



WAUNAKEE

COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

2026 Annual Meeting & Budget Hearing

Date: Monday, August 24, 2026
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Board of Education Room
905 Bethel Circle
Waunakee, WI 53597



Purpose of Annual Meeting

120.10 Powers of annual meeting. The annual meeting of a common or union high school district may:

- (1) **CHAIRPERSON AND CLERK.** Elect a chairperson and, in the absence of the school district clerk, elect a person to act as the clerk of the meeting.
- (2) **ADJOURNMENT.** Adjourn from time to time.
- (3) **SALARIES OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS.** Vote annual salaries for school board members or an amount for each school board meeting the member actually attends.
- (4) **REIMBURSEMENT OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS.** Authorize the payment of actual and necessary expenses of a school board member when traveling in the performance of duties and the reimbursement of a school board member for actual loss of earnings when duties require the school board member to be absent from regular employment.
- (5) **BUILDING SITES.** Designate sites for school district buildings and provide for the erection of suitable buildings or for the lease of suitable buildings for a period not exceeding 20 years with annual rentals fixed by the lease.
- (5m) **REAL ESTATE.** Authorize the school board to acquire, by purchase or condemnation under ch. 32, real estate and structures and facilities appurtenant to such real estate necessary for school district purposes.
- (6) **TAX FOR SITES, BUILDINGS AND MAINTENANCE.** Vote a tax to purchase or lease suitable sites for school buildings, to build, rent, lease or purchase and furnish, equip and maintain school district buildings. The tax may be spread over as many years as are required to pay any obligations approved or authorized at the annual meeting including rental payments due in future years under an authorized lease.
- (7) **TAX FOR TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES.** Vote a tax to purchase, operate and maintain transportation vehicles and to purchase liability insurance for such vehicles, and to finance contracts for the use and services of such vehicles.
- (8) **TAX FOR OPERATION.** Vote a tax for the operation of the schools of the school district.
- (9) **TAX FOR DEBTS.** Vote a tax necessary to discharge any debts or liabilities of the school district.
- (10) **SCHOOL DEBT SERVICE FUND.** Vote a tax to create a fund for the purpose of paying all current bonded indebtedness for capital expenditures. All money raised through taxation or otherwise collected pursuant to this subsection shall be deposited by the school district treasurer in a segregated fund. Such money shall not be used for any other purpose, except as provided by s. 67.11 (1), or be transferred to any other fund except by authorization by a two-thirds majority vote of the total number of electors of the school district.
- (10m) **SCHOOL CAPITAL EXPANSION FUND.** Vote a tax to create a fund for the purpose of financing all current and future capital expenditures related to buildings and sites. All money raised through taxation or otherwise collected pursuant to this subsection shall be deposited by the school district treasurer in a segregated fund. Such money shall not be used for any other purpose or be transferred to any other fund except by authorization by a majority vote of the electors present at a subsequent annual meeting and only if notice that the issue would be on the agenda was included in the notice of the subsequent annual meeting under s. 120.08 (1) (c).
- (11) **TAX FOR RECREATION AUTHORITY.** Vote a tax for the purposes specified in s. 66.0123.
- (14) **LEGAL PROCEEDINGS.** Direct and provide for the prosecution or defense of any action or proceedings in which the school district is interested.
- (15) **TEXTBOOKS.** Authorize the school board to furnish textbooks under conditions prescribed by the annual meeting or by the school board. The authorization shall continue in effect until revoked by a subsequent annual meeting.
- (16) **SCHOOL LUNCHES.** Direct the school board to furnish school lunches to the pupils of the school district and appropriate funds for that purpose.
- (19) **CONSOLIDATION OF HIGH SCHOOLS.** In a union high school district, vote to consolidate schools or to discontinue a school where more than one high school is operated by the school district.

History: 1975 c. 39, 115, 199; 1977 c. 206; 1979 c. 301; 1981 c. 20; 1983 a. 207, 339; 1985 a. 29, 218; 1993 a. 184; 1999 a. 150 s. 672; 2015 a. 55.

An action may be instituted and maintained by a school district board without specific approval of the district when management, control, and conservation of school district property requires speedy application for process. *Joint School District No. 1 v. City of Chilton*, 78 Wis. 2d 52, 253 N.W.2d 879 (1977).

The power to convert an elementary school to another educational use is not granted by sub. (5) or (12). The school board has this power under s. 120.13 (1). *State ex rel. Waldeck v. Goedken*, 84 Wis. 2d 408, 267 N.W.2d 362 (1978).

Sub. (10) authorizes levying a tax for the purposes of current or future capital expenditures even without corresponding, existing bonded indebtedness. *Barth v. Board of Education*, 108 Wis. 2d 511, 322 N.W.2d 694 (Ct. App. 1982).

Nothing in sub. (6) limits a district from paying a building lease from a general fund raised by the levy of taxes under sub. (8) for school operations. *Dieck v. Unified School District*, 165 Wis. 2d 458, 477 N.W.2d 613 (1991).

Discussing a common school district's authority under sub. (12) to lease surplus property. 67 Atty. Gen. 332.



Election of a Chairperson

- The budget hearing and annual meeting are to be chaired by an elector selected from those present.



Official Notice of the Hearing and Meeting

- The Board Clerk, Carly Eaton, will read the required notices as published in the district's official newspaper.
- Click [here](#) for the required notices under the Annual Meeting Reports tab.



Budget Summary

- Director of Business Services, Allie Newton will review the budget and financial data
- Click [here](#) for the budget publication under the Annual Meeting Reports tab.



Budget Timeline

- 3rd draft of the budget approved by school board on July 13, 2026
 - This budget draft was based on the Governor's approval of the 2025-27 State Budget
 - This budget draft did include a tax levy of \$51 million, an equalized property value increase of 6.0%, and a tax rate of \$8.80
 - This is the budget version published in the Waunakee Tribune for the budget hearing/annual meeting
- On October 26th, the school board will approve the budget and tax levy utilizing final budget data instead of estimated data.



Budget Timeline

I. 2026-2027 BUDGET TIMELINE

December 1	Review enrollment projection scenarios with the Budget Committee Review budget planning process with the Budget Committee
December 16	Review budget planning process with the Administrative Cabinet
January 5	Review expenditure projection scenarios and open enrollment capacity with the Budget Committee
January 12	Present open enrollment capacity to School Board for approval
February 2	Present draft of budget planning process to Budget Committee
February 9	Present FTE request to school board for approval
March 9	Present budget planning process to the School Board for approval
March 10	Distribute approved budget planning process to the administrative cabinet
March 15 – Apr. 15	Building/department level budget development
April 1-30	Preparation of the first draft of the budget Budget meetings with administrators as necessary
May 4-8	First draft of the budget to the Budget Committee
May 11	First draft of the budget to the School Board School Board approves 2026-27 student fees School Board approves 2026-27 insurance benefits
May 12-31	Staff presentations on the budget process
June 1-5	Second draft of the budget to the Budget Committee
June 8	Second draft of the budget to the School Board
July 1	State equalization aid estimates released by DPI
July 6-10	Third draft of the budget to the Budget Committee
July 13	Third draft of the budget to the School Board Public hearing on the budget during School Board meeting School Board approves budget to allow for summer activity
August 24	Presentation of the approved budget at the annual school district Budget Hearing. Request public approval of the tax levy at the Annual Meeting.
September 18	Third Friday in September student count
October 15	State equalization aid certification released by DPI
October 26	School Board makes any changes to the budget and sets the tax levy on or before November 1
Before Nov. 10	Certify tax levy by the School Board Clerk



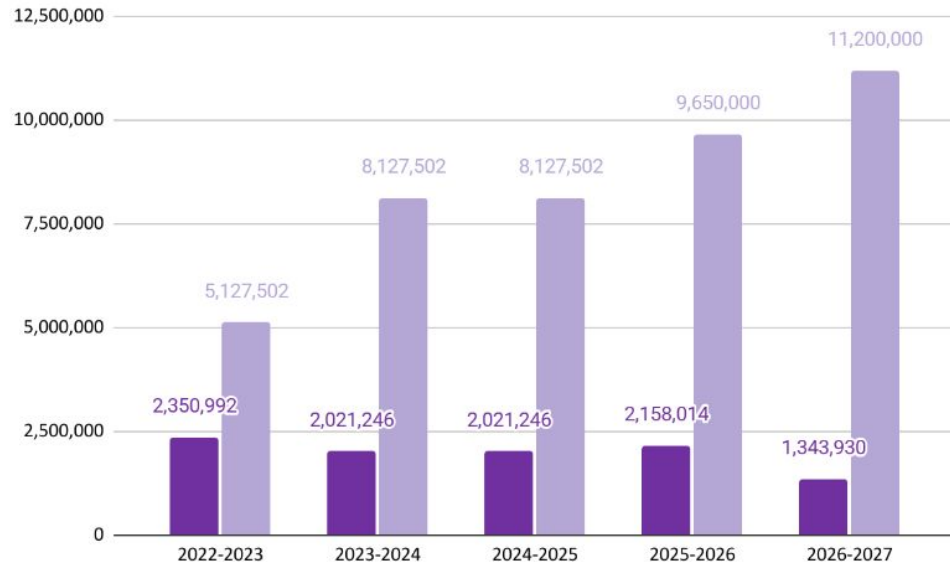
2025-27 State Budget - Revenue Cap

- The state revenue cap formula was increased by \$325/student for 2026-27.
- The student categorical aid remains the same at \$742.
- The November 2024 operational referendum allowed the 2026-27 revenue limit to increase by up to \$8.1 million (recurring), \$500,000 (recurring) for classified staff pay, \$1.05 million (non-recurring) for competitive wages.
- The revenue cap is estimated to increase by \$2,893,930 and non-revenue cap revenues are estimated to increase by \$341,659.



2025-27 State Budget - Revenue Cap

A operational referendum to exceed the revenue limit was approved by the community at \$9.65 million for 25-26 and \$11.2 million for 26-27.





2025-27 State Budget - State General Aid

- Waunakee is estimated to receive a \$491,805 decrease in state general aid for 2026-27.
- The 2025-27 state budget included a \$0 increase in the state equalization aid formula
- Under the state revenue cap formula, increases or decreases in state general aid are offset by increases or decreases in the fund 10 local property tax levy.



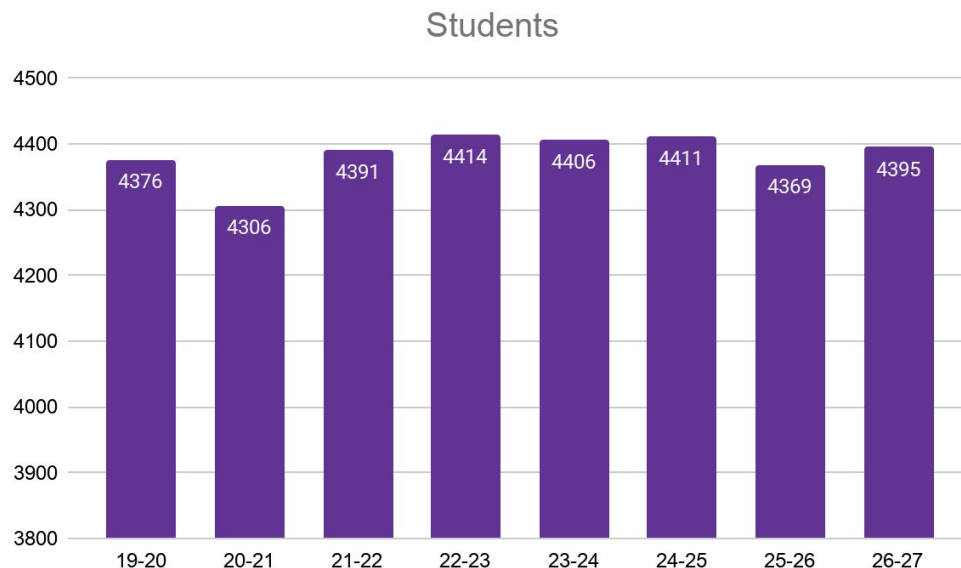
2025-27 State Budget - Special Education Aid

- State special education aid increased to 45% in 26-27
 - Waunakee is budgeting a 42% increase for 26-27
- Waunakee is estimated to receive a \$974,035 increase in state special education aid for 26-27.
- Under the school financing system, increases or decreases in state special education aid are offset by increases or decreases in the local transfer from the general fund 10 to the special education fund 27.



Enrollment Increase

- Budget developed with an estimated increase of 26 students (total enrollment estimated at 4,395).
- 4,395 students can be compared to 4,369 students from September 2025
- Current enrollment data is 4,319





Expenditures (General Fund)

- 6% increase over 25-26 (budgeted).
- 6.55 FTE (full time equivalency) increase in staff.
- The School Board has approved 2026-27 salaries/wages with a 2.63% CPI increase and compensation system increases for teachers and classified staff members. In addition, the school board has implemented the first phase of the classified staff average pay increases from November 2024 referendum.
- The contingency fund of \$300,000 is included in the budget. The previous contingency fund was \$200,000. This is the second increase in 25+ years.



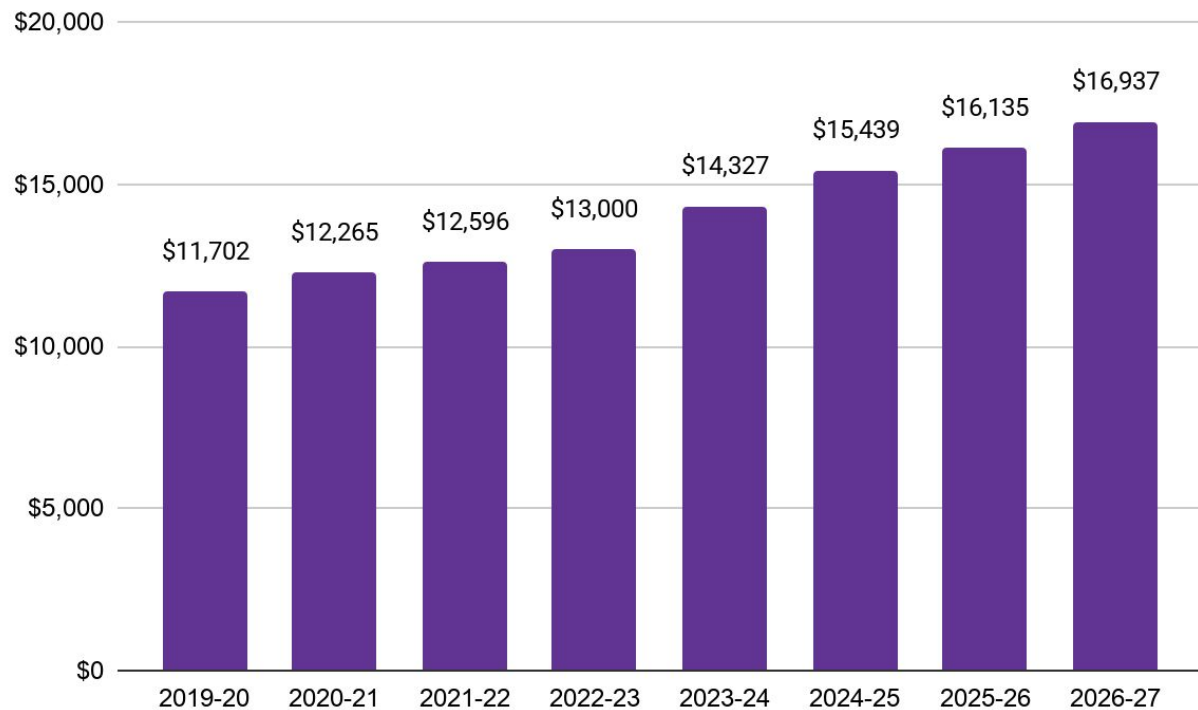
Expenditures (General Fund Actual)

- \$51,207,365 in 19-20
- \$52,814,759 in 20-21
- \$55,312,385 in 21-22
- \$60,298,881 in 22-23
- \$63,124,805 in 23-24
- \$67,708,385 in 24-25
- \$71,463,308 in 25-26
- \$74,438,290 in 26-27 (budgeted)



Cost per Pupil

Fund 10 expenditures divided
by the 3rd Friday in September
headcount



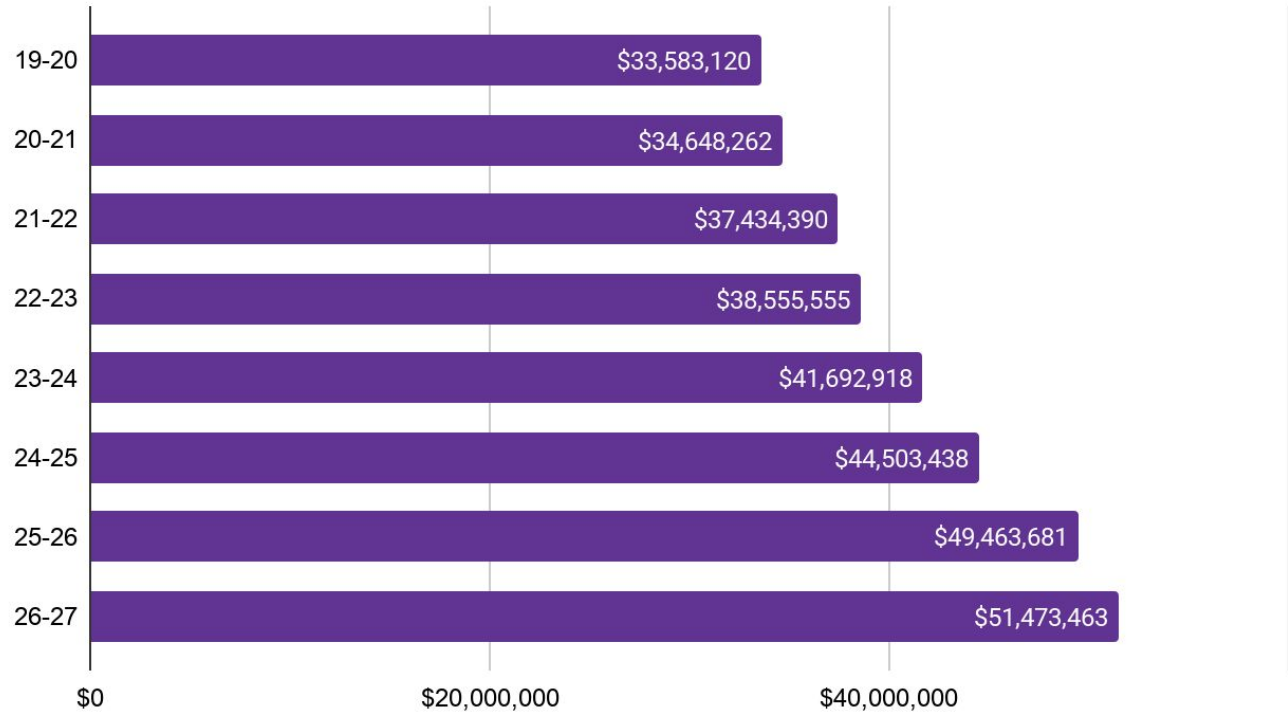


Revenue (General Fund)

- State aid decreases \$491,805 or 2%
- Local taxes increase \$3,385,734 or 9%
- Total increase of \$3,235,589 or 5% (over budget in 25-26)



Tax Levy





Equalized Tax Rate

- The 2025-26 equalized property values in the district were \$5,520,979,855.
- The 2025-26 tax rate was \$8.60 per \$1,000 of equalized value.
- The 2026-27 equalized property values in the district are estimated at \$5,852,238,646
- The 2026-27 tax rate is estimated at \$8.80 per \$1,000 of equalized value.



2026-27 Tax Levy

- The school board will be evaluating options to reduce the tax levy prior to October 30th

Proposed Property Tax Levy			
FUND	Audited	Unaudited	Proposed
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
General Fund	33,383,590.00	37,939,991.00	41,325,725.00
Referendum Debt Service Fund	10,699,681.00	8,544,712.00	8,850,867.00
Non-Referendum Debt Service Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00
Capital Expansion Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00
Community Service Fund	740,000.00	1,006,300.00	1,296,871.00
TOTAL SCHOOL LEVY	44,823,271.00	47,491,003.00	51,473,463.00
PERCENTAGE INCREASE –	8.0%	6.0%	8.4%
TOTAL LEVY FROM PRIOR YR			

Step #5 Setting of the Levy and a Sufficient Tax Amount Requirements

[Wis.Stat.sec.120.12\(3\)\(a\)](#) and [\(c\)](#) require that on or before November 1, a school board must determine if the tax voted at the annual meeting is sufficient to operate and maintain the schools for the school year. If the amount so determined is not sufficient, the school board shall raise the tax. The board may lower the tax if the amount so determined exceeds requirements. The tax levy shall not exceed limits established by [Wis.Stat.sec.121.91](#). The taxes levied must be certified to municipalities on or before November 10.

- The school board clerk must set the levy and adopt an original budget on or before November 1st.
- The school board clerk must certify the levy to the municipalities on or before November 10th.



2026-27 Tax Levy

- The debt service tax levy is \$8,850,867. The debt service levy includes \$0 identified as a debt service defeasance (also known as pre-paying existing debt). The use of referendum project savings could occur in 2026-27 to lower the overall tax levy.

- ▶ ([§120.12\(4\)](#) Wis. Stats.) – amount necessary to meet any irrepealable tax obligations
 - ▶ Tax for Debt Retirement
- ▶ A School District is allowed to annually levy up to and including all outstanding principal & interest
- ▶ Additional Levy is used for reducing future property tax levies
 - ▶ Prepayment of Debt (if a call date has been met)
 - ▶ Defeasance (if we are ahead of the call date)



Equalized Value (in Billions)

19-20 \$3.1 billion

20-21 \$3.2 billion

21-22 \$3.4 billion

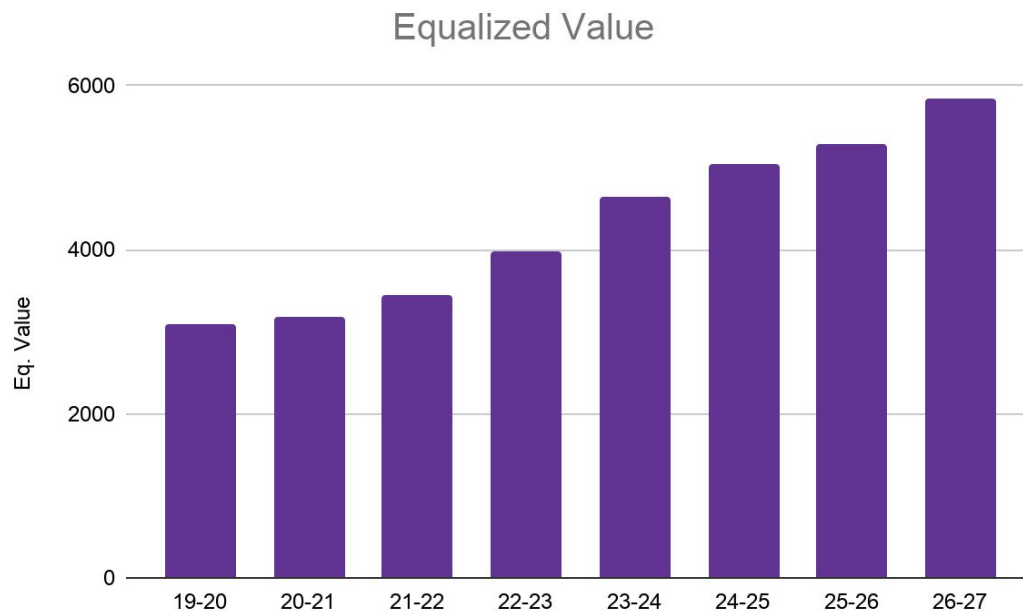
22-23 \$3.9 billion

23-24 \$4.6 billion

24-25 \$5 billion

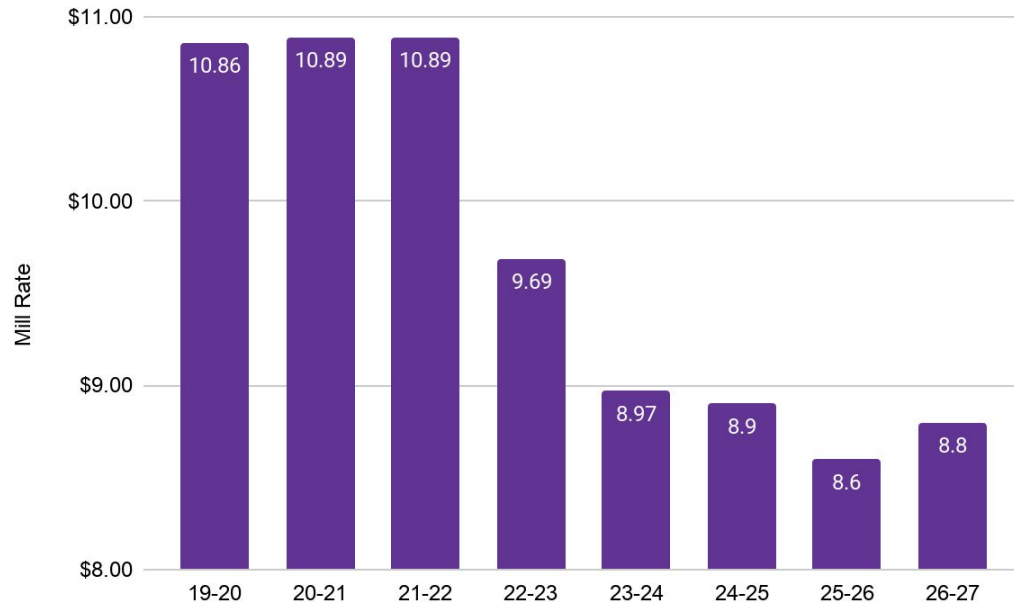
25-26 \$5.5 billion

26-27 \$5.8 billion





Tax Rate - District Average Estimated Increase is \$200 on a \$500,000 home with 0% inflation





Equalized Value - October 1st, 2026

- The 2026-27 tax levy is estimated based on a 6% increase in the equalized property value in the District.
- The State of Wisconsin certifies the equalized property value on October 1, 2026.
- Based on the August 15th property value information released by the Department of Revenue, the equalized value is estimated to increase by 10.22% with at least 2.9% of that being new construction in the district.



District Fund 10 Fund Balance (Assets-Liabilities)

Year	Amount	% of Next Year's Budget
19-20	\$6.4 M	11.7%
20-21	\$7.6 M	13.7%
21-22	\$8.7 M	15.1%
22-23	\$8.0 M	12.7%
23-24	\$7.5 M	11.0%
24-25	\$7.5 M	10.5%
25-26	\$8.5 M	11.4%



Next Steps with 2026-27 Budget

The School Board must modify the budget based on:

- September enrollment count on September 18, 2026
- Budget changes that have taken place since July 2026 (Cash flow borrowing expenses, open enrollment revenues and expenses, 4K expenses, transportation expenses, utilities, building budgets, summer school budget, district grants, personnel costs, etc.)
- Final district property values
- Final district revenue cap amount



Next Steps with 2065-27 Budget

- Final district state aid/property tax amount
- Final district tax rate
- All of the changes will be completed by November 1, 2026 which is the last date possible to approve the budget and tax levy
- A special board meeting is scheduled for October 26th to approve the budget and tax levy for 2026-27.



Budget/Financial Reviews

The budget/financial status of the district is reviewed by multiple internal and external groups including:

- School Board Treasurer - Mark Hetzel
- School Board Budget Committee (3 members)
- School Board (7 members)
- Department of Public Instruction
- External School Board Auditor (Wipfli)
- External Private Businesses (Moody's and Standard & Poor's Rating)
- Any citizen who wishes to review information



Budget/Financial Reviews

As an example:

Credit strengths

- » Above median resident incomes and full value per capita
- » Positive enrollment trend

Factors that could lead to an upgrade

- » An available fund balance ratio maintained near 25% coupled with maintenance of the net cash ratio above 5%
- » A long-term liabilities ratio closer to 200%

Factors that could lead to a downgrade

- » An available fund balance ratio nearing 10% and/or the net cash ratio falling under -1%
- » A long-term liabilities ratio above 400% of revenue

- In May 2026, the district received a rating of A2 from Moody's.
- Click [here](#) for Bond Rating information under the Financial Transparency tab.



Long-term Financial Planning

- Expiration of non-recurring operational referendum
 - \$2.1 million after 26-27 school year
- School board goal is to maintain competitive compensation for staff
- Disconnect between state budget resources and operational costs of a public school
 - \$325/student equates to 2.2% revenue increase
 - Expenditure increases exceed 2.2% for major expenditures like CPI salary increases, compensation systems, transportation, utilities, benefits, etc.
 - Alignment of revenues and expenses would require either expenditure reductions or operational referendums
- Address declining fund 10 fund balance percentage



What did the Community Approve for the November 5, 2024 Election?

Funding Initiatives	2025-26	2026-27
Maintaining current programs/services (recurring)	\$8.1 million	\$8.1 million
Increasing hourly employee compensations (recurring)	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
Increasing employee compensation costs (non-recurring)	\$1.05 million	\$2.1 million
Total	\$9.65 million	\$11.2 million

Two Referendum Questions - What is on the ballot?

\$10.5M & \$97.5M

Operational Referendum: (Investing in People)

Would provide additional recurring authority for the district's annual operating budget to keep staff salaries and benefits comparable to Dane County school districts.

Facilities Referendum: (Investing in Places)

Would authorize general obligation bonds for major facility improvements centered on Waunakee Community High School, the South Campus, and outdoor campus athletic facilities.



Operational Referendum Overview - Investing in People

- Continuation of the \$2.1 million that is expiring after the 26-27 school year (June 30, 2027)
- A 4-year operational referendum for the 2027-28, 2028-29, 2029-30, and 2030-2031.
- Recurring (permanent) funding
- Sole purpose would be to provide competitive compensation to all employee groups (inflation & compensation systems)
- \$2.1 million of expiring funds would be continued with an additional \$2.1 million in new funding per year
- Over the 4 years, fund balance is initially increased to help offset future deficits.
- The Board has directed Administration to draft a policy to lower annual amounts if the state budget provides resources to match annual budgetary expenditures.



Facilities Referendum Overview - Investing in Places

Why Now?

The proposed plan focuses on the student experience at Waunakee Community High School

Aging Infrastructure: Address portions of the high school that are more than 55 years old.

Cohesive Learning Spaces: Current constraints require some high school students to move between buildings. The long-term goal is for all high school students to receive educational programming in one high school building.

Modern Learning Spaces: The plan includes updated classrooms, science labs, career and technical education spaces, performing arts areas, and flexible learning environments aligned with current programming.

Safety and Security: The plan includes a relocated secure main entrance, improved hallway and door separation during emergencies, and improvements to parking, bus, and parent drop-off circulation.





Budget Detail and Questions

- We will be happy to answer any questions you may have
- Click [here](#) for detailed budget information under the Budget Planning tab.



2025 Minutes

- Please review the minutes of last year's meeting
- Click [here](#) for last year's minutes under the Annual Meeting Reports tab.



Treasurer's Report

- Board Treasurer, Mark Hetzel, will review this report
- Action should be taken to accept the report



Resolutions

- All need a motion and a second
- Please state your name for the minutes of the meeting



A. Student Fees

Resolution A / Authorize the School Board to Charge Student Fees

Be it resolved that the Board of Education of the Waunakee Community School District, Dane County, State of Wisconsin is hereby directed to charge student fees, and at such cost as shall be set by the said school board.

Introduced by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Dated: _____, 2026



B. Board Salaries

Present Salaries

- President, Clerk, and Treasurer receive \$6,972 per year for all regular and special meetings, and committee meetings.
- All other Board Members receive \$6,297 per year for all regular and special meetings, and committee meetings.
- Reimbursement for expenses.
- In 2023, the motion for Board salaries increased the amount by the approved CPI increase and provided Board Members access to the District Wellness Clinic.



B. Board Salaries

Resolution B / Board Salaries and Expenses

Be it resolved that the Board members of the Waunakee Community School District be paid a salary as stipulated below and be reimbursed for expenses incurred on district business when traveling outside of the district.

Salaries to be:

President, Clerk, Treasurer \$7,156 (currently \$6,972 per year for all regular/special/committee meetings)

All other Board Members \$6,463 (currently \$6,297 per year for all regular/special/committee meetings)

Introduced by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Dated: _____, 2026



C. School Lunch Program

Resolution C / School Lunch Program

Be it resolved that the Board of Education of the Waunakee Community School District, Dane County, State of Wisconsin is hereby directed to furnish school lunches to any and all students of the district at such places and times, and at such cost as shall be set by said school board, and the school board is hereby authorized to pay any deficiency which may result from said lunch program (Section 120.10 (16)).

Introduced by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Dated: _____, 2026



D. Legal Counsel

Resolution D / Authorization for Legal Counsel

Be it resolved that the Board of Education of the Waunakee Community School District be authorized to engage legal counsel to represent the district and provide legal advice to the district.

Introduced by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Dated: _____, 2026



E. Annual Meeting Date

Resolution E / 2027 Annual Meeting Date

Be it resolved that the Board of Education of the Waunakee Community School District be authorized to set the date and hour for the 2027 Annual Meeting within the guidelines established by Wisconsin Statutes or Be it resolved that the 2027 Waunakee Community School District Annual Meeting be held on _____, 2027. (Between the fourth Monday in July and the fourth Monday in October).

Introduced by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Dated: _____, 2026

- Administrative request to keep the 2027 Annual Meeting at the end of August for cash flow borrowing purposes.



F. Transportation

Resolution F / Transportation

Be it resolved that the Board of Education of the Waunakee Community School District, Dane County, State of Wisconsin be authorized to purchase, operate and maintain transportation vehicles as well as contract for transportation services to provide transportation to students, including but not limited to students whose residence is located within two miles of the school the student attends, as per Board policy.

Introduced by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Dated: _____, 2026



G. Tax Levy

Resolution G / Adoption of Tax Levy

Motion may be as follows: Mr. or Ms. Chairperson, I move that there be levied a school tax assessed against all taxable property within the Waunakee Community School District in the sum of \$51,473,463 necessary to operate and maintain the District School system and to finance the recommended budget for the 2026-27 school year.

Introduced by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Dated: _____, 2026

- The Board recommends a total levy of \$51,473,463 of which \$41,325,725 is for the general fund, \$8,850,867 is for debt service, and \$1,296,871 is for community service.



Questions/Information

- Please feel free to ask for information or answers of any Board member or administrator.



WAUNAKEE
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Thank you for coming this
evening.**