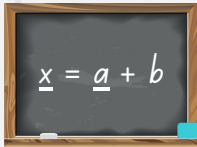


Frequently Asked Questions



How did we get here?



School funding in Wisconsin can best be described as a formula where:

x = the state-determined revenue limit

a = funding that comes directly from the state at the direction of the legislature

b = local property taxes raised by the district

Simply put, in this formula, the state legislature controls both x (how much total funding the district can expect per student) and a (how much state aid we receive toward that total). This means that b (the property tax levy), by law, can only be the difference between those two amounts **unless the community approves otherwise via a referendum.**

In 6 of the past 8 years, the state legislature has included a \$0 change to per pupil expenditures. In fact, over the past 12 years, the actual increase has averaged only \$3.02 per student per year. That amount is simply insufficient to keep pace with rising costs, especially in today's inflationary environment.



How did you arrive at \$4.82M and how are you going to use this money?

Our first step was to carefully analyze our budget and project out expected costs into the future based on what we think is needed to successfully maintain our programming. These amounts were then described in a community survey sent out earlier this spring. The items that our community rated most favorably were combined together to form the basis of this amount. Items that our community told us were less important were not included. [Survey results](#) are available to read on our website. A successful referendum will fund ongoing operations across our main priorities: attracting and retaining staff, maintaining educational programming, and paying for increasing operational costs. Our [final budgets](#) are approved at our [annual meeting every August](#) and are always available to the public online.



What does recurring mean and why is this a recurring referendum?

Recurring means that, should the community vote in favor of this referendum, the funding will continue annually in perpetuity. It is important to note, however, that the board determines the tax levy every year and has the authority to approve a tax levy *below* the approved amount should circumstances change. Other districts have asked for non-recurring referendums which approve funding for a short term. At the end of that term, the funding approval goes away and those districts will have to decide whether to seek new approval. While we considered this approach as well, we are asking for a recurring referendum because: (1) costs rarely decrease and we do not foresee the need reducing, (2) while we will continue to advocate for a more favorable state funding structure, history demonstrates it is reasonable to expect that current funding trends will continue, and (3) our community, students, and staff deserve consistency and reliability year to year; should a renewal be at risk of not passing, we fear it would have damaging effects on staff morale, recruitment, and retention.



So is this it? Will this solve the problem?

We can only be honest and say that we cannot predict the future when it comes to all of the factors that could impact our annual revenue and our costs. Additionally, we have facility needs that are currently under review by a committee comprised of community members and district leadership. They will make a recommendation to the board this fall on how to plan for our current and future facility needs and that recommendation could include a referendum on capital needs.



What are other school districts doing?

Many other districts in our region and across Wisconsin are also placing operational referendums on the ballot this year. We are one of 42 districts this fall in Wisconsin and one of 8 districts in Dane County. You can read more about statewide trends [here](#) and [here](#).

Links to Additional Resources:

[\[Video\] Why is there a need? \[5:45\]](#)

[\[Video\] What would a successful referendum cover? \[6:58\]](#)

[Open Letter from Members of the MHASD Board](#)

[Open Letter from Dane Co. Superintendents](#)

[Dane County Schools Seek Referendums \[NBC15.com\]](#)

[Public Schools Seek Referendums \[Wisconsin Public Radio\]](#)

For more information,
visit the District's
referendum webpage:



More questions? We would love to hear your feedback, concerns, and questions. Please contact Superintendent Steve Salerno at salernosteve@mhasd.k12.wi.us or 608-437-7010.