



STUDENT LEARNING, ESSENTIAL OPERATIONS, RESPONSIBLE BUDGETING



Operational Referendum for Pioneer Values & Common-Sense Spending

On the Tuesday, November 3, 2026 election ballot, residents in the School District of Westfield will vote on a non-recurring operational referendum seeking \$1.4 million per year for five years.

The referendum would maintain the essentials our residents expect schools to provide:

Reading. Writing. Math. Career skills. Strong teachers. Safe schools. Reliable transportation. Well-maintained buildings.

This referendum is not about expanding programs or funding wants. It's about **maintaining our existing student educational programs and preserving the financial stability of our district.**

For decades, our district has **stretched every dollar and trimmed operational costs to avoid coming to taxpayers.** However, we have reached a point where **cuts alone cannot close our growing budget deficit.** The gap is caused by rising costs and state aid that has not kept up with inflation.

The \$1.4 million request is a fiscally conservative approach — one that is **less than our need** but will help balance our budget. **The funds will pay for:**

STUDENT LEARNING



Back to the basics.
Forward to future careers.



Prepare all students for what's next, from the "three Rs" with targeted assistance for struggling learners, to skills for trades, college and jobs needed at home and beyond.

ESSENTIAL OPERATIONS



Staff. Transportation.
Utilities. Safety.



Keep high-performing teachers and staff and maintain basic services, replacing aging buses to safely transport students across nearly 300 miles.

RESPONSIBLE BUDGETING



Plan ahead. Maintain what we have. Spend wisely.



Budget for curriculum updates, technology needs, bus replacement and ongoing maintenance instead of waiting for problems to become emergencies.

Preserving What Generations Built

For generations, our community has prided ourselves in **doing things the right way — working hard, living within our means, and planning for the future.** Those same values guide every decision the district makes.

We know that money is tight. Families and seniors are paying more and making difficult choices. Our schools are facing those same rising costs. **In the past two years alone, the district has cut \$820,650 of recurring expenses from our budget.**

School Year	Budget Reduction
2025-26	\$393,650
2026-27	\$427,000
Total Reduction	\$820,650

In five years, our total projected budget deficit (the gap between expenses and revenues) will reach between **\$6 million and \$8 million.** The range depends on whether the state continues to provide a \$325 per-pupil revenue limit increase.

Tax Impact

Keeping Rates Below the State Average

Fair Market Property Value	Estimated Annual Increase	Estimated Monthly Increase
\$100,000	\$50	\$4.17
\$200,000	\$100	\$8.33
\$300,000	\$150	\$12.50
\$400,000	\$200	\$16.67
\$500,000	\$250	\$20.83

If approved, the estimated tax impact for the school district portion of taxes would be **50 cents per \$1,000** of fair market property value. The District's current school tax rate is **\$5.85 per \$1,000** — well below the K-12 state average of **\$7.09**. Even with the proposed operational adjustment, the tax rate is estimated to rise to **\$6.35**, remaining lower than the state average.

Why Now?

We Can No Longer Cut Our Way Out of This Gap

Our budget deficit is driven by:

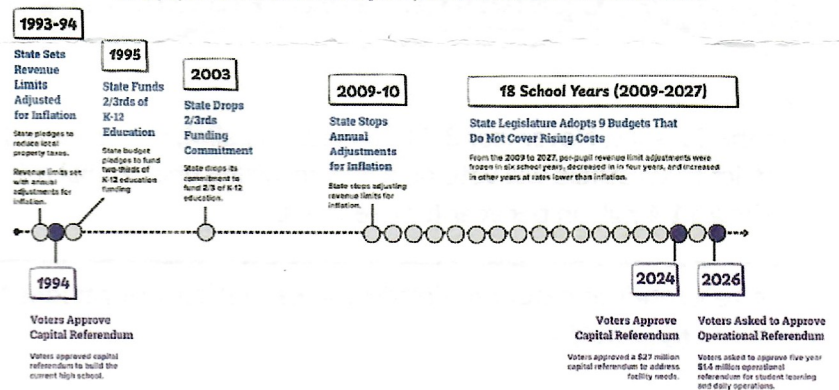
- rising costs in health insurance, transportation, utilities, mandated curriculum and more
- state revenue limits that have not kept pace with inflation for the past 17 years (since 2009)
- a state aid formula that penalizes "property rich" districts
- a two-year freeze on state general school aid from 2025 to 2027 that shifted costs to local taxes



33 YEARS OF STATE REVENUE LIMITS



The School District of Westfield has managed its operational budgets under 33 years of state revenue limits. Fiscal projections show this will no longer be possible without additional state or local aid.



Our district is projected to lose an additional **\$540,275** in general state aid next school year (a **14.07%** decrease).

Rather than relying on short-term fixes, depleting our savings or waiting for costly emergencies, this referendum allows the district to pay for essential costs and budget responsibly for transportation, curriculum, maintenance and other ongoing needs.

Understanding the Two Types of School Referendums

We are incredibly grateful for the community's overwhelming support in the **November 2024 Capital Referendum (Bricks & Mortar)**. This commitment is addressing critical, high-priority, district-wide capital maintenance needs — **30 years after the previous referendum**. State law legally restricts districts from using capital funds for daily operations such as staffing, educational programs, transportation and more. For this, districts must seek an **Operational Referendum (Kids & Learning)**.



SEE FAQ ON
WEBSITE



STAY INFORMED!
Stay tuned for details on community information sessions.



Michelle Johnson, District Administrator
michelle.johnson@westfieldpioneers.org, 608-296-2141, x1011
Veronica "Roni" VanDerhyden, Business Manager
veronica.vanderhyden@westfieldpioneers.org, 608-296-2141, x100

Learn More
westfield.k12.wi.us



Submit Questions
bit.ly/sdw-referendum

