

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated 10/15/26



1. What is on the November 3rd ballot?

The School District of Lodi’s Board of Education has proposed two referendum questions for the community to consider on November 3, 2026. The first question is the renewal of a five-year, non-recurring operational referendum for \$5.98 million for each of the next five years (starting in the 2027–2028 school year) for operational expenses for instructional and educational programming, technology updates, maintaining class sizes, and staff compensation. This is the same amount as the current operational referendum.

The second question is a capital referendum for \$13.2 million to pay the cost of school facility improvements. These projects include: renovations at the High School (specifically to the career and technical educational spaces, indoor pool, and athletic and pool locker rooms); construction of athletic practice fields and a varsity baseball field at the Primary School; and acquisition of furnishings, fixtures, and equipment.

2. What is the specific language that will be on the ballot?

Question Number I:

Shall the School District of Lodi, Columbia and Dane Counties, Wisconsin be authorized to exceed the revenue limit specified in Section 121.91, Wisconsin Statutes, by \$5,980,000 per year for five years, beginning with the 2027-2028 school year and ending with the 2031-2032 school year, for non-recurring purposes consisting of operational expenses for instructional and educational programming, technology updates and staff compensation?

Question Number II:

Shall the School District of Lodi, Columbia and Dane Counties, Wisconsin be authorized to issue pursuant to Chapter 67 of the Wisconsin Statutes, general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$13,200,000 for the public purpose of paying the cost of a school facility improvement project consisting of: renovations at the High School, including to the career and technical educational spaces, indoor pool, and athletic and pool locker rooms; construction of athletic practice fields, a varsity baseball field and corresponding site improvements at the Primary School; and acquisition of furnishings, fixtures and equipment?

3. What is the difference between an operational referendum and a capital referendum?

An operational referendum is a tool used by districts in Wisconsin to pay for everyday operational costs. It can be recurring (once passed, it is in place moving forward) or non-recurring (has a set time limit). The district is proposing a five-year, \$5.98 million non-recurring referendum for the 2027–28 school year through the 2031–32 school year. This operational referendum will replace the \$5.98 million non-recurring operational referendum that was passed by the community in April of 2022, which covered the 2022–23 school year through the 2026–27 school year. A way to think of an operational referendum is paying your monthly rent, grocery bill, and utility bill.

A capital referendum asks voters for permission to borrow money to finance large-scale physical building and infrastructure projects. It works by allowing a district to take out a long-term loan (in this case 20 years). Local property taxes are used to pay off the principal and interest on that debt service. A capital referendum is like taking out a mortgage or home improvement loan to remodel or update your home.

4. Why another operational referendum?

In 2022, district taxpayers approved the current five-year non-recurring referendum of \$5,980,000. This referendum expires at the end of the 2026–2027 fiscal year.

State Aid reductions and stringent revenue limits imposed by the State have severely limited the District's ability to fund educational programs and daily operations. The 2022 referendum provided funding to maintain the district's exceptional educational staff and quality educational programming. The operational referendum allowed the district to implement the strategic plan, which has led to Lodi having the highest DPI state accountability score in Columbia County, Dane County, and CESA 5 while continuing to provide a plethora of opportunities for students across the district. The 2022 operational referendum also included some projects. The district has been able to replace the roof at the Lodi Elementary School/Ouisconsin School of Collaboration building, replace the roof at Lodi High School, replace the track, and complete numerous other projects. Unfortunately, the same budgetary limitations face the District now in 2026 as they did in 2022. Further, costs for labor, utilities, educational materials, insurance, and maintaining our existing buildings continue to outpace the revenue limits imposed on the District by the State.

The fact that we have to again ask our taxpayers for help in supporting and maintaining existing programs and facilities is the outgrowth of less state support and increasing costs.

The five-year (\$5.98 million per year) non-recurring referendum is based on the financial analysis provided by the District's financial advisor R.W. Baird Public Finance, as well as input from the community (via the strategic planning process and the School Perceptions Community Survey), the Board of Education, the District's administration, and the staff.

5. Is this just a Lodi issue or a statewide issue?

Wisconsin continues to face a statewide school funding crisis. Many residents wonder why property taxes keep rising while schools struggle to maintain programs and attract teachers. The challenge lies in the state's complex funding formula, revenue limits, and unfunded mandates that affect all 421 school districts, including Lodi.

When the school funding formula and revenue limits were first created, they were intentionally tied to inflation to ensure a sustainable and predictable way to fund schools over time. However, that connection was eliminated in 2009, and since then, per-pupil increases have not kept pace with rising costs. According to the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials (WASBO), if funding had continued to track with inflation, schools would receive an additional \$3,573 per student in 2025. That represents approximately \$5.02 million in lost purchasing power for the School District of Lodi. To fill this gap, more than 85% of Wisconsin districts (including Lodi) have turned to operational referenda, which fund essentials like class sizes, instructional materials, and utilities, not extras.

6. Why did my property taxes go up last year if there was no new school district referendum?

The most recent state budget provided a \$325 per-pupil increase each year of the biennium but no new general school aid. This was the first time in a generation that there were no new general school aids included in a state budget. As a result, local taxpayers shoulder a greater share of school costs. This is due to the state budget decision, not because of any change in the district. Because Lodi is considered

“property-wealthy” under the state formula, this impact was felt more sharply here than in many districts. While the state budget included \$1.5 billion in income and sales tax relief, it raised property taxes.

7. Why propose an operating referendum now?

The November 3, 2026 election is a statewide election date. There will be many contests on the ballot, including the gubernatorial election. These types of elections typically have the highest turnout, and the District wants to hear from as many stakeholders as possible when it comes to our schools. The District could have waited until the April 2027 election to go to referendum. However, there tends to be a lower voter turnout at this election.

8. What will the 2026 operational referendum pay for?

The additional taxpayer funds would allow the School District of Lodi to:

- Sustain current instructional programming
- Provide targeted interventions and support to students who need them the most
- Pay employees a fair, yet competitive wage, enabling the district an opportunity to attract, recruit, and retain high-quality staff
- Provide for needed building maintenance
- Support technology needs, such as infrastructure, which supports current and future student educational needs

9. Wasn't part of the last operational referendum intended to help us close the compensation gap with our fencepost neighboring districts?

Yes. One of the goals of the last operational referendum was to help the District begin closing the compensation gap between our staff and comparable positions in our neighboring “fencepost” school districts.

At the time, the District planned for approximately 3.5% annual compensation increases during the first several years of the referendum. That represented a significant increase compared with the previous decade. From 2011–12 through 2021–22, annual staff compensation increases averaged approximately 1.84%, while the Consumer Price Index (CPI) averaged approximately 1.72% per year. Based on those historical trends, providing increases of approximately 3.5% appeared to provide an opportunity to both keep pace with inflation and make progress toward more competitive compensation.

What we could not anticipate was the significant increase in inflation that began in 2022. Over the past five years, CPI has averaged approximately 4.48% annually, including a high of just over 8%. During that same period, staff compensation increases in the District averaged approximately 4.18% per year. Those increases were greater than what had originally been built into the referendum plan, but they were still slightly below the rate of inflation.

As a result, rather than allowing us to significantly close the compensation gap with neighboring districts, much of the additional compensation was necessary simply to respond to rapidly rising costs and an increasingly competitive employment market. Consequently, the compensation gap we had hoped to close has remained and, in some cases, may have grown as neighboring districts have also increased compensation in response to the same competitive pressures.

The proposed operational referendum takes a more targeted approach. If approved, the District intends to bring each certified staff member to at least 90% of the market average for comparable employees in our fencepost districts, based on position, years of experience, and educational level. These adjustments would begin with the 2027–28 school year, and the District would continue to monitor market data moving forward so that we do not find ourselves facing the same type of gap in the future.

The proposal also includes a \$2.00-per-hour wage increase for support staff. Administrative and director-level positions are not included in the compensation adjustments funded through the referendum.

Our goal is to remain responsible with taxpayer resources while also recognizing that attracting and retaining high-quality teachers and support staff is essential to maintaining the educational opportunities, services, and outcomes our community expects for its students.

10. What will the \$13.2 million 2026 capital referendum pay for and what is the estimated cost of these items?

The additional taxpayer funds would allow the School District of Lodi to:

- Renovate the career and technical education spaces at the high school – \$3,720,500
- Renovate the indoor pool - \$2,849,500
- Renovate the athletic and pool locker rooms - \$1,556,500
- Construct athletic practice fields (think soccer and football) at Primary School site - \$997,500
- Construct a varsity baseball field at Primary School site – \$4,066,000

The capital referendum also includes the acquisition of furnishings, fixtures, and equipment for these spaces/areas and site improvements needed at the Primary School for these projects. These are included in the costs listed above.

11. What is involved with the renovation of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) spaces at the high school?

The proposed renovation will comprehensively modernize our outdated Career and Technical Education (CTE) facilities. Current spatial constraints and acoustic issues limit instructional effectiveness and restrict program growth. This project strategically reconfigures our labs and classrooms to mirror modern industry environments, expand course offerings, and maximize student safety.

- Agriculture Department Expansion & Labs: To accommodate growing enrollment, the back wall of the agriculture classroom will be removed to expand the instructional footprint and integrate dedicated laboratory spaces. Additionally, the underutilized former greenhouse will be converted into a specialized small-animal lab. Urgent acoustic remediation will also be performed to muffle disruptive HVAC noise in the agriculture shop, restoring a viable environment for daily instruction.
- Technology Education & Shop Realignment: The current layout forces the wood shop, metal shop, small engines, and fabrication equipment into shared or overlapping spaces, creating safety concerns, severe noise disruptions and instructional inefficiencies. The renovation will logically separate these programs:
 - New Wood Shop: The current tech ed classroom will be combined with the small engines area to create a spacious, standalone woodworking facility.
 - Dedicated Metals & Fabrication Shop: The existing combined shop will transition into a dedicated metals and fabrication hub. This expansion will house small engines, fabrication machinery, and additional welding stations, directly enabling the district to launch a highly requested dual-credit welding course for college advancement.
 - Classroom Relocation: The current, loud central classroom will be relocated into a quieter space currently used for offices, ensuring students can focus during lectures.
- Visibility & Community Engagement: New interior windows will be installed across all renovated CTE zones, including the Business Education classroom. This "learning on display"

design allows students, staff, and visitors to safely observe the high-level, hands-on work occurring inside these dynamic technical spaces.

12. What is involved with the renovation of the indoor pool?

The indoor pool environment is inherently harsh, and after years of continuous exposure to moisture and chemicals, critical components of the facility have reached the end of their functional lifespan. To ensure safety, structural integrity, and operational efficiency, this comprehensive renovation must address several urgent infrastructure and safety needs:

- **Mechanical & Structural Systems:** The pool's primary mechanical systems require immediate modernization to improve efficiency and air/water quality. Additionally, the pool deck itself needs structural restoration to address areas where internal rust is currently leaching through and staining the surfaces.
- **Safety & Lighting Infrastructure:** Current lighting fixtures are inaccessible for routine maintenance and have begun degrading, creating a safety hazard by dripping rust directly into the pool and surrounding deck area. These will be replaced with modern, accessible, and moisture-resistant fixtures.
- **Facility Remediation:** High-moisture areas have severely compromised the surrounding infrastructure. All rusted door frames in and around the pool enclosure must be completely replaced to ensure proper building security and containment.
- **Acoustics & Technology:** The facility's aging timing and sound systems are failing and require full replacement. Furthermore, the degraded sound attenuation panels throughout the space must be replaced to restore proper acoustics and communication clarity during activities.
- **Aesthetics & Branding:** The entire aquatic center will be repainted with specialized, moisture-resistant coatings and updated with school/community branding to revitalize the space for students and community members.

13. What is involved with the renovation of the athletic and pool locker rooms?

The current physical education locker room has very small lockers for storage, limiting students' ability to house all their necessary items during specific seasons and/or physical education units.

In addition to locker replacements, the locker rooms themselves need to be modernized, including updates to showers, plumbing, painting, and lighting. Additional shelving and outlets will be added to aid students as they prepare for the rest of their school day.

14. Why are we looking to update the pool and locker rooms now?

Deferring these updates any longer will lead to accelerated facility degradation, higher emergency repair costs, and potential operational closures. This referendum addresses these critical maintenance needs proactively to preserve vital community assets.

15. What is included in the practice fields proposal at the Primary School?

The district would be looking to flatten out some of the land that is currently owned at the Primary School for use as practice spaces for soccer, football, and other activities. These areas would not be considered game fields; they would be used for practices. The district, as well as youth soccer, youth football, and CREW, are always looking for more practice spaces. This would allow the district to use land they already own for this purpose.

16. What is all included in the construction of a baseball field at the Primary School?

A new 360-foot varsity baseball field would be constructed next to the Primary School. The field would include:

- Amended topsoil
- Flat Panel Underdrain
- Irrigation
- Outfield and Sideline Fencing
- 40 foot Net Backstop
- Masonry Dugouts
- Concrete Plaza with Bleachers
- Scoreboard
- Batting Cages
- Bullpen

The new baseball field would not include:

- Field Lighting
- Concession/Restroom Building
- Turf Infield

17. Why hasn't the District budgeted for the repair of the indoor pool, athletic and pool locker rooms, and technology needs?

The District does have an annual budget for maintenance and technology needs. However, as the district has needed to go to an operational referendum, the amount of money budgeted in this area has not kept pace with the growing maintenance needs of the district as the budget has needed to be focused on the day-to-day operational needs of the district.

The District levies annually into a capital improvement fund to address these types of facility issues. As part of the proposed operational referendum, the District is proposing that we levy \$400,000 a year into this capital improvement fund to help address some of these issues in the future.

The District is trying to be more proactive in this area and have our buildings and grounds and technology departments working collaboratively with CG Schmidt, North American Mechanical Inc., and other professional service providers to fully understand replacement timeframes and track the useful life cycles of these systems.

18. What process did the Board use to determine the items to include in the capital referendum?

The Board used an in-depth process to get to a final decision on items included in the capital referendum. The Facility and Finance Committee of the Board has spent many years reviewing the different aspects of the District's facilities, including indoor and outdoor athletic spaces. This was given more priority after the strategic planning process was completed in 2021. One of the pillars of the strategic plan was titled Operational Excellence. The description of this pillar referenced planning for the district, incorporating innovation, budget forecasting, building maintenance & future needs for the district ensuring operational viability.

One of the areas that was also highlighted in the 2021 strategic plan (and continued to be highlighted in the 2025 strategic plan refresh) was Career and Technical Education (CTE). The Board then worked with Plunkett Raysich Architects (PRA) to study our CTE, Performing Arts Center (PAC), and indoor athletic areas, and worked with Point of Beginning (POB) to review our outdoor athletic spaces. PRA met with the staff that used the CTE, PAC, and indoor athletic spaces daily to hear what was working, what areas were issues, and what they would like to see in their facilities to help move these programs forward. In addition, the staff visited area schools with similar spaces that were newly constructed or remodeled and shared that feedback. PRA took this input and produced some designs to meet the needs of our students and staff. The staff reviewed these designs and provided additional

feedback, which was incorporated into the designs. This work was shared with the Facility and Finance Committee of the Board.

While this was being done, the Board participated in professional development work. They developed guiding principles for facility and greenspace planning in the event of a future capital referendum.

In 2025, the Board created a 12-member team selected from a variety of stakeholders in the community to refresh the strategic plan and gather information. The team completed a thematic analysis of the information gathered and created a refreshed strategic plan which was approved and adopted by the Board in December of 2025.

To gather additional community input, the Board created a 15-member Community Viability Team (CVT) to study facilities and green space (outdoor athletic spaces). The Board again reached out to stakeholders in the community and asked them to serve on this committee. The Board gave the following charge to the team:

- *The Community Viability Team is charged with engaging the community to gather input and develop recommendations that align with the Board's guiding principles. The committee will assess current and future needs for school facilities and outdoor spaces, focusing on accessibility, student opportunities, community use, and long-term sustainability. Final recommendations will be presented to the Board of Education to inform long-range planning and referendum decisions.*

The CVT reviewed all the plans and videos prepared by our staff, PRA, and POB, prioritizing the needs of the district, and evaluating cost estimates and tax impacts of these different projects. The team anchored their decisions in the guiding principles that the Board had created and in a newly refreshed strategic plan.

The team categorized items into four general areas: Career and Technical Education, Indoor Athletics, Performing Arts Center, and Outdoor Athletics. The committee also prioritized items within each of these areas except for outdoor athletics. Ultimately, the committee presented their findings and recommendation of \$33.3 million worth of projects to the Board in February of 2026 with the understanding that the Board would use this information to create a community survey to gather more community input.

The Board worked with School Perceptions to create an independent community survey. The survey was emailed to all families and staff in the district and directly mailed to every mailbox within the School District of Lodi's boundaries. The survey was open for three weeks, and 1,029 people took the survey for a response rate of 23% (higher than the response rate in 2021). School Perceptions presented the results of the survey to the Board during their May 2026 meeting. The survey indicated that support for a \$15 million capital referendum was above 50%, but fell within the margin of error of the survey. The survey indicated that support grew for a capital referendum under \$15 million.

The Board met multiple times in May and June to review their guiding principles, the refreshed strategic plan, the Community Viability Team recommendations, the School Perception community survey results, and financial information from Baird. The Board used these documents to anchor their discussion and decisions when it came to both the operational and capital referendum. The Board decided to move forward with a \$13.2 million referendum which includes:

- Renovations to the career and technical education spaces at the high school
- Renovations to the indoor pool, athletic, and pool locker rooms

- Construction of athletic practice fields (think soccer and football), a varsity baseball field, and corresponding site improvements at the Primary School
- Acquisition of furnishings, fixtures, and equipment for these spaces/areas

This decision was the result of years of work and many hours of gathering community input and feedback.

19. Who served on the Strategic Plan Refresh Committee?

The following community members served on the Strategic Plan Refresh Committee:

Erica Bardwell	Susan Goethel	Scott Pierquet	Rachel Wipperfurth*
Heather Baron	Diana Karls	David Puls	
Skye Baron*	Heidi LeHew	Emily TenBarge	
Pam Cunningham	Steve Neander	Julia Wiessing	

* Community members who also served on a previous strategic planning process

20. Who served on the Community Viability Team?

The following community members served on the Community Viability Team (CVT):

Scott Bilse	Brittanie Dempsey	Jason Marshall
Vince Breunig	Rick Findora	Beau Ripp
Shane Clapper	John Haag	Tracy Sachtjen
Joel Crane	Heather Hatley	Trent Schneider
Dennis Crow, Jr	Ben Kuehn	Megan Smith

21. What other areas did the Community Viability Team review and consider as part of their review that are not included in the referendum?

The Community Viability Team looked at a wide variety of facility and greenspace needs during their study of the district. The CVT recommended that the Board survey the community on \$33.4 million worth of potential projects in the district. The other areas they looked at, but which are not included in the referendum, were:

Indoor athletics

Expanded weight room/fitness center

Wrestling room addition

Performing Arts Center

Upgrade lighting system (hoists, fixtures, dimmer rack, on stage electronics)

Sound system upgrade

Upgrade stage decking

Upgrade pit and pit cover

Greenroom addition including restrooms

Replace carpet and seating

Outdoor Athletics

Reconstruct tennis courts

In addition, the CVT reviewed the following areas and asked the Board to survey the community on these as well, understanding that this was information for future planning:

Indoor Athletics

High School gym addition

Outdoor Athletics

Permanent lights, bathroom, and concession building at varsity softball/baseball diamonds
Regrading of varsity softball field including installation of drainage and irrigation
Regrading of JV baseball field
Remake of the Hwy 60 JV baseball facility to include an outfield that could accommodate football/soccer practices

Performing Arts Center

Performing Arts Scene Shop Addition

None of the items listed in this question are included in either of the referendum questions the Board is asking in November. However, please note that the district does plan to use money that was donated for use exclusively in the Performing Arts Center to complete some of the PAC projects listed above.

22. What if the operational referendum does not pass?

- Increased class sizes and elimination of educational and co-curricular programs will be considered.
- Reduced academic and behavioral interventions and support systems that help students reach their full potential.
- A reduction in staff positions, including teachers, educational assistants, administrators, and support staff, could occur.
- Maintenance projects and upgrades will continue to be deferred.
- The District would not implement the 90% market adjustment for certified staff and additional pay for support staff.
- Retaining and attracting high-quality staff will become even more difficult.

23. What have we done to reduce the budget and save money in the district?

- Reduced 4.0 full time positions across the district for the 2026-27 school year
- Reduced a 1 full time school nurse
- Took property, liability, cybersecurity, and health insurance out to bid in 2026
- Delayed facility improvements and updates
- Provided low cost-of-living increases to employees
- Reduced educational programming (i.e., Family & Consumer Education at the high school, reduced English Learner services)
- Engaged contracted service providers, such as contract cleaning companies, to reduce costs
- Reduced bus routes
- Installed solar panels on each building to reduce energy consumption and costs

24. What is the estimated impact to taxpayers if the operational referendum passes?

Because this referendum replaces the District's existing \$5.98 million operational referendum authority that is scheduled to expire, there is no estimated impact to the 2027–28 school district mill rate on an apples-to-apples basis.

While individual property tax bills may still change due to factors outside the District's control, such as property value changes and state funding decisions, the District would continue levying the same \$5.98 million annual operational referendum amount it has levied since 2022–23. Assuming these other factors remain relatively consistent, many homeowners may see little to no change in their school taxes if the referendum passes.

25. If the referendum fails, won't my taxes go down even more?

Yes, property taxes across the district would go down. However, this would need to be offset by significant reductions to our educational programming. Options that the Board will have to explore include:

REDUCING STAFFING - The Board would have to look at reducing staff across the various employee groups of teachers, administrators, educational assistants, building and grounds staff, and other support staff.

INCREASED CLASS SIZES - Reducing staff would reduce the number of classes the district can offer. Depending on how the final cuts get spread out among the various employee groups, class sizes could grow to as large as 27 at the Primary/Elementary/OSC levels.

CUT TECHNOLOGY AND DEFER MAINTENANCE - Much of the last two referendums were invested in enhancing students' learning with technology and catching up on deferred maintenance issues. The district would have to look at cutting back on the replacement cycles and deferring maintenance across the district.

INCREASING FEES - Fees for instructional materials would have to go up along with consideration of charging fees for community programs to use district facilities.

This level of reduction will still not balance the current budget, but would allow the District to come back with a smaller referendum in the spring of 2027. If that operating referendum is not supported, the District would have to look at even more significant reductions in the following years.

26. How can this be the case as my property taxes went up last year and are projected to go up this December?

Many homeowners saw their property taxes increase in December 2025 and may see additional increases in December 2026. Those increases are primarily the result of state funding decisions and changes in how school funding is distributed, not the proposed referendum.

Key factors include:

- Under Wisconsin's school finance system, a district's revenue limit is funded through a combination of state aid and local property taxes. When state aid decreases, local property taxes generally increase to make up the difference.
- The State increased school revenue limits by \$325 per pupil in each year of the 2025-27 biennium but did not provide corresponding increases in general school aid. As a result, a greater share of school funding comes from local property taxes.
- Because Lodi is considered a property-wealthy district under Wisconsin's school funding formula, reductions in state aid have a greater impact on local taxpayers than in many other districts.
- The School District of Lodi experienced a reduction in state aid of \$634,305 for the 2025-26 school year. Current state estimates indicate an additional reduction of approximately \$597,046 (9.18%) for 2026-27.

As a result, even if the referendum is structured to maintain the district's current voter-approved operating authority and is estimated to have no additional tax impact from the referendum itself, property tax bills may still change due to factors outside the referendum, including biennial budget changes and state aid reductions.

The District has discussed these funding changes at Board meetings, Community Engagement Sessions, and through Community Link and remains committed to being transparent about the factors that affect local property taxes.

27. What is the estimated impact to taxpayers if the capital referendum passes?

If the community approves the capital referendum, the “school district mill rate” is projected to increase approximately 0.44 mills. Taxpayers will see an annual increase of approximately \$44 per \$100,000 of fair market value. Below is a table that shows the annual impact and monthly impact of different property value levels. The District uses the \$100,000 property value to start as it makes for easier math for people to determine the estimated impact on their specific property.

Property Value	PROJECTED ANNUAL IMPACT	PROJECTED MONTHLY IMPACT
\$100,000	\$44.00	\$3.67
\$250,000	\$110.00	\$9.17
\$500,000	\$220.00	\$18.34
\$750,000	\$330.00	\$27.50

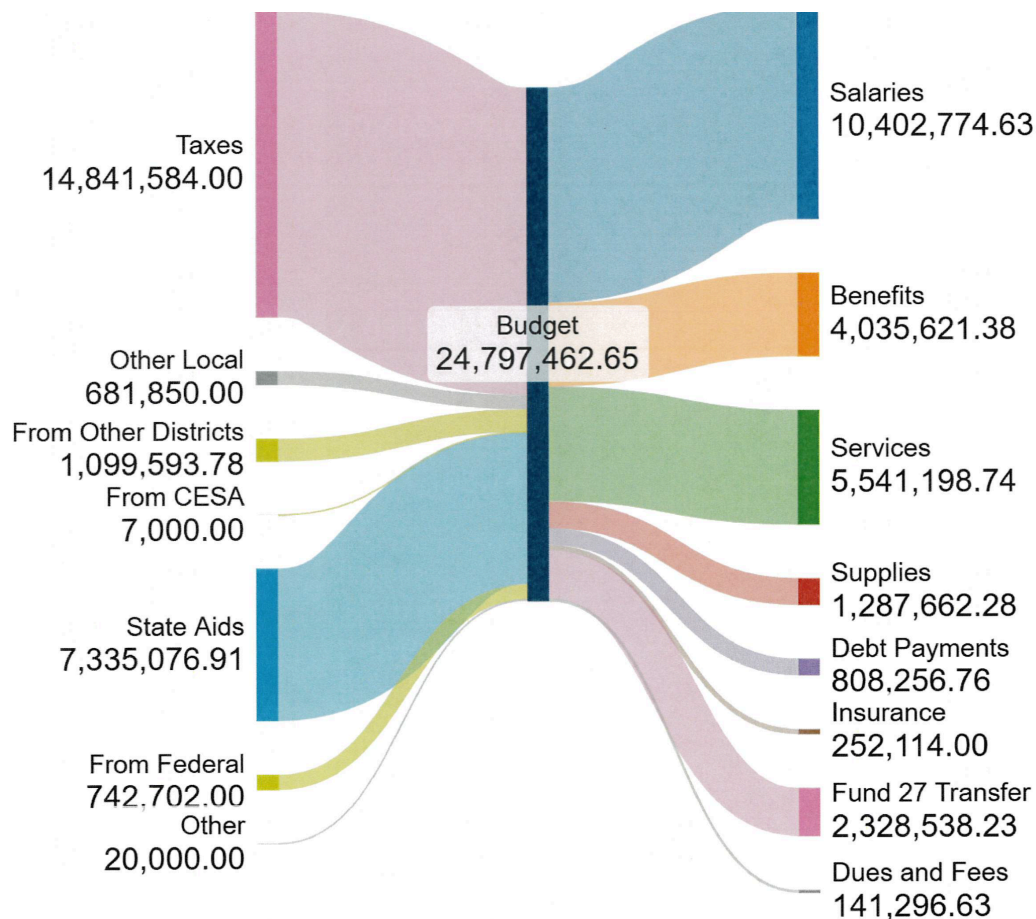
The estimated tax impact for the capital referendum uses a planning interest rate of 5.25% and a term of 20 years. Annual equalized valuation growth of 1% is assumed. Tax impact estimates provided by financial consultants from Baird.

28. What is the current starting salary for a teacher in Lodi compared to other area districts?

According to statewide district data reported to CESA 5 for the 2025–2026 school year, the School District of Lodi is tied for 113th out of 149 participating districts with a starting teacher salary of \$43,000. While this is \$3,000 above the lowest reported salary (\$40,000), it falls significantly behind regional leaders. Specifically, Lodi's starting pay is \$13,500 below the highest-paying district (located in its athletic conference) and \$13,329 below the second-highest district, which shares a boundary with Lodi.

29. How is the current budget allocated?

The left side of this graphic represents revenue, while the right side of this graph represents expenses.



30. How much of the current budget goes toward athletics and co-curriculars? Would it help to increase the amount that students pay?

The entire co-curricular budget for the District (athletics and other co-curriculars) is approximately \$600,000. Currently, high school students pay \$75 for each sport they play in unless they meet the family maximum of \$300. Most other co-curriculars at the high school have a fee of \$40 per participant. These fees were raised for the 2026–27 school year.

An increase in fees will be one of the items considered if the referendum does not pass in November.

The Board has looked at fees in the past and always tries to balance providing students access to these important activities (which should be available to all students), against the level of fee that could potentially dissuade someone from participating.

31. What is the current cost per pupil in the School District of Lodi? What was it five years ago?

The School District of Lodi, for the 2024-2025 fiscal year (which is the most recent, audited data available from DPI), had an approximate shared cost per member of \$13,000. This places the district second-lowest in terms of per-member costs of Capital Conference school districts, as well as second-lowest when compared to school districts sharing a boundary. Five years before, for the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the School District of Lodi had a shared cost per member of approximately \$12,100.

32. If the state would have maintained their rate of support that they did from 1993–2010 through this current year, would the district's operational referendum still be \$5.98 million?

According to financial analysis from the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials (WASBO), if the state funding formula had remained continuously tied to inflation, the School District of Lodi would receive an estimated \$3,573 more in funding per pupil by the end of the 2025–27 state budget

cycle. Based on the district's recent enrollment of 1,433 students, this formula change represents a calculated difference of \$5,120,109 in annual revenue ($\$3,573 \times 1,433$). Under the original framework, this revenue would have been generated through a combination of general state aid and local property taxes, rather than the per-pupil categorical aid models utilized today.

33. How does Wisconsin's K-12 funding compare nationally?

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau provides national context on inflation-adjusted, overall K-12 education spending (combining local, state, and federal sources):

- Wisconsin Spending Trends: Between 2002 and 2023, Wisconsin's inflation-adjusted per-pupil spending increased by \$36 (2.4%).
- National Spending Trends: During the same period, the national average for per-pupil spending rose by \$3,483 (21.1%).
- Spending at the national level was 100 times Wisconsin's.

According to WASBO research, this variance altered Wisconsin's national ranking in K-12 per-pupil spending over two decades. In 2002, Wisconsin ranked 11th in the nation, spending 11% above the national average. By 2023, Wisconsin ranked 26th in the nation, spending 9.6% below the national average.

34. What is the enrollment trend of the School District of Lodi?

The District had an enrollment study completed in 2025 by the Applied Populations Laboratory out of the University of Wisconsin - Madison. This study, which was approved by the Board at their July 2025 meeting, indicated that the enrollment in Lodi would stay fairly steady over the next five years (with us maybe losing a handful of students) but is projected to grow slightly after that. The operating referendum was based on the enrollment projection approved by the Board.

35. When the pool was opened, it was not a WIAA-sanctioned pool; will that change with this renovation?

This is not an accurate statement. The Lodi High School indoor pool is the correct length and size for WIAA events. We do have difficulty holding any type of large event due to the lack of seating in the pool, but the pool itself is regulation size.

36. Will there be more seating at the pool with this renovation?

There will not be any more seating added to the indoor pool. There was discussion about this at both the Community Viability Team and the Board level, but additional seating would have required expanding the footprint of the pool and was determined to be cost-prohibitive.

37. Why does a baseball diamond cost \$4 million? How many bids did the district get on this field?

This is an [estimate](#) provided by CG Schmidt for the cost of a varsity baseball diamond to be built at the Primary School. This is an estimate based on recent diamonds that they have helped build and that Point of Beginning has been a part of building the last few years. This is just an estimate. If the capital referendum is approved, this project will then be taken out to bid to secure the best possible prices for completion of this project. This is a similar process that was used in the previous referendum for the track, LES/OSC roof, HS roof, cabling, etc. The referendum and conversations in 2022 were based on estimates, but each of these projects was then taken out to bid to secure a high-quality project at the best possible price for the district.

38. Aren't there concerns about placing a baseball field at the Primary School and having high school students drive to the field while Primary School students are leaving school for the day?

The Primary School ends its day at 2:55 pm, and students walking home from the Primary School and the traffic from parents/guardians picking up students is typically dissipated by the time the high school releases students at 3:13 pm.

39. What would the plan be if the referendum questions are not supported by the community?

The Board would need to make a decision on the next steps if one or both referendums were to not be supported by the community on November 3.

- If the operational referendum were to fail, the Board would most likely come back with a referendum question for the community to consider in April of 2027 as the current operational referendum ends following the conclusion of the 2026–27 school year. Legally the Board would have to pass a referendum resolution in January to place it on the April ballot (resolution needs to be passed a minimum of 70 days prior to the referendum election date).
- If the capital referendum were to fail, the Board could decide to come back with a question in April of 2027 or could hold off and potentially ask a capital referendum question at a later date. It is worth mentioning that there are no fall elections in 2027, so if the Board decides not to go in April of 2027, the next opportunity would be in the spring of 2028.

40. Why can't we separate out all the items on the capital referendum and vote on them individually? Why did the Board put them together?

Wisconsin state law limits school districts to two referendum questions per calendar year. Because the School District of Lodi is asking voters to consider both an operational referendum and a capital referendum, and we have reached that limit. As a result, the Board must combine the various facility improvement projects into one capital referendum question rather than allowing voters to vote on each project separately.

This has not always been the case. In 2016, our district was able to ask voters three separate referendum questions. Voters approved an operational referendum and a capital referendum to build a new primary school, but did not approve a third question to add another gymnasium at the high school.

However, the 2017–2019 state budget changed the rules. The new law limited school districts to two referendum questions per calendar year and required referendums to be held on regularly scheduled election days.

Because of these changes, the Board no longer has the same flexibility it had in 2016 to place individual capital projects on the ballot as separate questions. This is why the proposed facility improvements are included in one capital referendum question.

41. Where do I go to vote?

City of Lodi

Lodi City Hall
130 S. Main Street
Lodi, WI 53555
608-592-0713
Polling Hours: 7:00am - 8:00pm

Village of Dane

Village of Dane Hall
102 W. Main Street
Dane, WI 53529
608-849-5422
Polling Hours: 7:00am - 8:00pm

Town of Arlington

Arlington Community Bldg
200 Commercial Street
Arlington, WI 53911
608-635-4808
Polling Hours: 7:00am - 8:00pm

Town of Dane

Dane Town Hall
213 W. Main Street
Dane, WI 53529

Town of Dekorra

Dekorrra Town Hall
W8225 County Road JV
Poynette, WI 53955

Town of Lodi

Lodi Town Hall
W10919 County Road V
Lodi, WI 53555

608-849-4335

Polling Hours: 7:00am - 8:00pm

Town of Roxbury

Roxbury Town Hall

7167 Kippley Road

Sauk City, WI 53583

608-643-8281

Polling Hours: 7:00am - 8:00pm

608-635-2014

Polling Hours: 7:00am - 8:00pm

Town of Vienna

Vienna Town Hall

7161 County Road I

DeForest, WI 53532

608-845-3800

Polling Hours: 7:00am - 8:00pm

608-592-4868

Polling Hours: 7:00am - 8:00pm

Town of West Point

West Point Town Hall

N2114 Rausch Road

Lodi, WI 53555

608-592-7059

Polling Hours: 7:00am - 8:00pm