



Whitefish Bay
SCHOOL DISTRICT

An Exceptional Place to Learn

Community Survey Results and Recommendation

February and March, 2026

[Website](#)





Facilities Planning: Timeline

June
2023

District begins the **long-term facility planning process**, completes facility assessment



Sept
2024

Board approves **Facilities Charter**, directing creation of a comprehensive 20-year plan



Jan-Aug
2025

Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) studies options and holds focus groups and community presentations



Nov
2025

District offers **facilities presentations** and **surveys community** to gather input

Jan
2026

Board approves a resolution question for the **April 7, 2026 ballot** for a referendum



Feb/Mar
2026

District offers **facilities presentations** based on survey feedback and the Board approved **resolution question**



April
2026

Community votes on the resolution question



Spring
2027


If the community votes to approve the April 7, 2026 resolution question, projected construction start is in the spring of 2027 (approximately 18 month building timeline - Middle School)



Our Guiding Compass: The Focus Plan

- Safe, caring, and inclusive schools
- Student-centered learning environments
- Educational equity and excellence
- Stewardship and integrity





Whitefish Bay
SCHOOL DISTRICT

FOCUS PLAN

VISION

An Exceptional Place to Learn

MISSION

The Whitefish Bay School District, in partnership with families and community, is student-centered with a tradition of educational excellence that:

- Supports the individual needs of the whole child in a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment;
- Empowers students with the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and character necessary to thrive in an ever-changing, global society so that students are life, career, and college ready;
- Honors the diversity of all students and the pursuit of educational equity*.

VALUES

Educational Equity and Excellence:
We maintain high expectations for personal growth and achievement.

Tradition and Innovation:
We acknowledge the past and commit to continuous improvement.

Safety and Well-being:
We strive for a safe and welcoming environment that fosters individual and collective welfare.

Individual and Community:
We develop the talents and skills of individual learners and collaborative teams.

Stewardship and Integrity:
We serve through principled and strategic decision-making and allocation of resources.

GOALS

An Exceptional Place to...

<p>Learn: Every student will continuously grow to meet or exceed academic learning targets and social emotional competencies.</p>	<p>Work: Every staff member will experience an environment where they are valued, developed, and supported.</p>	<p>Engage: The community will be provided with opportunities to be involved in activities that promote collective growth, learning, and well-being.</p>
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*Educational Equity "means that every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, ability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income" (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2023).

School Board Approved: April 10, 2024



Why We are Here



We will:

- **Share** the historic engagement results from the community survey and the community agreement for a facilities referendum;
- **Detail** the recommendation to move forward with a focus on infrastructure, accessibility, safety, and security as well as the construction of a new middle school;
- **Envision** how modern learning spaces will foster collaboration and “future-ready” pedagogy;
- **Explain** how a focus on inclusive spaces provides dignified and accessible environments for every learner;
- **Review** the financial framework and timeline for an **April 7, 2026 referendum**.





Building Futures

In preparation for the final part of the session, your small group will:

1. Discuss any questions you might have at this point.
2. Share out any common, emerging question(s) to the larger group.





Exceptional Place to Engage: What we Heard and Learned



2026


Community Information Sessions





Exceptional Place to Engage: Survey Results

- November 2025 survey window
- 2,234 respondents
- 45% response rate (industry average response rate is 18%)



Whitefish Bay
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dear Families and Community Members:

You are receiving this survey because the Whitefish Bay School Board is exploring options to update our facilities. **Your opinion matters, and your feedback will help determine whether we move forward with a referendum in April 2026.**


Whitefish Bay public schools have a strong tradition of excellence; we are proud to be among the highest achieving districts in Wisconsin. We believe our schools contribute to the high quality of life in this community and are crucial to maintaining strong property values.

While we address routine maintenance each year, all five buildings (built between 1918 and 1955) are aging. Building systems (such as HVAC, plumbing, and electrical) have exceeded their service life. Classrooms/support areas do not meet today's standards and have accessibility challenges.

To help develop options, we formed the **Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC)**, made up of community members, parents, staff, and students. **The process identified over \$325 million of possible projects.** Your feedback is essential in helping us decide what to do next.

TWO WAYS TO TAKE THIS SURVEY

Online: (saves postage expense)
Go to: www.SPFeedback.com
Enter your code: XXXXXXXXXXXX



Paper: Return to any school office or mail it to School Perceptions, PO Box 607, Slinger, WI 53086. *The survey code can be used only once.*

To obtain additional surveys for other adults in your household, please call the District Office at 414.963.3901 or email us at districtnews@wfbsschools.com.

如需协助完成调查，请联系区办公室。
सर्वेक्षण पूरा गर्न सहायताको लागि, जिल्ला कार्यालयमा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोस्।
Для получения помощи в заполнении анкеты обратитесь в районный офис.
Para obtener ayuda para completar la encuesta, comuníquese con la oficina del Distrito.

Survey deadline: November 20

If you need additional support to complete this survey, please contact the District Office at 414.963.3901. Survey results will be reported at a board meeting and available on our website.

The District is committed to a clear, transparent process around prioritizing projects, communicating costs, and engaging our community. Thank you for completing this survey!

Dr. Kristin Bencik-Boudreau Board President	Lynn Raines Board VP & Clerk	W. Brett Christiansen Board Treasurer	Nathan Christenson Board Member
Sandy Saltzstein Board Member	Dan Tyk Board Member	Pamela Woodard Board Member	Dr. Jamie J. Foeckler District Administrator

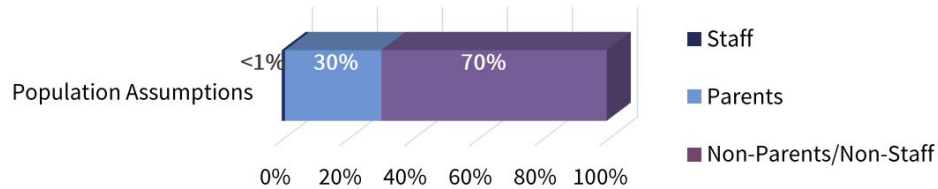
An Exceptional Place to Learn



Exceptional Place to Engage: High-Level Support



Additional Analysis: Referendum support for each amount



Weighted support for *Definitely yes* and *Probably yes*:

$$\text{\$325M: } 0.30 (24\%) + 0.70 (8\%) = \underline{12.8\%}$$

$$\text{\$275M: } 0.30 (30\%) + 0.70 (12\%) = \underline{17.4\%}$$

$$\text{\$225M: } 0.30 (51\%) + 0.70 (25\%) = \underline{32.8\%}$$

$$\text{\$175M: } 0.30 (63\%) + 0.70 (39\%) = \underline{46.2\%}$$

$$\text{\$125M: } 0.30 (76\%) + 0.70 (57\%) = \underline{62.7\%}$$

$$\text{Smaller: } 0.30 (85\%) + 0.70 (77\%) = \underline{79.4\%}$$

Note: Survey results indicate a +/- 2.12% statistical margin of error



Additional Safety, Security, and Accessibility



Whitefish Bay High School
(53.1% support to address this now)



Additional Safety, Security, and Accessibility Renovate main offices to better monitor and control visitor access and improve Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility
(Estimated Cost: \$2.1 million)

Cumberland/Richards Elementary
(51.9% support to address this now)



Additional Safety, Security, and Accessibility Reconfigure drop-off/pick-up areas, renovate main offices to improve security and accessibility, and improve front entrance ADA accessibility
(Estimated Cost: \$7.6 million)

\$135.6M Referendum: What's Included?





What would be included in a \$135.6M referendum?



- **Building Renovations (\$67.9M) at Cumberland, Richards, High School and Lydell**

Focus Areas: Aging Infrastructure, Accessibility, Safety, and Security

- **Increase** - Accessibility, safety & security at building entrances
- **Improve** - Elementary drop off and pick up
- **Upgrade** - Fire and sprinkler systems to code
- **Update** - Plumbing and electrical systems
- **Replace** - Aging and unreliable HVAC systems

- **Construct New Middle School (\$67.7M)**

Focus Areas: Learning Environments, Aging Infrastructure, Accessibility, Safety, and Security

- **Flexible Learning Spaces** - Designed to enhance teaching best practices
- **Honor the Past** - Veterans Memorial integrated into the overall project plan
- **Minimal Disruption to Learning** - During construction of the new building

Note: The school district plans to contribute \$20.4 million of funding in addition to the \$135.6 million referendum which will be integrated into the projects listed above.

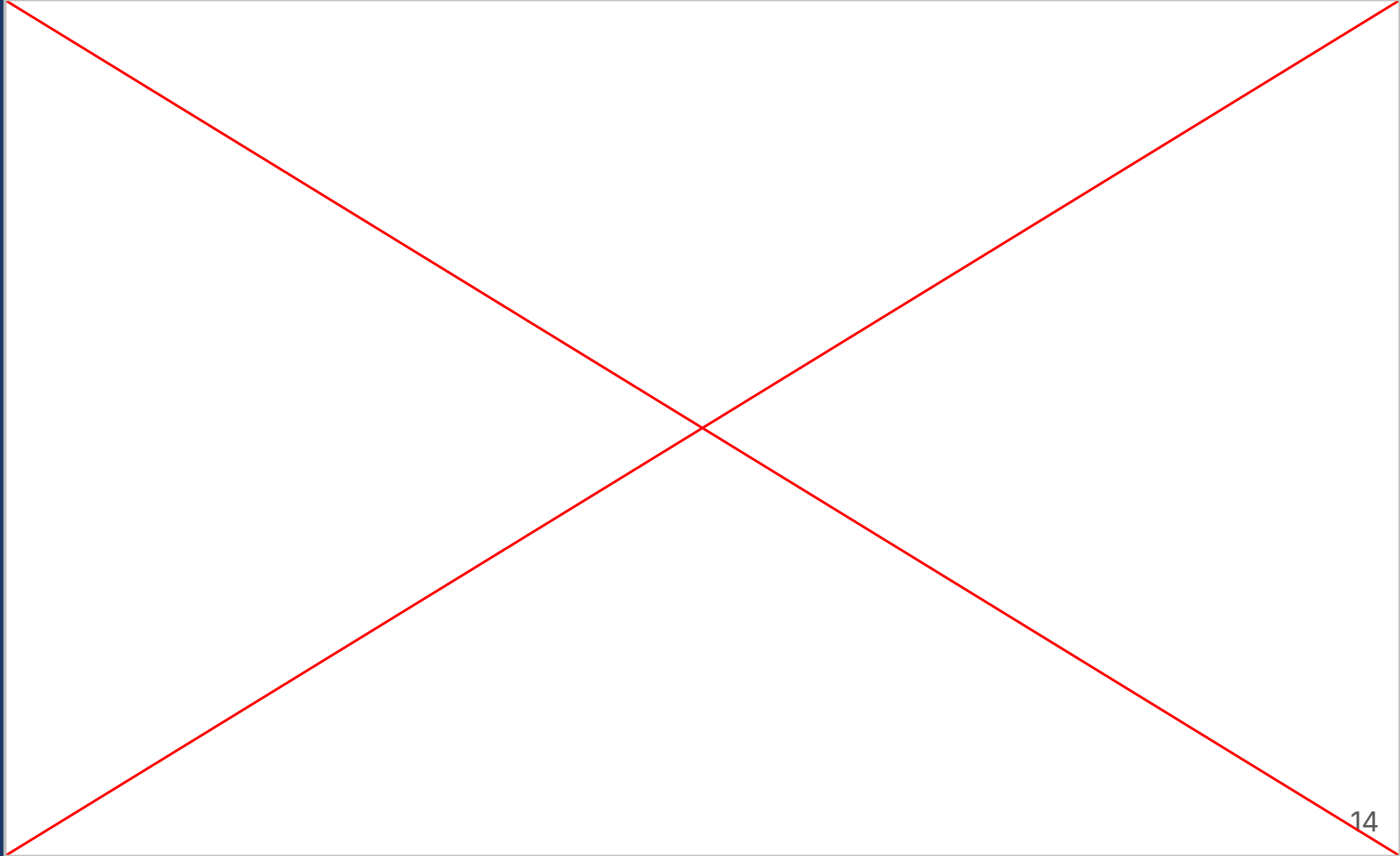
Building Renovations: Infrastructure, Accessibility, Safety, and Security





Community Information Sessions

2026



Building Renovations at Cumberland, Richards, High School and Lydell (\$67.9M)

Focus on Aging Infrastructure, Accessibility, Safety, and Security





Exceptional Place to Learn: A Focus on Learning



2026

Community Information Sessions



Construct a New Middle School





Whitefish Bay
SCHOOL DISTRICT

An Exceptional Place to Learn

2026 Referendum

Existing Middle School Conditions





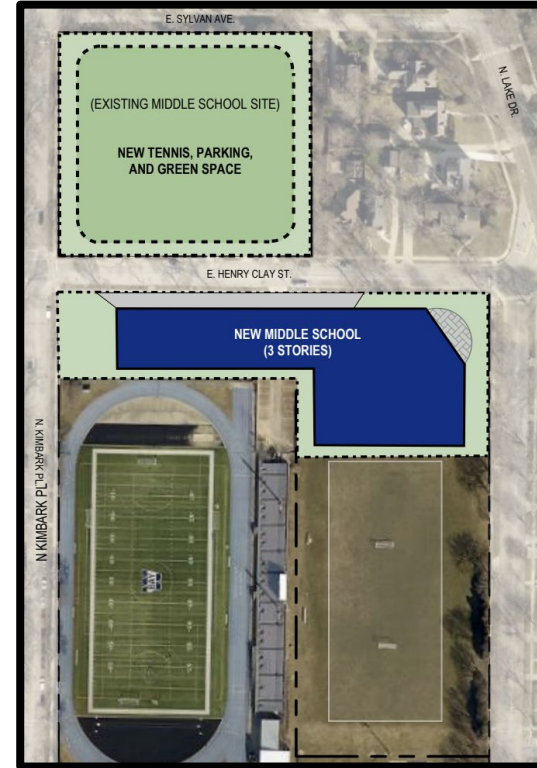
Construct a New Middle School (\$67.7M)



The Board explored a number of options to update the existing building, which is over 100 years old. Given its age, layout, and inflexible design, the cost to renovate is approximately the same as a new building.

Therefore, the School Board is recommending building a new middle school on the south side of Henry Clay Street (see image). The Veterans' Memorial Monument would be reestablished on or near its current site, and the tennis courts and parking lot would be relocated.

The School Board chose this option because it provides the best long-term investment in facilities, avoids disruption to teaching and learning, and provides the most design flexibility.



Construct a New Middle School (\$67.7M)

Focus Areas: *Learning Environments, Aging Infrastructure, Accessibility, Safety, and Security*





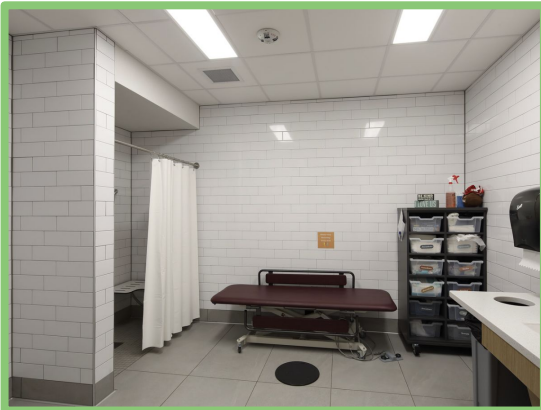
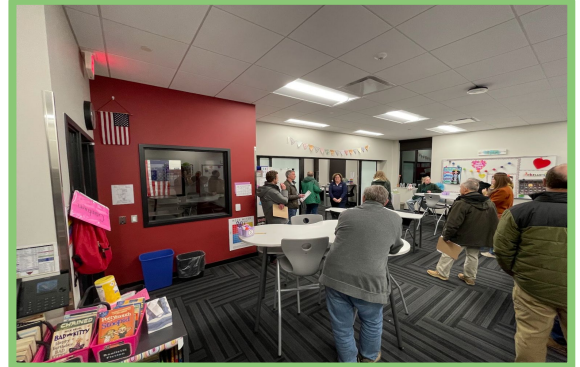
Exceptional Place to Learn: A Focus on Inclusive Spaces







Exceptional Place to Learn: A Focus on Inclusive Spaces



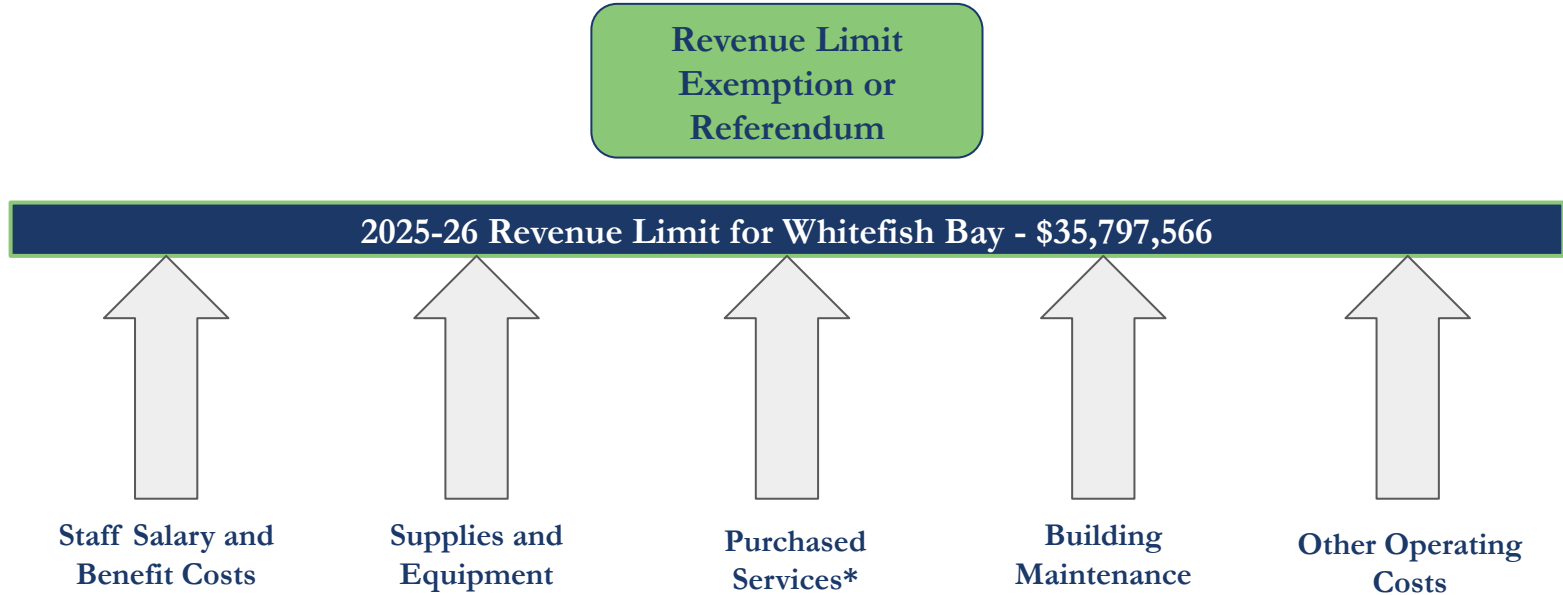


Finance and Funding





Public School Finance



Established in 1993, revenue limits set a maximum amount of revenue a public school district could raise through state general aid and property taxes. The maximum limit for a district can change based on membership and per pupil increases from the state. A district may only exceed the revenue limit through an approved exemption or by referendum.

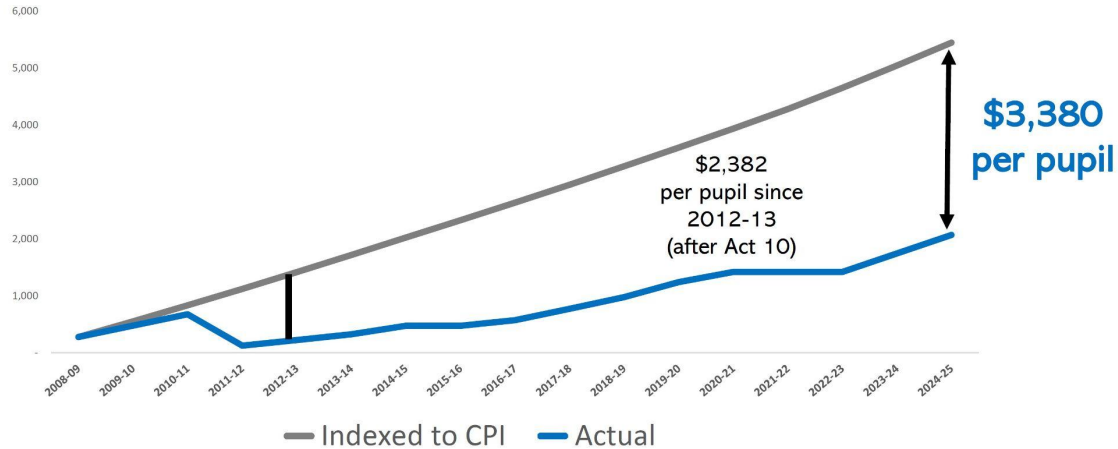
*Some examples of costs for Purchased Services include utilities, software, and contracted services through a vendor.
Source: Department of Public Instruction





Public School Funding

General school district revenues per pupil lag inflation by more than \$3,300 since 2009



Wisconsin public schools have not received an inflationary increase from the state since 2008-09 and received no per pupil increases in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years resulting in budget deficits in many districts across the state. Even with limited funding, costs continue to rise for school districts resulting in many schools needing to make significant cuts into their educational programs or having to pursue an operational referendum. This shortfall represents 21.5% less buying power compared to 2009.

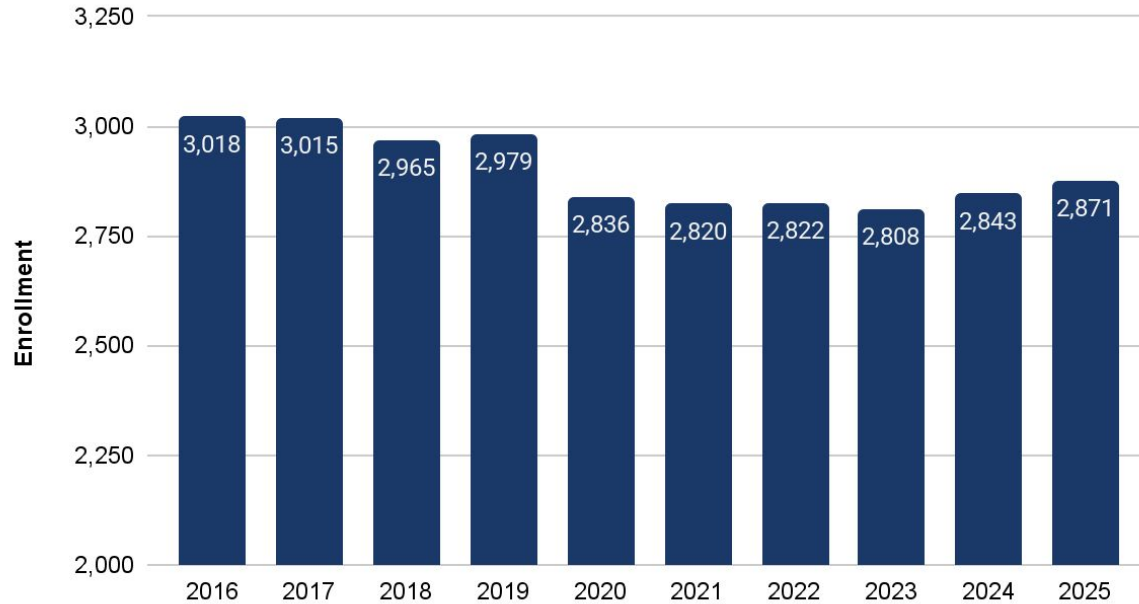
Source: Kava, Russ (January 9, 2023) Legislative Fiscal Bureau Memo re: Revenue Limit Per Pupil Adjustment Indexed for Inflation; Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials (WASBO)





Enrollment

Whitefish Bay Enrollment History



After a decrease in enrollment during the COVID-19 pandemic, student counts have been steadily increasing over the last few years. Long-term projections for enrollment predict a slight decline over the next 15 years.

Source: Department of Public Instruction





Tax Bill Breakdown

Assessed Value Land	Ass'd Value Improvements	Total Assessed Value	Ave. Assmt. Ratio	Est. Fair Mkt. Land	Est. Fair Mkt. Improvements	Total Est. Fair Mkt.	
97,000	323,100	420,100	1.0020	96,800	322,500	419,300	<input type="checkbox"/> star in this box means unpaid prior year taxes
Taxing Jurisdiction	2023 Est. State Aids Allocated Tax Dist.	2024 Est. State Aids Allocated Tax Dist.		2023 Net Tax	2024 Net Tax	% Tax Change	Gross Property Tax
MILWAUKEE COUNTY	2,436,806	2,372,707		1,770.01	1,767.13	-0.2%	5,760.47
VILLAGE OF WHITEFISH BAY	1,182,266	1,205,970		1,611.27	1,650.69	2.4%	-53.88
WHITEFISH BAY SCHOOL DIST	18,993,159	19,027,095		1,836.76	1,939.99	5.6%	-173.49
MMSD				513.09	518.25	1.0%	
SALES TAX CREDIT				-461.32	-450.99	-2.2%	
MATC	2,346,357	2,479,030		334.29	335.40	0.3%	5,533.10
Total	24,958,588	25,084,802		5,604.10	5,760.47	2.8%	
	First Dollar Credit			53.61	53.88	0.5%	
	Lottery & Gaming Credit			199.55	173.49	-13.1%	
	Net Property Tax			5,350.94	5,533.10	3.4%	
School taxes reduced by school levy tax credit	\$ 540.51						
<small>IMPORTANT: Be sure this description covers your property. This description is for property tax bill only and may not be a full legal description.</small>				<small>Net Assessed Value Rate (Does NOT reflect credits)</small>			
				0.013712119			



TOTAL DUE FOR FULL PAYMENT
 PAY BY **January 31, 2025**
\$ 5,533.10

Warning: If not paid by due dates, installment option is lost and total tax is delinquent subject to interest and, if applicable, penalty.
Failure to pay on time. See reverse.

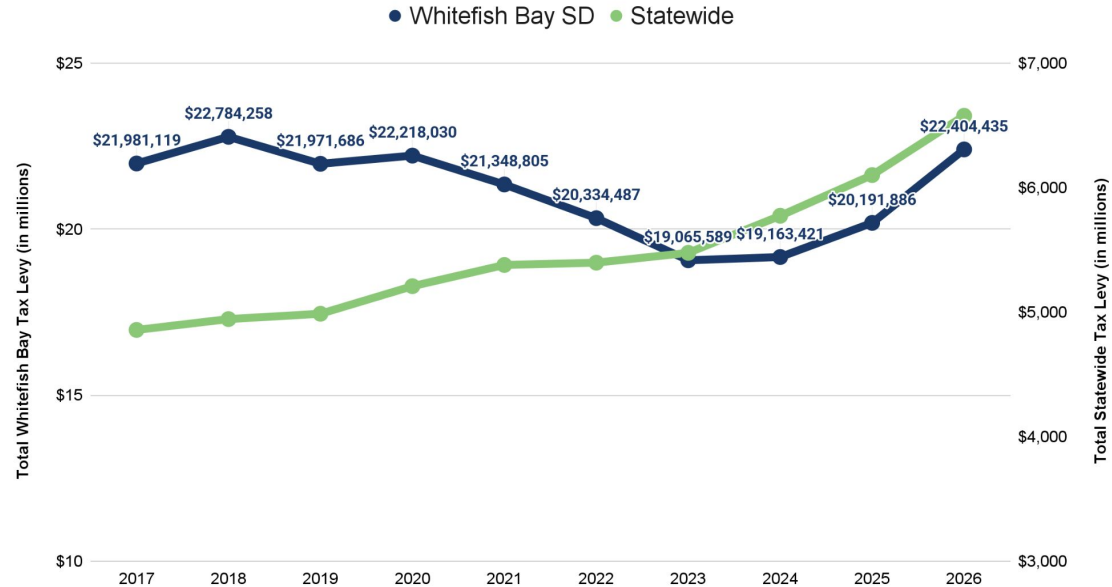
The tax levy rate for 2024-25 was \$5.92 for every \$1,000 of property value. Therefore, the calculation for this example would be \$419,300 (fair market value) multiplied by .00591581 (tax levy rate divided by 1,000) minus \$540.51 (school levy credit).





Tax Levy History

Total School Tax Levy History



After a slight decline in the total tax levy starting in 2020, the total levy amount for the Whitefish Bay school District has increased over the last few years due to a number of factors including the state budget, private school vouchers, and the final debt payments from the 2009 referendum. The total levy amount for Whitefish Bay School District for 2026 is less than the total amount levied in 2018.

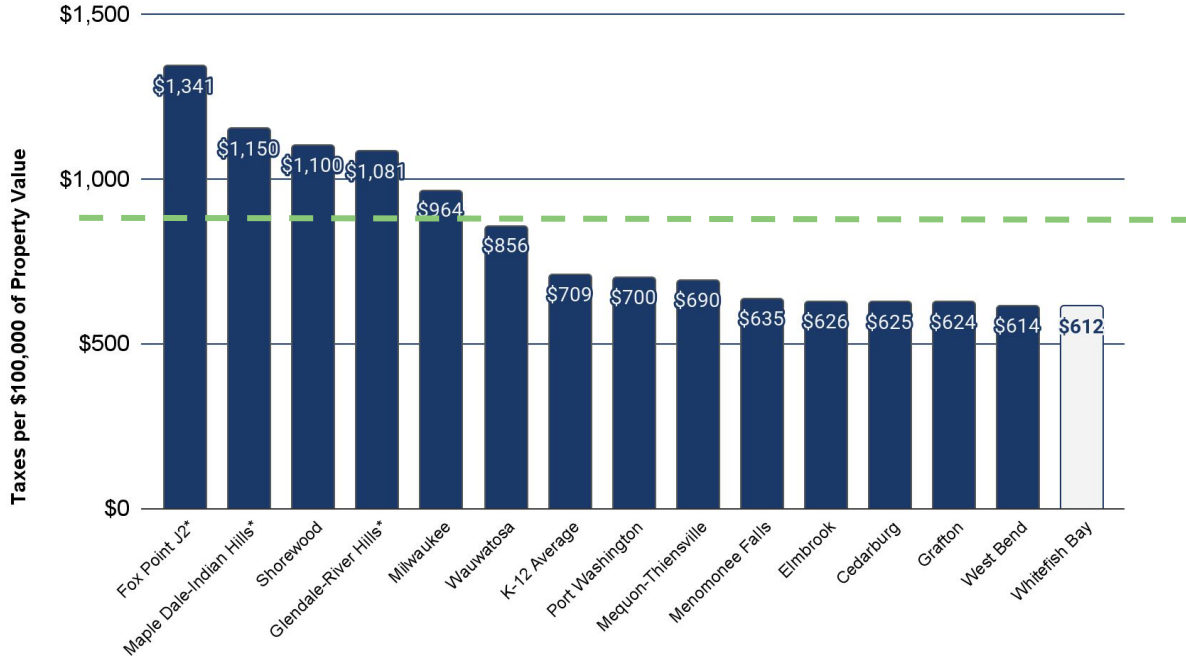
Source: Department of Public Instruction





Tax Levy Comparison

2025-26 Property Tax Rates (per \$100,000 of Property Value)



Potential \$135.6M referendum

The Whitefish Bay School District has one of the lowest tax levy rates in the area and is below the K-12 average in Wisconsin.

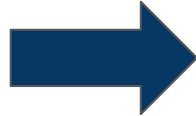
*Combined K-8 Grade School plus Nicolet UHS
Source: Department of Public Instruction



Additional Infrastructure, Accessibility, Safety, and Security (District Funded)



Whitefish Bay High School
(55.3% support to address this now)



Additional Infrastructure Update/replace plumbing and electrical systems, brickwork, foundations, etc. (Estimated cost: \$10.7 million)

Cumberland/Richards Elementary
(55.7% support to address this now)



Additional Infrastructure Update/replace plumbing and electrical systems, brickwork, foundations, etc. (Estimated cost: \$8.1 million)

Lydell School and Community Center
(37.3%/33.1% support to address this now)



Additional Infrastructure Update/replace plumbing and electrical systems, brickwork, foundations, etc. (Estimated cost: \$1.0 million)

Additional Safety, Security, and Accessibility Reconfigure drop-off/pick-up areas, renovate main offices to improve security, and improve front entrance ADA accessibility (Estimated cost: \$0.6 million)



School District Funding



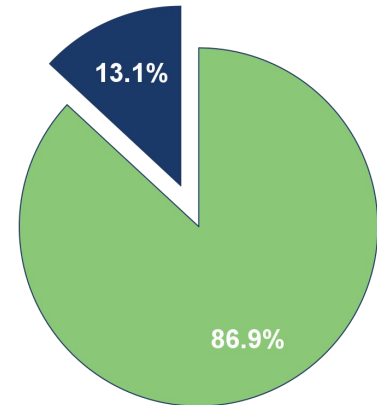
We propose utilizing \$20.4 million from District funding for a strategic combination of:

- Fund 10 (General Fund) - \$6.9 million
- Fund 46 (Long-Term Capital Improvement Trust Fund) - \$10 million
- Fund 80 (Community Service Fund) - \$3.5 million

Referendum Amount: \$135.6 million

District Funding Amount: \$20.4 million

Total Project Amount: \$156 million



● Referendum ● District Funding

Note: Fund 46 can only be used on projects included in the long-term capital plan. Fund 80 can only be used on projects at Lydell School and Community Center, or for other community projects.



School District Tax Levy Impact

Referendum Cost NOT TO EXCEED: \$135.6 Million	Estimated AVERAGE ANNUAL School Property Tax Impact:	Estimated AVERAGE MONTHLY School Property Tax Impact:
Per \$100,000 of property value	\$260 ⁰⁰	\$21 ⁶⁷
Per \$200,000 of property value	\$520 ⁰⁰	\$43 ³³
Per \$300,000 of property value	\$780 ⁰⁰	\$65 ⁰⁰
For an average home in Whitefish Bay (\$685,800)	\$1,783 ⁰⁸	\$148 ⁵⁹

Preliminary tax impact estimates assume borrowing over a 21-year period at an interest rate of 5% to 5.25%. The District is scheduled to pay off the remaining debt obligations from the November 2009 referendum in 2026 and the impact of those final payments is included in these estimates. The current tax levy impact of the November 2009 referendum debt is \$57 per \$100,000 of property value.

Source: PTMA Financial Solutions





Your Voice Matters: Referendum Resolution Question

Shall the School District of Whitefish Bay, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin be authorized to issue pursuant to Chapter 67 of the Wisconsin Statutes, general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$135,600,000 for the public purpose of paying the cost of a district-wide school building and facility improvement project consisting of: safety, security, building infrastructure and capital maintenance improvements at Whitefish Bay High School, Cumberland and Richards Elementary Schools, and Lydell School and Community Center; construction of and site improvements for a new middle school to replace the existing middle school; acquisition of land; demolition of the existing middle school and repurposing the site for district and community use; and acquisition of furnishings, fixtures and equipment?





Building Futures

Thank you for your engagement in this facilities planning process. This work has the potential to benefit current and future students and community members.





Staying Informed and Questions about the Process



- You can visit our **Facilities Long-Range Planning [webpage](#)** for additional updates on any next steps.
- If you have a **question about the process** you can [submit a question](#).

Website



Questions?





Opportunity for Questions and Answers





Building Futures

1. Please talk in your small groups about any questions you might have at this point.
2. Share out any common, emerging question(s).
3. Choose 1 person to share out for your group.

03:00





Staying Informed and Questions about the Process



- You can visit our **Facilities Long-Range Planning [webpage](#)** for additional updates on any next steps.
- If you have a **question about the process** you can [submit a question](#).

Website



Questions?

