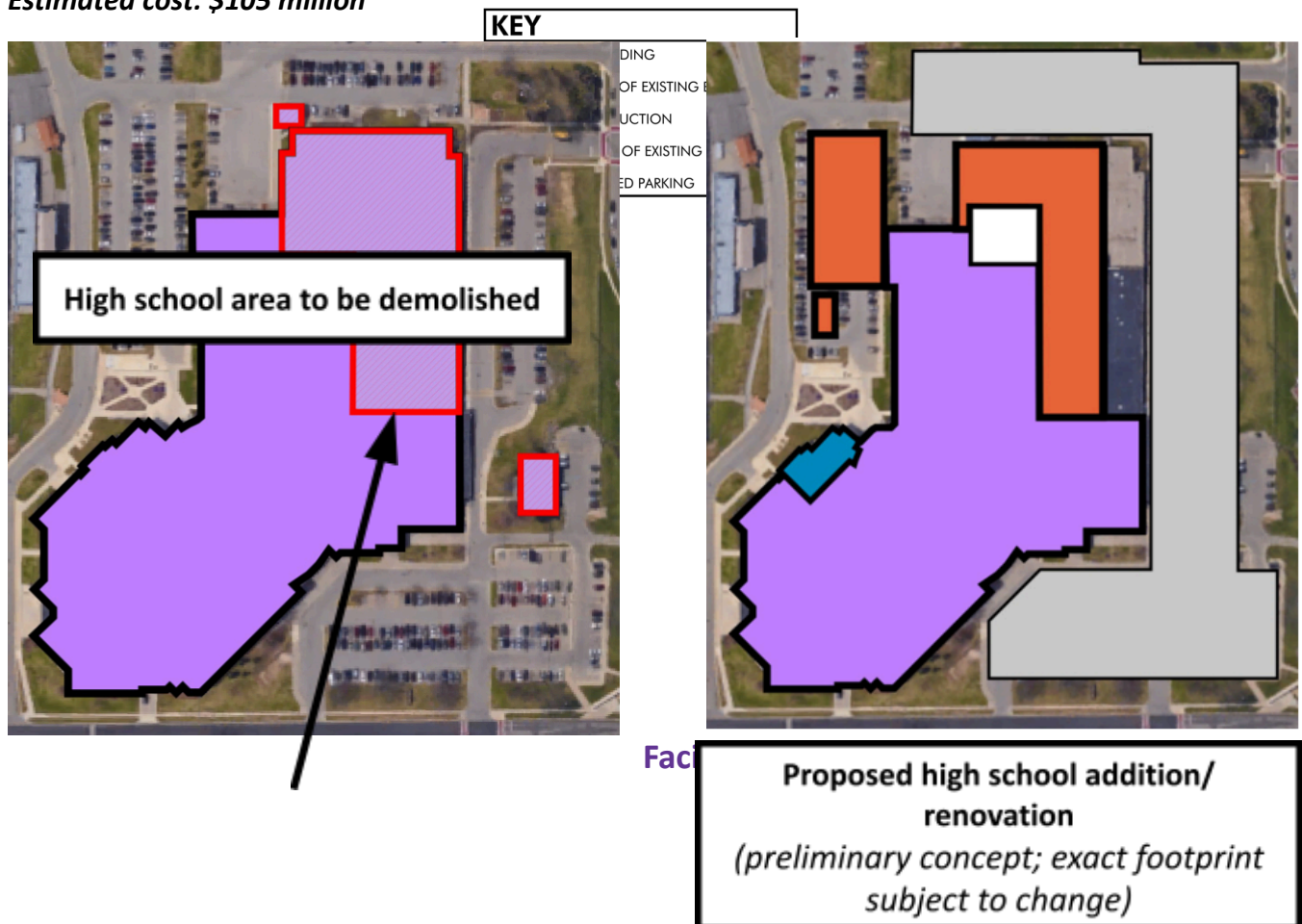
Potential Facility Projects

If the community supports exploring a capital referendum in November 2026, we will need your input on the plan below. The project includes demolishing most of the 1971 portion of the high school, a section from 1994, and the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) and building a new wing(s) on that site. More specifically, the high school plan would:

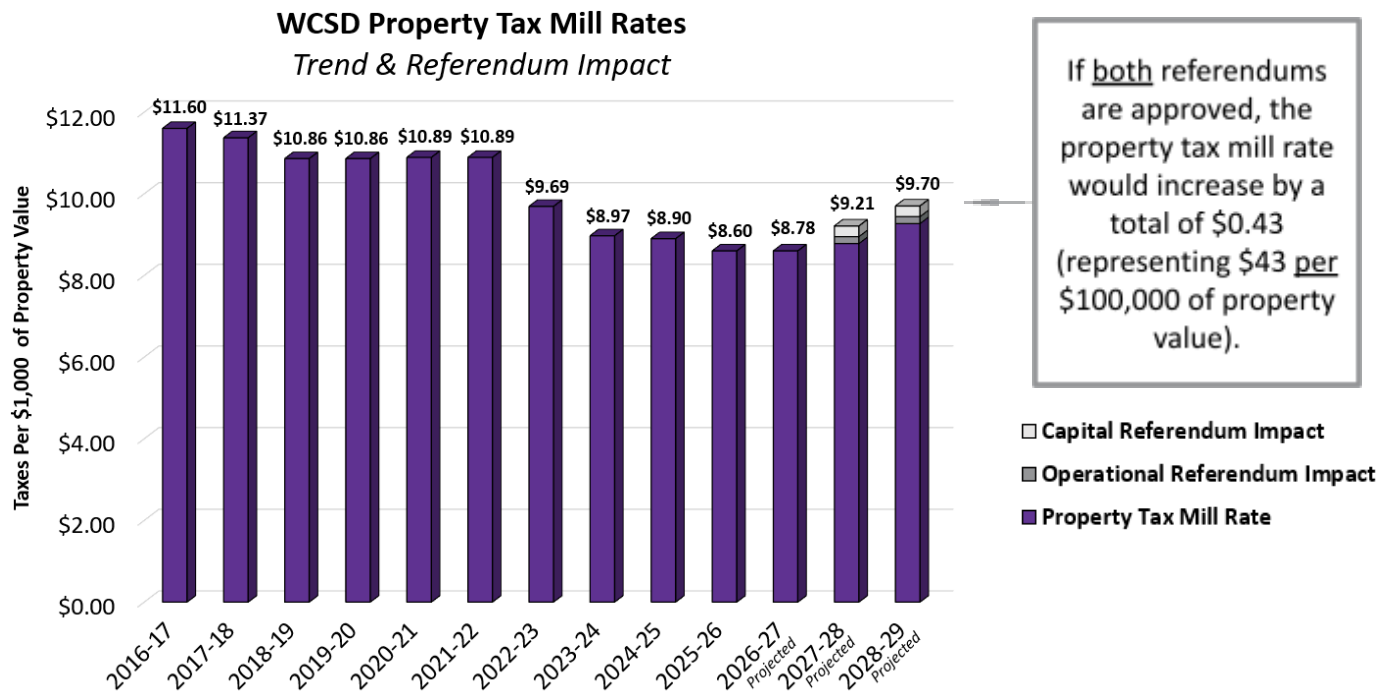
- **Improve safety and security:** Reduce the number of exterior entrances, better compartmentalize the building so visitors can only access designated areas, and combine student parking lots to better separate pedestrian and vehicle traffic.
- **Expand and modernize learning spaces:** Build new science labs and classrooms so every teacher has a dedicated classroom, add flexible spaces for both small- and large-group instruction, and relocate the library to provide natural light and improved student collaboration areas.
- **Improve student and activity spaces:** Expand cafeteria seating to reduce congestion and noise; construct two outdoor athletic team centers near the fields with changing areas, restrooms, athletic training space, and severe weather shelter; and turf the varsity baseball and softball fields to match comparable schools in the area.
- **Update major building systems:** Upgrade HVAC systems with more efficient geothermal technology (these systems are eligible for rebates, just like the \$1.2 million we received from the federal government for Heritage Elementary).

In addition to the projects above, the plan would also build new locker rooms and high school fitness and weight room areas in the existing middle school building.

Estimated cost: \$105 million



The tax impacts to pay for both the operational and capital referendums are shown in the chart below. Financing assumes a 20-year bond with interest rates at 4%.



Would you support a \$105 million capital/building referendum to pay for the facility plan?	☐ Definitely yes ☐ Probably yes ☐ Undecided ☐ Probably no ☐ Definitely no
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If you are undecided or do not support this referendum, what are the primary reasons?

Overall Satisfaction

How is the District doing in each of the following areas?

Delivering a high-quality education	☐ Poor	☐ Fair	☒ Good	☐ Great	☐ Not sure/ no opinion
Keeping the public informed	☐ Poor	☐ Fair	☒ Good	☐ Great	☐ Not sure/ no opinion
Managing funds appropriately	☐ Poor	☐ Fair	☒ Good	☐ Great	☐ Not sure/ no opinion
Building pride in the community	☐ Poor	☐ Fair	☒ Good	☐ Great	☐ Not sure/ no opinion

On a scale of 0 – 10, how likely would you be to recommend the District to a friend or family member?

[illegible]

If you'd like to explain why you gave us these ratings, please use the space below:

Respondent Information

What is your age? ☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65+

In which municipality do you reside?

☐ Village of Waunakee ☐ Town of Dane ☐ Town of Springfield
☐ Town of Vienna ☐ Town of Westport ☐ City of Madison
☐ City of Middleton ☐ Other

Do you live in the Waunakee Community School District?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Are you an employee of the District?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have children attending a school in the District?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Thank you for your participation! We sincerely value your time and input.

Waunakee Community School District
905 Bethel Circle
Waunakee, WI 53597

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Questions about this important school survey?

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These sessions will also be recorded and uploaded to our website.

Please complete this survey by April 27, 2026.

*This publication was produced for the residents of the **Waunakee Community School District**. Due to the overlap of postal routes, residents from neighboring school districts may receive this publication. Given the limitations of bulk mailing, this overlap was difficult to eliminate without significant cost. Thank you for your understanding.*