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# Operational Referendum - Woods School

Tuesday, 11.08.2022



## What is an Operational Referendum?

An operational referendum is permission from voters to exceed the state-imposed revenue limit for the purpose of funding school operations.

## Why does Woods need an Operational Referendum?

Woods is fast approaching a juncture when revenues will no longer sufficiently fund the school. A non-recurring operational referendum will ensure continued funding for student programs and services. This is the best way to support our students and community.

## I have questions.

### Will my taxes or the mill rate go up?

Neither will increase due to the referendum, which has “no tax impact.” The goal is to maintain the current mill rate (\$3.28) and taxes are projected to decrease.

### Doesn't the government pay to fund schools?

Schools in Wisconsin are funded with a combination of federal and state aid and local property taxes. The state imposes a revenue limit that restricts the amount of money schools can receive.

The result is that Woods does not receive enough revenue to adequately fund programs and services. Under Wisconsin's “one size fits all” funding formula, our district is considered “property-rich” due to high property values. Meaning that most of the responsibility for funding Woods rests on local property taxpayers.

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## I heard the problem is we're losing too many students.

This is a common misconception. Certainly, we would prefer not to lose any students to other districts. However, enrollment changes and student retention are not the problem. Even with double or triple the students, Woods would still face a budget deficit.

## I heard the new gym and middle school expansion referendum is the problem.

Not at all. The money used for a building referendum is separate from an operational budget. The district has worked hard to pay down the school expansion debt and is on track to pay off the building referendum early.

## I heard we pay for all the open enrolled students in our district.

That is not the case. In fact, open enrolled students make up over 60% of the students at Woods. During the 21'-22' school year, \$8,161 per open enrolled student was transferred from their home districts to Woods, providing over \$725,000 in revenue.

## What about other districts? Are they having similar problems?

Our district isn't the only one facing these challenges. The formula for funding schools in Wisconsin is fundamentally flawed. State Legislators are aware of the issues but have yet to resolve them. In the last decade, voters all over Wisconsin have approved more than 400 operational referendums to help their districts continue to serve students. Other local districts like Lake Geneva, Elkhorn, and Fontana have all successfully voted to continue funding their schools. This November, there are 41 Wisconsin districts, including Woods, asking for operational referendums to exceed revenue limits.

## What can I do to help?

- **VOTE for the referendum on Tuesday, November 8, 2022**
  - **Encourage other in-district residents to VOTE for the referendum**
  - **If you have more questions, please contact Wood's District Office: 262-248-3816**
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