



School District of **WESTFIELD**

INVESTING TODAY FOR THEIR TOMORROW

\$1.4 Million for 4 Years to

- **REPLACE** Aging Buses and Vans
- **KEEP** Our Best Staff
- **RESTORE** Academic Programs
- **UPDATE** Classroom Curriculum
- **IMPROVE** Career/Trade Pathways

VOTE
APRIL 7TH

**Learn more about
the April 7, 2026
OPERATIONAL
referendum at**

www.westfield.k12.wi.us

Or contact 608-296-2141



Serving Our Community: Understanding Our Financial Future

The Difference Between Operational and Capital Referendums

It's vital that we can clearly explain the difference between the tremendous investment our community recently made and the current need we are addressing.

Referendum Type	What It Pays For (The Need)	Key Point to Remember
Capital Referendum - Passed November 2024	Major facility projects , like building construction and large-scale repairs.	"Bricks and Mortar." It <i>cannot</i> be used for daily expenses.
Operational Referendum (Potential April 7, 2026)	Daily expenses and resources to run the district, bus replacement, curriculum, utilities, and competitive/attractive salaries.	"Kids and Programs." It helps keep our doors open and our programs running.

Positive Talking Point: *"November, 2024, our community showed an incredible commitment to our students by approving a \$27 million Capital Referendum (which passed by 62.4%). That shows a clear commitment to our students. Now, now, we are asking for a complementary **operational** investment (\$1.4M for four years) to ensure we have the staff and resources to utilize those facilities to their fullest."*

The Need: Why We Are Seeking an Operational Referendum?

The financial challenges we face are not due to local mismanagement; they are a statewide funding system that hasn't kept pace with inflation.

1. State-Imposed Revenue Limits Since 2009, the state has eliminated inflationary adjustments for school funding. We are currently at the **lowest revenue limit authorized by the state.** * **The Gap:** If funding had kept pace with inflation, our District would have nearly **\$3.8 million** in additional funds this year (approx. \$3,573 per student).

- **The Only Tool:** Because these limits are fixed, a referendum is the only tool available for communities to maintain local control over their schools.

2. Increasing Financial Strain -

Our current revenue limits simply can't cover our essential costs:

- **Growing Deficit:** We face a budget deficit of \$230,000 this year (even after eliminating five positions). This is projected to grow to **\$1.7 million** over the next five years. We are currently relying on our savings (fund balance) to meet payroll.
- **Rising Costs, Falling Aid:** Costs for transportation and utilities are rising, while our state aid is decreasing by nearly 20% this year. This is a burden shared by 71% of districts statewide.
- **Staffing Crisis:** Our starting teacher salary is lower than neighboring districts, making it increasingly difficult to attract and retain high-quality educators.
- **The Bottom Line:** We receive less local, state, and federal funding per student than every other district in our conference.

What Will This Referendum Address?

Regardless of the outcome, the School District of Westfield will still need to make difficult budget cuts. However, a successful \$1.4 million referendum will allow us to prioritize:

- **Safety:** Replacing a depleted transportation fleet (serving nearly 300 square miles).
- **Staffing:** Recruiting and retaining the best staff for our kids.
- **Academic Excellence:** Protecting programs for struggling learners and state-mandated curriculum.
- **Career Readiness:** Maintaining competitive career/trade pathways for students.

We Are Not Alone: A Statewide Trend

This is not just an issue for our district. Out of the 421 school districts in Wisconsin, 308 (73%) have passed an operational referendum to help stabilize their budgets. Our District has never secured this type of funding.

Community Feedback

Recent survey results helped shape this proposal:

- **The Ask:** The community expressed more favorable support for an amount under \$1.6 million. In response, the Board is considering pursuing \$1.4 million.
- **The Priorities & Skills**
The top three priorities for the District's limited resources, across all respondent groups (Staff, Parents, Non-Parents/Non-Staff), were *recruit and retain high-quality staff*, *career and technical education courses (trades)*, and *life skills*.

The two skills the community overwhelmingly agrees are most important for graduate success (ranked #1 and #2 by all groups) are #1 *understanding personal finances and budgeting*, and #2 *having skills for a specific trade or career*.

6335 - Westfield

No referendum, Buses/van, RVA & Pathways included, \$120,000 maintenance reduction								Base
	Historical 2024 - 2025	Current Year 2025 - 2026	Budget Year 2026 - 2027	Forecast				
				2027 - 2028	2028 - 2029	2029 - 2030	2030 - 2031	
Sept Membership (FTE)	1,114	1,080	1,012	986	962	946	947	
Per Pupil Increase	\$325	\$325	\$325	\$325	\$325	\$325	\$325	
Per-Pupil Categorical Aid \$	\$742	\$742	\$742	\$742	\$742	\$742	\$742	
TIF Out Equalized Valuation Growth	9.15%	9.92%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	
Fund 10 Total Salaries Increase	-0.10%	-2.58%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	
Fund 10 Total Benefits Increase	6.50%	-1.37%	5.13%	5.22%	5.31%	5.39%	5.48%	
Fund 10 Revenues	\$16,834,045	\$17,011,318	\$17,127,349	\$17,124,244	\$16,937,892	\$16,885,179	\$16,913,066	
Fund 10 Expenditures	\$16,784,729	\$17,248,083	\$17,645,150	\$17,927,902	\$18,257,177	\$18,713,328	\$19,183,894	
Surplus (Deficit)	\$69,316	(\$236,745)	(\$517,801)	(\$803,658)	(\$1,319,285)	(\$1,848,149)	(\$2,270,628)	
Fund Balance	\$5,963,732	\$5,726,987	\$5,209,188	\$4,405,528	\$3,086,243	\$1,238,094	(\$1,032,535)	
Fund Balance as % of Expenditures	35.57%	33.20%	29.52%	24.57%	18.90%	6.62%	-5.38%	
Non-Recurring Referendum \$	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Recurring Referendum \$	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Referendum Debt Levy	\$2,426,250	\$1,839,550	\$1,877,875	\$1,877,925	\$1,876,175	\$1,877,300	\$1,876,175	
Energy Efficiency Exemption	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total School-Based Tax Levy	\$11,080,897	\$11,584,444	\$12,205,590	\$12,698,343	\$12,955,899	\$13,148,939	\$13,493,988	
Mill Rate (per \$1,000 EQ Value)	\$6.16	\$5.85	\$6.05	\$6.17	\$6.17	\$6.14	\$6.18	
		(\$0.30)	\$0.19	\$0.12	\$0.00	(\$0.03)	\$0.04	
Insert notes here								
\$1.4 Million Referendum added for 4 years, \$120,000 maintenance reduction								Scenario 1
	Historical 2024 - 2025	Current Year 2025 - 2026	Budget Year 2026 - 2027	Forecast				
				2027 - 2028	2028 - 2029	2029 - 2030	2030 - 2031	
Sept Membership (FTE)	1,114	1,080	1,012	986	962	946	947	
Per Pupil Increase	\$325	\$325	\$325	\$325	\$325	\$325	\$325	
Per-Pupil Categorical Aid \$	\$742	\$742	\$742	\$742	\$742	\$742	\$742	
TIF Out Equalized Valuation Growth	9.15%	9.92%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	
Fund 10 Total Salaries Increase	-0.10%	-2.58%	8.32%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	
Fund 10 Total Benefits Increase	6.50%	-1.37%	7.34%	5.16%	5.25%	5.34%	5.42%	
Fund 10 Revenues	\$16,834,045	\$17,011,318	\$18,527,349	\$18,524,244	\$18,337,892	\$18,285,179	\$18,913,066	
Fund 10 Expenditures	\$16,784,729	\$17,248,083	\$18,455,751	\$18,750,768	\$19,092,615	\$19,581,851	\$20,045,226	
Surplus (Deficit)	\$69,316	(\$236,745)	\$71,598	(\$226,524)	(\$754,723)	(\$1,296,473)	(\$3,132,160)	
Fund Balance	\$5,963,732	\$5,726,987	\$5,798,585	\$5,572,062	\$4,817,339	\$3,520,866	\$388,706	
Fund Balance as % of Expenditures	35.57%	33.20%	31.42%	29.72%	25.23%	18.00%	1.94%	
Non-Recurring Referendum \$	\$0	\$0	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000	\$0	
Recurring Referendum \$	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Referendum Debt Levy	\$2,426,250	\$1,839,550	\$1,877,875	\$1,877,925	\$1,876,175	\$1,877,300	\$1,876,175	
Energy Efficiency Exemption	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total School-Based Tax Levy	\$11,080,897	\$11,584,444	\$13,605,590	\$14,098,343	\$14,355,899	\$14,548,939	\$13,493,988	
Mill Rate (per \$1,000 EQ Value)	\$6.16	\$5.85	\$6.74	\$6.85	\$6.84	\$6.79	\$6.18	
		(\$0.30)	\$0.49	\$0.15	(\$0.01)	(\$0.04)	(\$0.82)	
Insert notes here								

-The image above shows two financial projections: one without a referendum and one with a \$1.4 million operational referendum. Even if the referendum passes, additional cuts will be necessary. We will continue to face this reality unless the state funding model changes.