

OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2026



The **School District of Wisconsin Dells** is a regional leader in education and a source of immense local pride. However, maintaining the quality of education our community expects has become increasingly difficult due to financial challenges largely beyond our control.

Like all public school districts in our state, Wisconsin Dells Schools operates under a state-imposed revenue limit that restricts the funding we can receive from state aid and local property taxes. This system was established in 1993 and has not kept pace with inflation or the rising cost of educating students.

If school funding had kept pace with inflation since 2009, districts like ours would receive about **\$3,500 more per student each year**. This would amount to approximately \$6.3 million in additional spending authority for our schools and students.

Additional statewide funding decisions have also reduced general aid to public schools, further limiting our ability to meet students' needs.

Steps have been taken in recent years to reduce spending, including nearly **\$1.3 million during the 2025-26 school year**.



Budget savings in the prior school year included closing Lake Delton Elementary School, which produced about \$386,000 in operational savings. Today, the district has 12 fewer teachers than it did three years ago.

Despite these measures, we face projected budget deficits averaging more than \$2.4 million through the 2028-29 school year. An operational referendum is the only option to prevent additional cuts to programs and opportunities for students.



PROPOSED SOLUTION



On **Tuesday, November 3, 2026**, our community will vote on a recurring operational referendum to provide critical funding for our schools and students.

If voters approve the measure, our district will be authorized to exceed its state-imposed revenue limit by **\$1.8 million annually**.

A new operational referendum in November would **not increase** property tax rates. Our district's mill rate has fallen more than 25% since 2020, and the board and administration are forecasting a \$5.82 mill rate for 2026-27. This would be an **all-time low for Wisconsin Dells Schools**.

Even with an approved operational referendum in November, the district is still expecting its mill rate to fall through 2029-30, to \$5.30

DID YOU KNOW?

Over the past decade, **more than half** of Wisconsin school districts have received voter approval through successful operational referendums to exceed their revenue limits.



LEARN MORE!

Find additional information and answers to FAQs at:
www.wisconsinellsreferendum.org

