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 608.219.6542.

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 parents, and a supportive community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Monica Kelsey-Brown *Superintendent*	**Joan Ensign** *Board President*	**Dawn Heinrichs** *Board Vice President*	**Mark Hetzel** *Board Treasurer*
Carly Eaton *Board Clerk*	**Ted Frey** *Board Director*	**Heather Murrary** *Board Director*	**Christopher Sonne** *Board Director*

Committed to Children · Committed to Community · Committed to Excellence

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 and 6:00-7:00pm at the District Office (905 Bethel Circle).*

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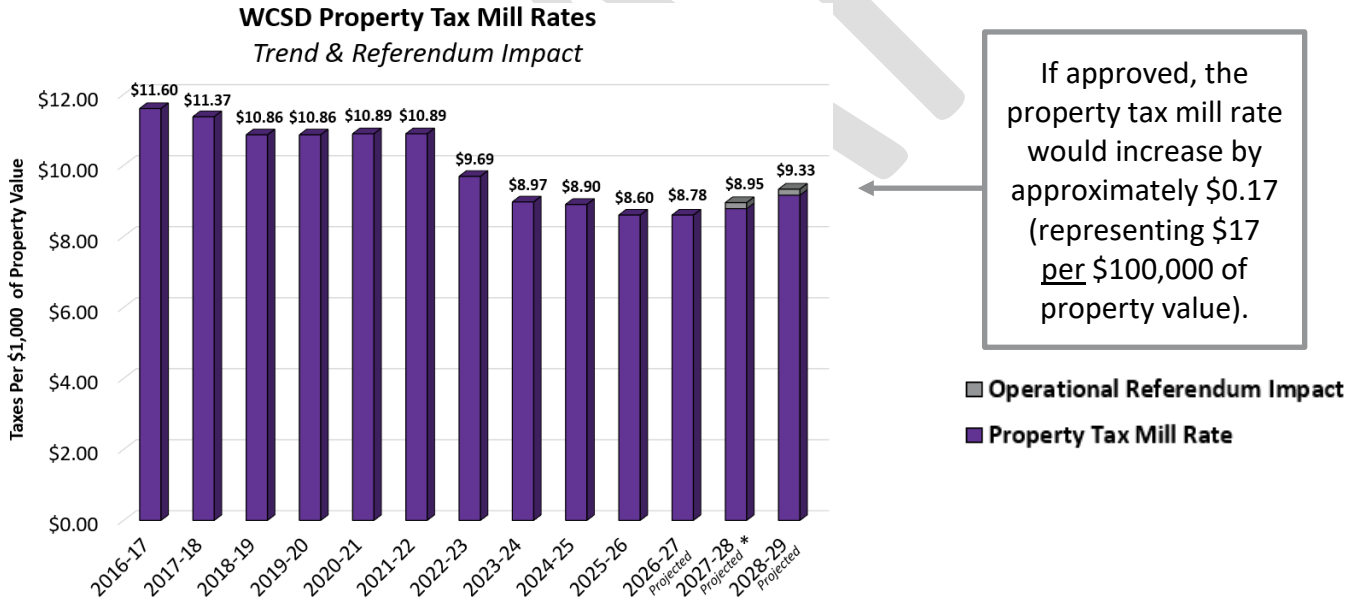
Financial Challenges

- 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.
- The state limits the amount of money available to the District from state aid and local property taxes. This funding level used to increase with inflation, but the state ended that in 2009. **If that had continued, Waunakee schools would have approximately $15.5 million in additional funds this year ($3,573 more per student).**
- The federal government cut funding to school districts, including Waunakee.
- The District continues to experience increasing costs for transportation, utilities, insurance, technology, and services for students receiving special education.
- 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

The District is asking voters to consider renewing this referendum at slightly higher rate adjusted to the consumer price index (inflation). This replacement referendum would provide $2.1 million each year for four years.



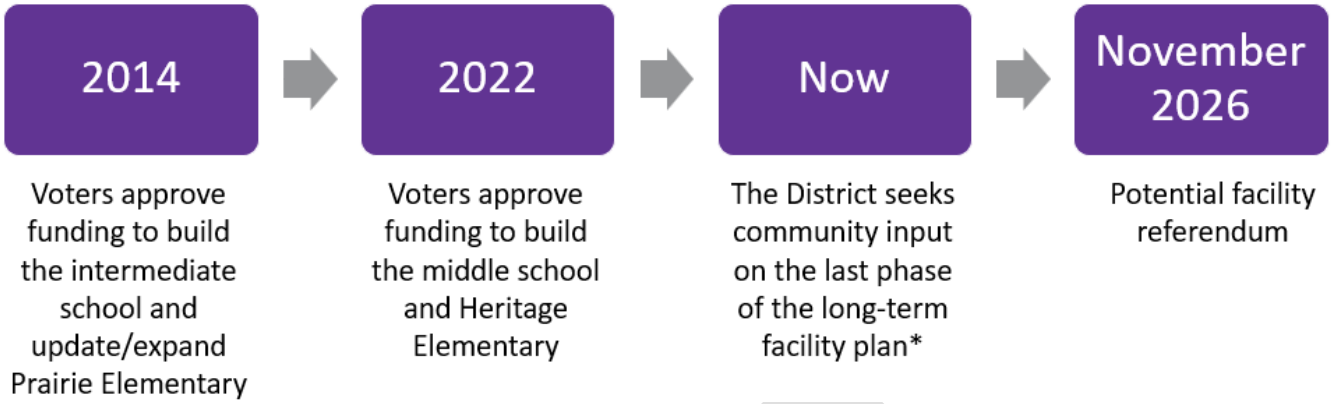
If approved, the property tax mill rate would increase by approximately $0.17 (representing $17 per $100,000 of property value).

** A new state program called "Get Kids Ready" may affect Waunakee's 4K enrollment and state funding for our district.*

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?

Facility Planning



** This next phase (focused on the high school) is the last phase of our long-term facility plan. Based on this plan, we do not anticipate any additional building referendum until 2040. For more information, visit www.waunakee.k12.wi.us/community/facility-planning.*

Facility Challenges

Based on an outside analysis, updating the high school is the most pressing issue.

- Some areas of the building are 55 years old and have not been updated since they were originally built.
- Classrooms and labs in this area cannot support more modern equipment and technology.
- Major building systems are also aging (HVAC, plumbing, electrical, etc.).
- Career and technical education ("shop") and family and consumer education (FACE) spaces are outdated.
- High school students must leave the building and walk to the middle school to take classes. This creates safety and security concerns.

In addition, the District lacks space to serve students receiving alternative and special education services and onsite four-year-old kindergarten.

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.

Should the District pursue a capital/building referendum in November 2026 to address the issues above?	❒ Yes ❒ No ❒ Not sure

Comments/suggestions/questions:

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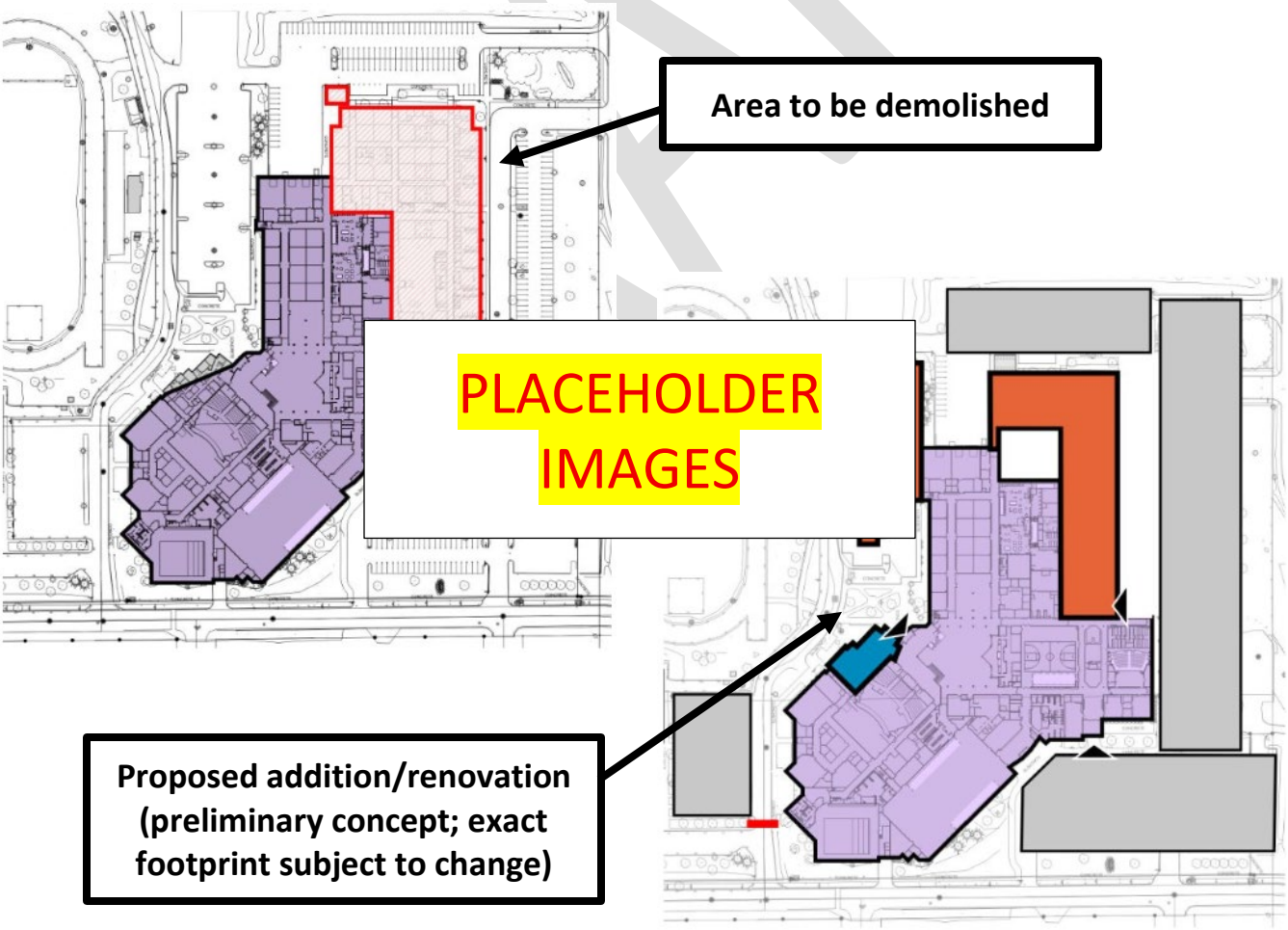
Potential Facility Projects

If the community supports exploring a capital referendum in November 2026, we will need your input on the plan below. The projects include demolishing the oldest portion of the high school (the early-1970s area) and building new wing(s) on that site. More specifically, the high school plan would:

- Improve security by reducing the number of entrances into the building.
- Combine student parking lots to better separate pedestrians from vehicles.
- Build new science labs and classroom spaces (every teacher would have their own classroom).
- Better compartmentalize the building so that guests only have access to specific areas.
- Add flexible small- and large-group instructional spaces.
- Relocate the library with more natural light and and student collaboration space.
- Add cafeteria space to reduce congestion and noise.
- Build two outdoor athletics team centers near the fields (facilities would include a changing area, restrooms, athletic training space for injuries, and protection from severe weather).
- Turf the varsity baseball and softball fields.

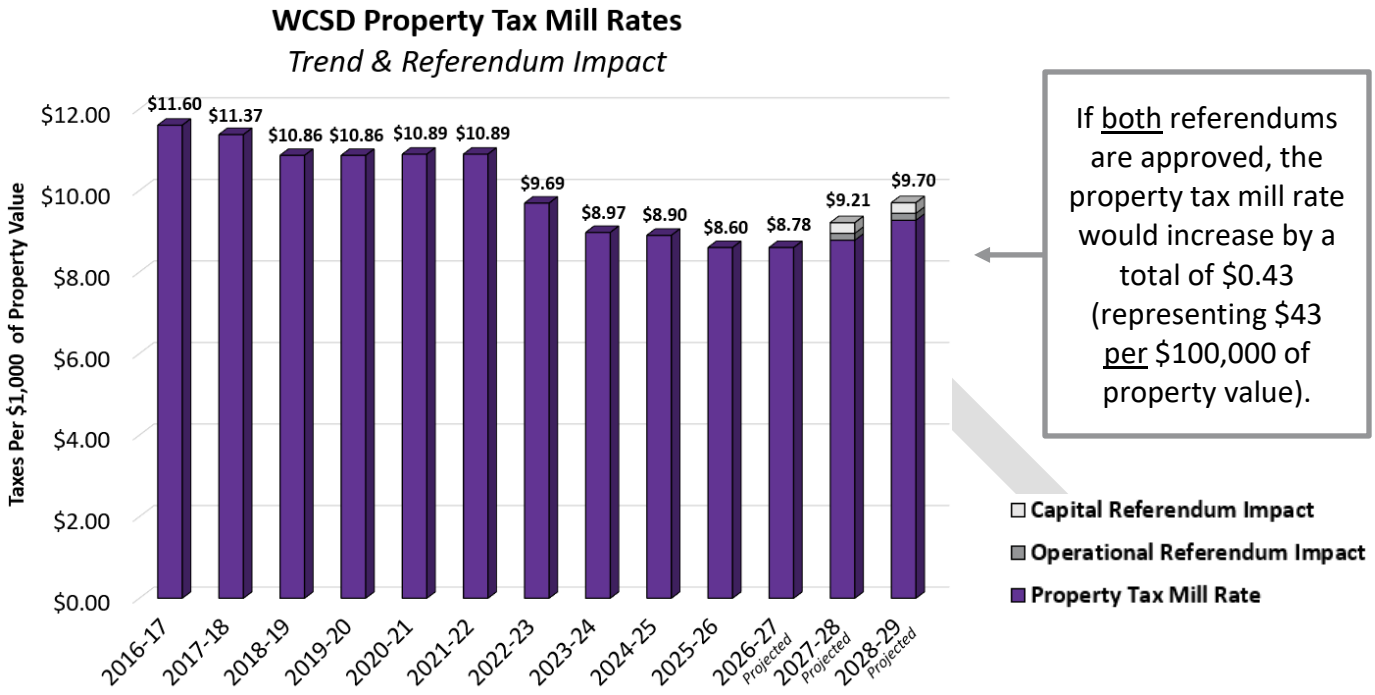
In addition to the projects above, the plan would also build new locker rooms and high school fitness and weight room areas in the existing middle school building.

Estimated cost: $105 million



Facility Plan Funding Support

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%.



If both referendums are approved, the property tax mill rate would increase by a total of $0.43 (representing $43 per $100,000 of property value).

Would you support a $105 million capital/building referendum to pay for the facility plan?	❒ Definitely yes ❒ Probably yes ❒ Undecided ❒ Probably no ❒ Definitely no

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?

❒ 0 ❒ 1 ❒ 2 ❒ 3 ❒ 4 ❒ 5 ❒ 6 ❒ 7 ❒ 8 ❒ 9 ❒ 10

Extremely Unlikely Neutral Extremely Likely

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

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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

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

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Waunakee Community School District
905 Bethel Circle
Waunakee, WI 53597

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Questions about this important school survey?

Please consider attending one of our information/Q&A sessions on April 14th. They will take place from 10:00-11:00am and 6:00-7:00pm at the District Office (905 Bethel Circle).
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.*