Referendum Guide

April 1, 2025 Election

This guide has been developed to provide our Marshall Public Schools residents with information about the \$5,355,000 April 1 bond/facilities referendum. Our referendum focus is largely centered around improving school student/staff safety and security measures to include:

- Improved safe/secure front entrances to each school building
- Automatic interior door lock mechanisms to shut and lock interior hallway door entrances with the press of a button located in each office area
- Interior and exterior video surveillance camera upgrades

Safety remains our district's top priority and these improvements are essential to enhance/improve safety and security in each of our four schools.

This guide will provide the referendum details regarding the essential capital needs to improve the safety/security at each of our school's entrances and replacing the failing Elementary School windows and roof. The identified improvements/replacements, projected costs, wording of the April 1st ballot question, and numerous frequently asked questions are available. Tax implications and rationale to complete each of the capital projects will also be presented.

On April 2, 2024, the capital referendum failed by 53 votes. We learned that we need to improve our district communication related to the "why" behind the essential facility improvements/replacements. Trust and transparency are critical, and we know that change happens at the speed of trust.

Thank you for taking time to review this information and feel free to view additional resources by visiting the district website at <u>marshallschools.org</u>. Special thanks for your interest as we strive to help you make an informed vote on April 1st.

Visit marshallschools.org for additional information.

Capital (Bond) Referendum

On January 15, 2025, the Marshall Board of Education unanimously approved two resolutions to address highly essential maintenance needs for the April 1 ballot. The first resolution, asking district residents to authorize the issuance of general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$5,355,000 for the public purpose of paying the cost of a school facility improvement project consisting of: district-wide safe and secure school entrance improvements; capital maintenance improvements, including roof and window replacements at Marshall Elementary School; and acquisition of furnishings, fixtures and equipment. The second resolution, to provide for a Referendum Election on the Question of the Approval of an Initial Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of General Obligation Bonds in an Amount Not to Exceed \$5,355,000.

Referendum Question

Shall the Joint School District Number 2, Village of Marshall, Towns of Cottage Grove, Deerfield, Medina, Sun Prairie and York, Dane County, Wisconsin be authorized to issue pursuant to Chapter 67, Wisconsin Statutes, general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$5,355,000 for the public purpose of paying the cost of a school facility improvement project consisting of: district-wide safe and secure school entrance improvements; capital maintenance improvements, including roof and window replacements at Marshall Elementary School; and acquisition of furnishings, fixtures and equipment?

In summary, Marshall Public Schools will be presenting one referendum question to the community on April 1, 2025 as summarized below:

Referendum Question: Capital (Bond) Referendum

Seeks voter approval for a \$5.355M bond to improve/replace the following:

- 1. Secure front entrances will be added to each school (\$3,647,000 approx.)
- 2. Replace Elementary School roof (\$1,568,000 for 30-40 year lifecycle roof)
- 3. Replace 58 Elementary School windows (\$140,000)

Estimated Property Tax Impact of Capital (Bond) Referendum Question

YEAR	Promissory Notes (20-year Bond)	Estimated Yearly Property Tax Impact (per \$100,000 property value)
2024-25	\$5.355M	\$23.00 year / \$1.92 month

^{*}Assumes borrowing repaid over 20 years at 4.75% interest rate

Visit <u>marshallschools.org</u> for additional information.

Frequently Asked Questions

What process did the district use to determine the Capital referendum priorities?

Throughout 2022, residents, Board members, and district staff served as members of the Building and Grounds study team. Team members met monthly to examine and prioritize facility needs. Their recommendations were presented for the Board of Education's consideration in June 2022. It was noted that the district hadn't brought a Capital referendum to residents since the Elementary School was built in 2004.

The District Facilities Community Advisory Team, composed of residents and district staff, met from July through December in 2023. 140 residents completed a Community Facilities Feedback Survey measuring residents' support of addressing district facility needs at each of our school buildings. The Advisory Team then prioritized the district's current and upcoming facility needs such as: improving the safety and security of each school building's entrance, Elementary School window replacements, renovating the High School Tech Education classrooms, upgrades to the football/track complex, explored solar installation, Elementary School roof replacement, and parking lot repairs. The Board of Education considered the Advisory Team's recommendations in December 2023.

With community and staff input, the district developed a 2022-27 strategic plan. The Business and Financial Performance portion of the strategic plan outlined strategic actions to improve the safety of each of our school's entrances and replace the Elementary School windows and roof.

In spring of 2023, the district commissioned McKinstry, Kehoe-Henry & Associates architects, and Garland Roofing to develop specific priorities for facility improvements. As a result, the administration presented a recommendation, and the Board approved the resolution focused on school entrances, window, and roof replacement on the April 1 referendum question.

What happens if a Capital (Bond) Referendum passes?

District officials will immediately start the planning process for the approved facility projects. Key steps include the following:

- Finalize and prioritize facility project specifications.
- Create a project completion schedule.
- Request bids and select contractors.
- Replace roof and windows during summer/fall 2025.
- Begin school entrances construction late spring/early summer 2026.

Visit <u>marshallschools.org</u> for additional information.

What happens if the Capital (Bond) Referendum fails?

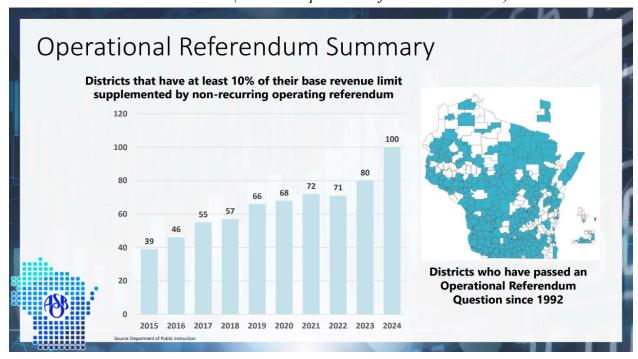
The projects outlined in the Capital Referendum will remain on the district's rolling, annual comprehensive facility plan. Improvements/replacements will be deferred until resources are available to complete the projects. The district will maintain and update the 10-year facility projects list and will continue to prioritize and complete projects within the limited annual operational budget. Temporary but ongoing roof repairs will be needed on an annual basis; windows will continue to be energy inefficient and rotting; front entrances will continue to be less secure and safe. Simply stated, these larger referendum projects would be deferred until resources are available.

Why was the November 2024 Operational referendum needed in Marshall?

Districts, just like Marshall, rely on their resident's support through operational referendums to provide the programming, staffing, technology, and student offerings that they expect from the district. Due to limited state funding for public education, over 80% of districts statewide have been forced to seek operational referendum support from their communities to continue day to day operations (see table below).

There are many factors to consider when deciding on a referendum, but ultimately the Marshall Public Schools can not continue current programming and operations without additional revenue. Despite a long history of being financially responsible, reducing debt, and saving for facility expenses, state-imposed inequitable revenue limits and inadequate state funding have not kept up with inflation.

Table: Statewide referendum data (Source: Department of Public Instruction)



This ongoing revenue problem has become even more challenging when the 2023-25 state biennial budget did not include enough new revenue to replace one-time/non-recurring federal pandemic funding or account for historically high inflation. Without additional revenue or a significant reduction in expenditures, the district budget would have included deficits that were not sustainable into the future. Therefore, the district was blessed with voter support for a *levy override* to increase our revenue with the November vote.

With approximately 75% of our district expenses tied to compensation for employees, the operational referendum allows the district to offer appropriate salary/benefits. The November operational referendum also addressed the increased inflationary costs associated with purchasing educational supplies, materials, and services, as well as handling the operational increases in our schools, such as electricity, natural gas, general building/grounds maintenance, and costs associated with student transportation.

When was Marshall's last Capital (Facilities) Referendum?

The failed April 2024 Capital Referendum was the first Capital Referendum brought to residents since the Elementary School was built in the 2004 referendum. The April 2024 capital referendum failed by 53 votes.

Successful Capital Referendums in nearby districts (past 7 years)

DISTRICT	REFERENDUM AMOUNT
Sun Prairie	\$164M
DeForest	\$125M
Monona Grove	\$57M
Lake Mills	\$51M
Deerfield	\$49.7M
Columbus	\$30M
New Glarus	\$28.9M
Wisconsin Heights	\$27M
Waterloo	\$16.2M
Johnson Creek	\$15M

Source: DPI LINK: https://sfs.dpi.wi.gov/Referenda/CustomReporting.aspx

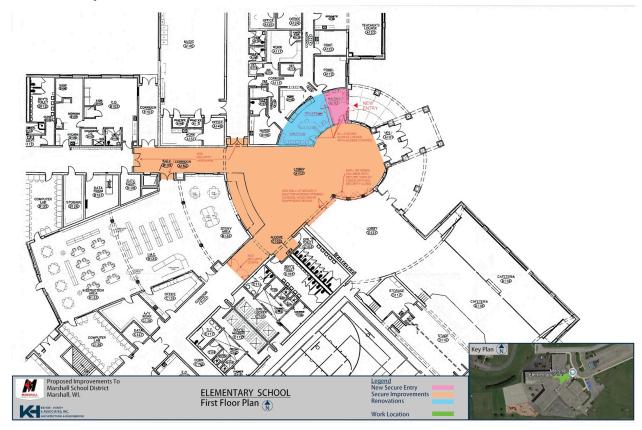
Visit marshallschools.org for additional information.

^{*}Marshall is seeking support for \$5.355M to improve school entrances; Elementary School windows & roof replacement.

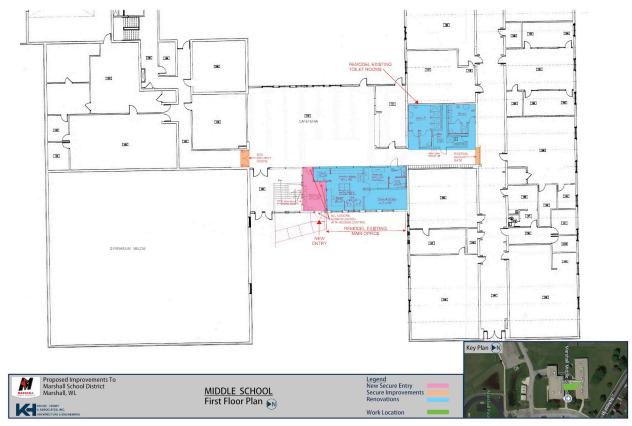
Early Learning Center (secure entry, security improvements & work location)



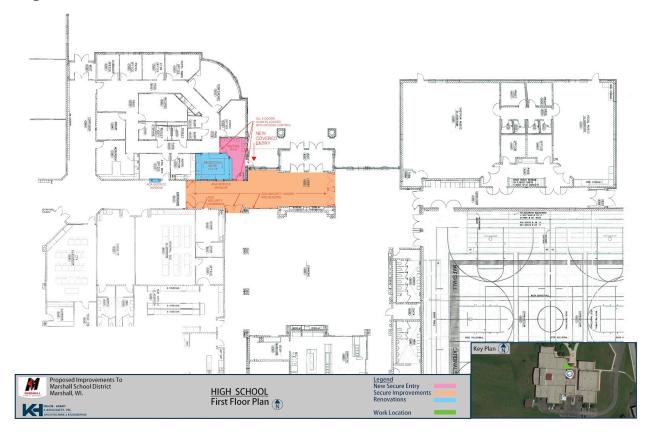
Elementary School (secure entry, security improvements & work location)



Middle School (secure entry, security improvements & work location)



High School (secure entry, security improvements & work location)



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION		
When were our school buildings built?	 High School - Built in 1998 Middle School - Built in 1967 with an addition in 1973. Elementary School - Built in 2004 Early Learning Center - Built in 1994 with an addition in 1998 	
Over the past six years, what facility upgrades and improvements has the district made and what funds were used?	 Replaced the public address/clock systems at the ELC, Elementary School and at the High School (\$450,000 General Fund) Remodeled lower-level ELC rooms and replaced windows to create an Early Literacy Center (\$350,000 ESSER funds) Replaced both High School boilers (\$240,000 General Fund) Track resurfacing/painting (\$100,000 General Fund) Parking lot and wastewater collection improvements (\$45,000 General Fund) Middle School library remodel (\$45,000 General Fund) 	

- ELC HVAC replacements (\$125,000 ESSER funds)
- Outdoor concrete projects across the district (\$35,000 General Fund).

How much of my taxes go to fund private voucher schools?

The result of the private school voucher programs where Marshall resident students are seeking their educational learning through private school programming in 2022-2023 was \$0.44/\$1,000. State law deducts the associated expenses from our equalization aid. As the equalization aid is a major factor within the revenue limit, this then transfers the financial burden of paying for Marshall students who attend a private school through a voucher program to the local property tax payer. Read more about the Private School Voucher Impacts on Marshall Public Schools here.

What is a revenue limit?

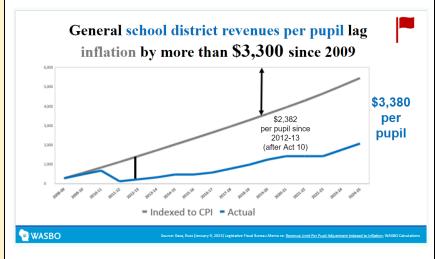
Revenue limits were established for school districts in Wisconsin in the fall of 1993 by the state legislature. They were intended to be a means by which the state could control property taxes. A district's revenue limit is made up of state aid and local taxes. Notice in the visual below that the Revenue Limit remains the same once it is determined. (The size of the whole rectangle stays the same). As state aid to the district decreases, property taxes increase and vice versa.

Public School Funding - HOW are schools funded? Revenue Limit Property Tax Equalization Aid Revenue Limit = Property Tax + State Equalization Aid

Up until 2009, the state granted an inflationary increase to the revenue limit each year so school districts could keep up with increasing costs for the same services. Since then, the revenue limit has decreased or seen only small increases. In order to exceed the state-imposed revenue limit a school district must go to referendum and ask the local taxpayers for the additional revenue it may need.

Why does the district have to go to referendum every three years, and why can't the District "live within its means?" The school district's "means" are limited by state law through the revenue limit and state aid. Since 2009, The dollar has had an average inflation rate of 2.10% per year between 2009 and today, producing a cumulative price increase of **31.05%**. Even with the recurring portion of the 2019 referendum and minimal increases in state aid, the district cannot keep up with the cost increases of current programs and services without a referendum to exceed the state-imposed revenue limit.

The following visual shows how inflation (gray line) has grown since 2009 and how the State of Wisconsin has funded schools with per pupil aid (blue line). We are lagging over \$3,300 per pupil. If we multiply that by an approximate membership of 945 Marshall students, that is a lag well over \$3,000,000 for just this year as compared to 2009. Now consider all of the years in between.



I don't have children in the district. What is the importance of this referendum to me? Studies show that strong communities and strong schools go hand in hand. The benefits of a strong school system include maintaining and increasing property values, providing a qualified workforce, lowering crime rates, creating a strong sense of community, supporting more stable families and enhancing public services with less demand for social programs (by Corey Lund).

The current biennial budget provided increased funding to

Marshall Public Schools received a \$325 per pupil increase in State aid this year. However, the increase only covered a portion

school districts.	How
have these funds	been
allocated?	

of staff salary increases which are essential in retaining talented staff.

PREPARING & PLANNING FOR THE APRIL 2025 REFERENDUM

What is the difference between an Operational referendum and a Capital/Facilities Referendum?	Capital referendums are used for building projects, such as remodels or new buildings. Operational referendums are used to add to a district's operations budget for items such as increasing staff pay, adding more staff, or adding to the maintenance budget. • Two types: • Recurring operational referendums allow districts to exceed the revenue cap forever. • Non-recurring operational referendums allow districts to exceed the revenue cap for a set amount of time and require future approval from voters to continue.		
What was the purpose of the District Facilities Community Advisory Team and the planning process?	To identify and prioritize current facilities' needs, look at district finances, and to provide facility short-term and long-range needs for facility replacement/improvement recommendations for the Board of Education to consider in December 2023.		
Who led the District Facilities Team?	Each participant had an equal voice. Administration facilitated the meetings and provided resources.		
Who participated in the District Facilities Community Advisory Team?	District residents, staff, Board members, and Administrators were involved.		
What overarching priorities/themes led the discussions?	Safety/security, immediate facility needs, expanding career education, deferred maintenance, and energy efficiency/sustainability.		
What facility and maintenance needs were examined?	Increasing school entrance safety/security, Elementary School roof replacement, High School Technology Education renovation/addition, solar installation, Elementary School window replacement, parking lot repairs, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible outdoor athletic facility upgrades.		

What were the District Community Advisory Team responsibilities and timeline?	The District, along with the assistance of the Advisory Team, discussed facility improvement and replacement needs, created a prioritized list for completion while considering available funding, and ultimately determined the need for a capital/facilities referendum. The Board of Education reviewed the Advisory Team's recommendations in December.
What did the Building & Grounds Study Team recommend in July 2022?	The 2022 Study Team recommended improvements to each of our schools' main entrances to increase security and safety; replace the public address/clock systems at the ELC, Elementary School and at the High School; replace the Elementary School roof and windows; and address blacktop repairs.
What is the district doing in the short term to address safety and security?	The District has modified visitor entry procedures and has implemented the Navigate 360 visitor management and prevention system. Interior and exterior cameras have been installed in each of our schools and are using standard response and reunification protocols.
How have community members and staff been engaged in the process?	The District has prioritized input from staff and community members during the November 2021 and 2022 Community Conversations, 2022 Building and Grounds Study Team, November 2023 Community Feedback Survey, and through perception surveys.
Did Marshall Public Schools survey the community regarding District facility needs and about a potential Capital/Facilities referendum?	Yes. The District created and gathered feedback through the November 2023 Community Feedback Survey sent through a mailed invitation to each resident and each student's family members to participate in the facilities survey. Communication was mailed to each District resident, printed in the Courier, and also shared through electronic communication with each of our student's families.
PREVIOUS MARSHALL REFERENDUM QUESTIONS	

When was the most recent Capital Referendum and what projects did it include?

In February 2002, electors overwhelmingly voted in favor of constructing a new Elementary School with necessary furnishings to support instruction. The school opened in September 2004. On March 1, 2022, Marshall Public Schools made the final payment on debt related to the construction of the Elementary School. As a result of numerous debt related transactions that occurred over the course of the 20 year debt payment schedule, the district was able to reduce future interest expense providing a savings to our taxpayers of \$627,137. The

Residents approved an operational referendum in the amount of \$1.875M beginning with the 2025-2026 school year and ending with the 2027-2028 school year on a non-recurring basis. What Operational Referendums have Marshall residents supported in the past? 1. The first operational referendum override was in 2013-14 where taxpayers authorized the collection of a non-recurring amount of \$500,000 per year for the 2013-14, 2014-15 & 2015-16 school years. 2. In 2016-17, the previously approved \$500,000 operational authority expired and voters approved a non-recurring amount of \$875,000 per year to support the 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. 3. Again in 2019-2020, as the previously approved \$875,000 perviously approved \$875,000 operational authority expired, the voters approved a new referendum question that sought to include the \$875,000 previously approved on a non-recurring basis as recurring going forward, as well as an additional \$375,000 on a non-recurring basis to support the 2019-2020, 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years. 4. On April 5, 2022, residents voted to exceed the revenue limit for recurring and non-recurring parining with the 2022-2023 school year on a recurring basis and by an additional \$975,000 per year beginning with the 2022-2023 school year on a non-recurring basis. 5. Residents approved an operational referendum in the amount of \$1.875M beginning with the 2025-2026 school year and ending with the 2025-2028 school year on a non-recurring basis.		District refinanced twice and defeased debt three times over the 20-year loan.	
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THE APRIL 2025 REFERENDUM

Will there be a Capital/Facilities referendum question on the April 1, 2025 ballot? Yes. Approval of this question would authorize the District to secure obligation bonds in a amount not to exceed \$5.355M for the public purpose of paying the cost of a school facility improvement project consisting of: district-wide safe and secure

	school entrance improvements; capital maintenance improvements, including roof and window replacements at Marshall Elementary School; and acquisition of furnishings, fixtures and equipment.	
The Capital/Facilities referendum will provide building safety and security improvements. What does this mean?	With a successful referendum, the District will make facility safety and security improvements to each of the four school buildings' entrances. An alternative entrance, at each school, will be constructed and be used by visitors entering each school while school is in session. Automatic interior door lock mechanisms to shut and lock interior hallway door entrances with the press of a button located in each office area and interior and exterior video surveillance camera upgrades will be installed.	
What if the Capital Referendum does not pass?	School entrance improvements are essential to increasing the safety of each of our four schools. Unfortunately, the Elementary School windows are rotting and the roof needs to be replaced. A successful referendum will allow the District to make needed facility improvements now, rather than making improvements when funds may become available.	
FINANCES		
Remaining District Indebtedness	With the retirement of the Elementary School debt in March 2021 the district's remaining indebtedness equals \$12,055.000 related to the various energy efficiency and other capital improvements undertaken district-wide during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 years.	
Does a successful referendum mean that my taxes will go up?	It depends. Even following a successful referendum, some residents' tax rates can decrease based on municipality equalized property values. Based on the 2025 Baird predictions, a successful Capital referendum will impact taxes \$23/ per year per \$100,000 of home value.	
If approved, what is the projected maximum annual tax impact?	Baird projects the impact of the April 2025 referendum on the property tax rate (also called mill rate) over the current 2024-2025 rate to be an increase of \$1.92/month or \$23/year per \$100,000 of home equalized home value.	

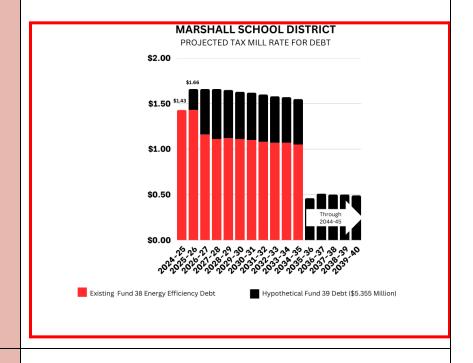
HOW MUCH WILL THIS IMPACT MY PROPERTY TAXES?

Property Value	Cost Annually	Cost Monthly
\$100,000 Property	\$23.00/annually	\$1.92/monthly
\$200,000 Property	\$46.00/annually	\$3.80/monthly
\$300,000 Property	\$69.00/annually	\$5.75/monthly



Based on a 20 year bond

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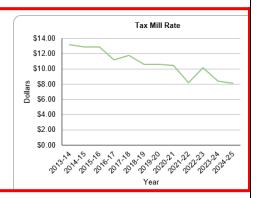


Since the projections for the tax mill rate are based on interest rate assumptions, how could the interest payments be impacted by different interest rates?

Marshall Joint School District Number 2 Referendum Interest Cost Matrix			
Hypothetical Interest Rate	Based on Referendum Amount of \$5,355, Estimated Interest Cost	000 Change vs. Base Assumption of 4.75%	
5.50%	\$3,594,500	\$490,100	
5.25%	\$3,431,100	\$326,700	
5.00%	\$3,267,800	\$163,400	
4.75%	\$3,104,400		
4.50%	\$2,941,000	(\$163,400)	
4.25%	\$2,777,600	(\$326,800)	
4.00%	\$2,614,200	(\$490,200)	
3.75%	\$2,450,800	(\$653,600)	

What is some historical data about the tax mill rate for Marshall Public Schools?

Tax Mill Rate		
Year	Dollars	% Change
2013-14	\$13.16	22.42%
2014-15	\$12.88	-2.13%
2015-16	\$12.88	0.00%
2016-17	\$11.18	-13.20%
2017-18	\$11.76	5.19%
2018-19	\$10.56	-3.30%
2019-20	\$10.60	0.38%
2020-21	\$10.47	-1.23%
2021-22	\$8.14	-22.25%
2022-23	\$10.19	25.18%
2023-24	\$8.40	-17.57%
2024-25	\$8.08	-3.81%



What is some historical data about the tax levy for Marshall Public Schools?

Local Property Tax Levy			
Year	Dollars	% Change	
2013-14	\$4,695,081.00	17.51%	
2014-15	\$4,629,969.00	-1.39%	
2015-16	\$4,746,178.00	2.51%	
2016-17	\$4,326,383.00	-8.84%	
2017-18	\$4,711,984.00	8.91%	
2018-19	\$4,752,145.00	0.85%	
2019-20	\$4,986,129.00	4.92%	
2020-21	\$5,212,571.00	4.54%	
2021-22	\$4,281,448.00	-17.86%	
2022-23	\$6,206,325.00	44.96%	
2023-24	\$5,662,773.00	-8.76%	
2024-25	\$6,209,707.00	9.66%	



VOTE

Where can I vote?

The Marshall Public School District encompasses residents from the Village of Marshall, as well as residents in the Town of Cottage Grove, Deerfield, Sun Prairie, Medina and York. If you

have questions about where you should vote, visit https://myvote.wi.gov . Voting ballots will be available in English and Spanish. All polling places will be open at 7:00 a.m. and will close at
8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 1.

How can I learn more?

The district will provide multiple opportunities for residents to learn more about the capital referendum. We will provide informative videos, newspaper articles, mailing, newsletter social media information, website, and at the referendum conversation listed below.

Referendum Conversations			
DATE	TIME	LOCATION	
March 6	7:30-9 am	137 Main (formerly the Badger Pub)	
March 7	11:45 am	Free lunch & tour at Elementary School	
March 16	9-11 am	FFA Alumni Breakfast High School	
March 19	5:15 pm	Tour & Q/A Elementary School	

Terminology and Legal Considerations

Capital (Bond) Referendum – A bond referendum question allows a district to issue a bond which loans us money (like a home mortgage) for facility improvements. Bond referendums can provide funds for improving existing facilities, and/or new construction. To be clear, we are NOT constructing completely new facilities but rather adding new secure front entrances, replacing windows and a roof. Like a home mortgage, after voter approval of a bond referendum, debt is issued into a repayment schedule to be paid back by the district.

Operational Referendum – An operational referendum seeks voter approval to override the state-imposed revenue limit to pay for general operating costs. By law, an operational referendum cannot be combined into a joint facilities referendum – they must be two separate questions. With an operational referendum, there is no bond issued (no loan to be paid back) rather, when voters

approved the November referendum, those increased dollars (\$1.8M/year for only three years) are generated through local property taxes.

Revenue Cap Limit – The state revenue limit acts as a ceiling on the total overall revenue (from property tax revenue and state aid)that a school district can receive in a year. This limit is the largest source of funding for Marshall.

It is due to this revenue limit that we needed to seek voter approval for an "operational" referendum last November (to maintain staff, avoid budget cuts, and keep pace with inflationary costs). Now due to the same funding formula deficiencies, we are unable to make appropriate facility improvements that cause the need for a "bond/facilities" referendum on April 1st.

Legal Considerations – By law, bond/facility referendum questions must be listed separate from operational referendum questions on a ballot. Hence, the community supported our "operational" referendum support last November to simply avoid budget cuts to programs and services for students' day-to-day programming support.

Now, there will be a separate April referendum question Also, no more than two total referendum questions can be asked in a calendar year. State statutes limit when school districts can go to referendum – only on state scheduled election dates – hence the April ballot question.

For more information, please contact:

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