

Farm Team

Dear Mount Horeb Area School District Residents,

Despite several great hires these past few years, our ability to attract and, more recently, retain talent is increasingly becoming a major hurdle when serving our children. Simply put, there are fewer people accepting the call to serve as public educators and employees. This is causing the cost of talent to rise. Add in inflationary pressures, Mount Horeb is not in a position to compete.

For example, we've had three different secretaries at the Primary Center in three years - not because of the work, but because we cannot compete with the private sector or the districts surrounding our borders.

Don't the paraprofessionals who are responsible for toileting and feeding students through g-tubes (Gastrostomy Tubes) deserve a starting wage higher than a student cashiering at our local gas stations or fast food restaurants? Similar wages in a hospital or nursing facility start north of \$20/hour.

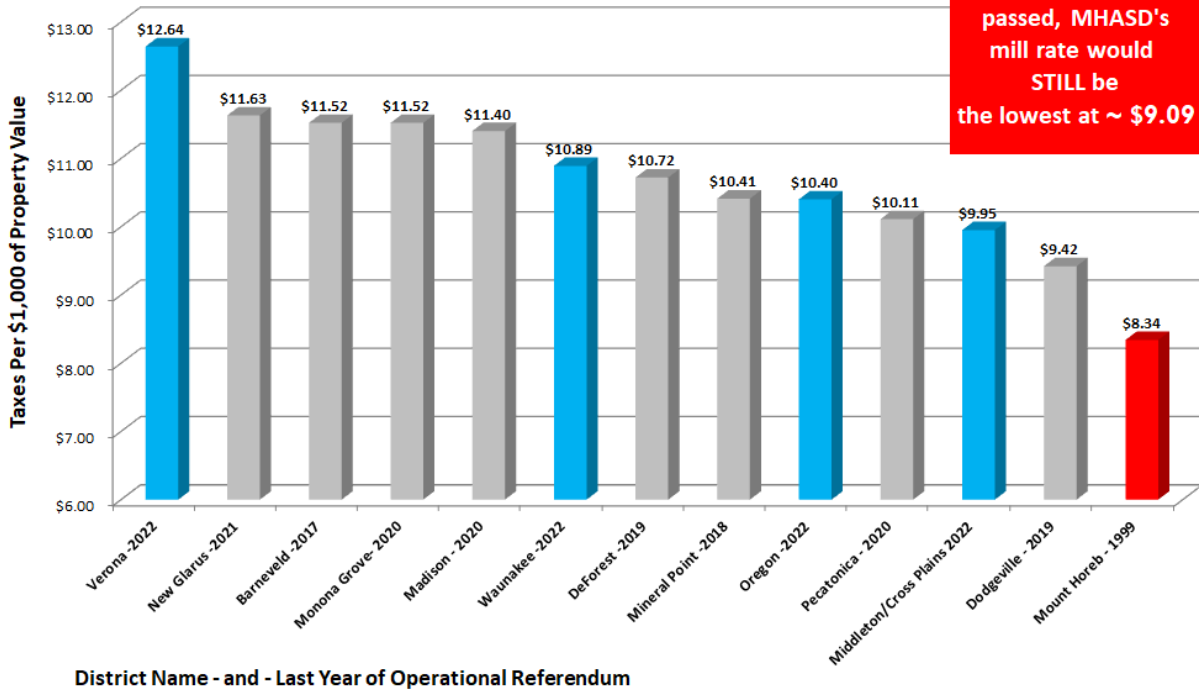
If we are not proactive, I fear our district will serve as a farm team for neighboring school districts looking to recruit our talent. That talent has been developed and paid for by you, our taxpayers, which also includes other incalculable costs for interviewing and onboarding new employees. I call it "brain drain" leaving our community.

That brain, by the way, is drained also because of the need for our dedicated and loving teachers to work two jobs in order to care for their basic needs. Though they do their very, very best to ensure that reality does not seep into their classroom planning and instruction, they are only human. I am not proud to tell you this, but a new teacher in our district who supports a family of four can qualify for free or reduced meals. This can never be a reality for which we should accept.

On November 8, voters will consider an operational referendum that, if approved, would attract/retain school employees, maintain most of our current programs and services (e.g. favorable class sizes for our children), and pay for increasing costs (e.g. utilities, busses, technology, curriculum resources, etc.).

A successful operational referendum would maintain Mount Horeb Area School District's standing as the lowest mill rate in relationship to our comparables. An approximate \$0.75 increase per \$1,000 of equalized property value would mean a projected mill rate of \$9.09.

Tax Mill Rate Comparisons 2021-22 School Year



This is a recurring referendum, which means ongoing unless the Board of Education elects to not levy to their maximum taxing authority. Wages rarely go down, right? Without a recurring referendum, the constant fear of looming cuts to programs and a cloud of layoffs is neither good for the culture to which we aspire for our students nor our employees' morale.

I invite you to attend the Chamber of Commerce's "Good Morning Mount Horeb!" event on November 2, from 8:00-9:00 a.m. at Martinson Hall. If you missed our October 20 virtual town hall meeting, our website (www.mounthorebschools.org) has two informational videos that provide even greater detail. Of course, a personal phone call or email is always welcomed too. I may be reached at 437-7010 or salernosteve@mhasd.k12.wi.us.

Please vote on Tuesday, November 8, 2022.

Dr. Steve Salerno
Superintendent