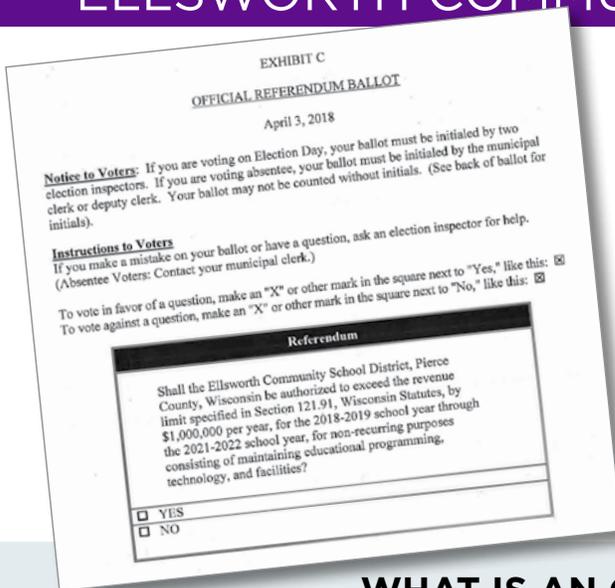




# Operational Referendum

## ELLSWORTH COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



On April 3, 2018, Ellsworth Community School District residents will have an opportunity to participate in a referendum election. The School District Referendum question on the ballot is:

**Shall the Ellsworth Community School District, Pierce County, Wisconsin be authorized to exceed the revenue limit specified in Section 121.91, Wisconsin Statutes, by \$1,000,000 per year, for the 2018-19 school year through the 2021-22 school year, for non-recurring purposes consisting of maintaining educational programming, technology, and facilities?**

Voting "Yes" to this question will approve the requested funding. Voting "No" to this question will not allow the requested funding.

### WHAT IS AN OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM?

An operational referendum gives voters local control to invest in their school district through a property tax increase above the mandated state limit for school revenue.

The state revenue limit (often called a levy cap) is based on revenue profiles that were in place in 1993. Low spending districts, like Ellsworth, were imposed

with revenue limits well below the state average. As needs increase, such as curricular requirements, building maintenance, utilities, etc., that state imposed revenue limit requires districts to either cut costs or request additional local investment through property taxes. Many districts offer operating referendums to address this need.

The levy cap allows an opportunity to keep tax dollars local. Rather than the state collecting property taxes and reallocating them across all school districts, an operational referendum to exceed that cap allows voters to approve property tax dollars for use right in their own communities.

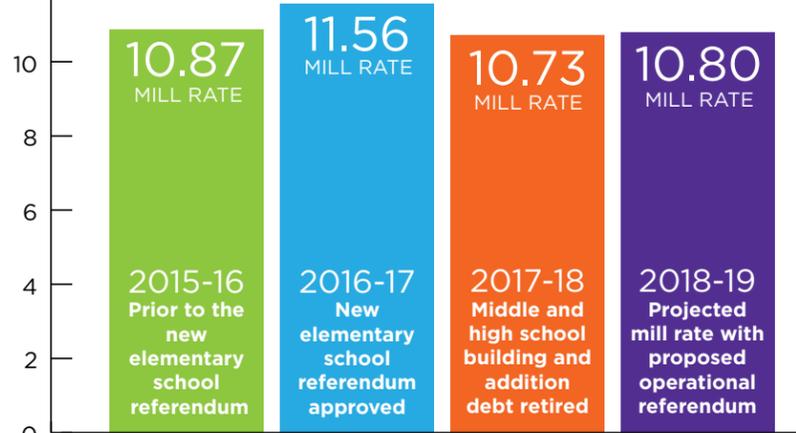
**WHY IS A REFERENDUM NEEDED?**

- The current levy override authority of \$1.3 million per year for three years expires at the end of this school year. With the continued state levy cap, the school will need to reduce expenses this year and moving forward to maintain the already reduced budget.
- Reauthorizing a levy override allows the District to:
  - maintain educational programming
  - retain staffing
  - provide ongoing facility upkeep
  - invest in technology
  - maintain current co-curricular activities
- With efficiency in operating procedures, completed deferred maintenance projects, and changes in state revenue, the new levy override request is lower than the previous override amount.
- The District has previously made substantial cuts due to the state finance system and without a successful referendum the District will need to make additional cuts of nearly \$1 million.

Ellsworth Community School District is a wonderful place to raise children. The small communities that make up the District have big hearts, great dreams, and exceptional results. People have graduated from Ellsworth and developed impressive careers. Many have stayed in our communities to enrich and improve the area.

**SCHOOL MILL RATE COMPARISON**

2015-16 through 2018-19 proposed school year



The mill rate, is a figure representing the amount per \$1,000 of the assessed value of property, which is used to calculate the amount of property tax. As an example for 2018-19, a typical tax payer would see a tax of \$10.80 per \$1,000 of home value or \$1080 per \$100,000 in home value.

**KEY DPI STATISTICS**

(Department of Public Instruction: [www.dpi.wi.gov](http://www.dpi.wi.gov))

- In 2015-2016 Ellsworth ranked 7 out of 8 in the Middle Border Conference in spending per student for instruction, support staff, and administration. The state average was \$10,952 and our District was \$9,649.
- Without the current \$1.3 million levy override, the District would be about \$1,000 below the state average in spending per student.

**IF APPROVED, HOW WILL TAXES BE IMPACTED?**

The estimated tax increase is \$7 on a \$100,000 home (which is a mill rate impact of .07). That breaks down to 58.5¢ per month for \$100,000 of home value. This increase would be in effect for the four year referendum, if the entire amount is levied. If the state limits change in that time frame and the District is able to levy less, the impact would be lower.

**NOTE:**  
 this proposed \$7 increase follows an \$83 tax decrease in the 2017-18 school year.

**TAX IMPACT OF REFERENDUM**

The estimated increase on current property taxes would be \$7 annually (or 58.5¢/month) on a \$100,000 home beginning with the 2018-19 school year.

**Estimated Tax Impact on Property with Fair Market Value**

	MONTHLY IMPACT	ANNUAL IMPACT
\$100,000 Home	58.5¢	\$7.00
\$200,000 Home	\$1.17	\$14.00
\$300,000 Home	\$1.75	\$21.00

**WHAT IF THIS DOESN'T PASS?**

The District is seeking a non-recurring operational referendum, which means it will only be imposed for a four-year time frame, beginning in the 2018-19 school year. This allows the District to evaluate the budget in light of the state mandates at the end of the four years and potentially adjust future budget needs with voter approval.

If this does not pass there will be some hard decisions to make. Identified budget cuts will need to be implemented beginning with the 2018-19 school year in order to accommodate a loss of approximately \$1.3 million in revenue due to the expiration of the current referendum. This will impact staffing, educational programs, co-curricular programs and general operations. Further reductions are projected in the following three years, as well, if there is not an approved local referendum or an increase in revenue through a change in the state levy cap.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Attend the Community Information Session on March 15 at 6:30pm in the High School Library

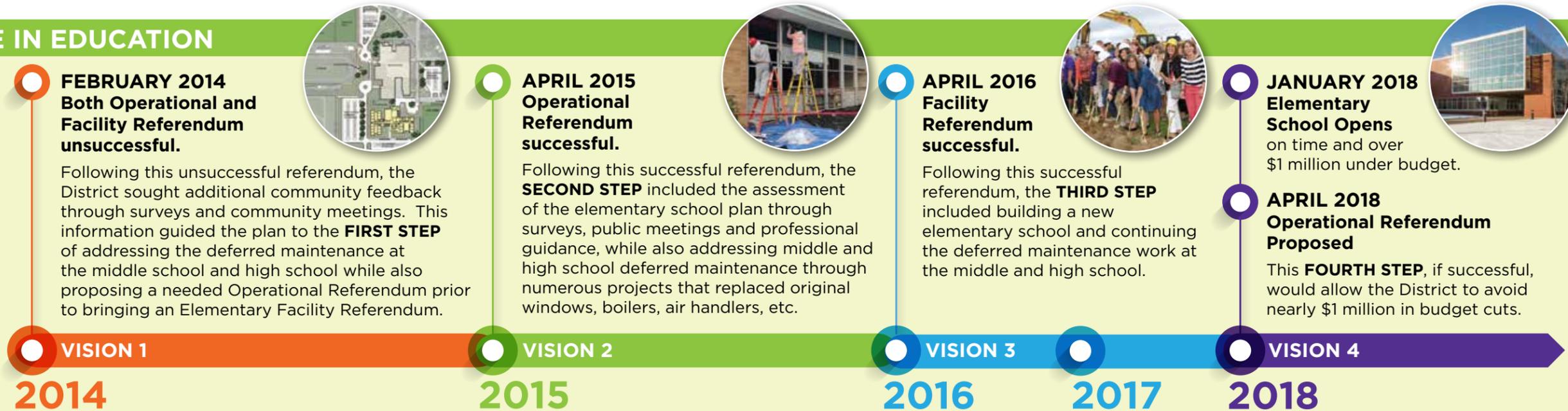
Visit our website at [www.ellsworth.k12.wi.us](http://www.ellsworth.k12.wi.us)  
 Also, look for an information table at upcoming school functions.

Contact Superintendent Barry Cain at (715) 273-3900 or School Board Members

**VISION FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION**

Careful and deliberate planning is important to Ellsworth Community School District. With student needs always a top priority, District options are carefully prioritized to develop the most practical and cost-effective solutions. This is true for long range planning on big projects as well as routine purchases. Community input has always been a guiding principle and will continue to be into the future.

Ellsworth Community School District will always be student focused and community involved. It is a formula that has built an excellent educational system for now and into the future.





**HOW TO VOTE:** The spring election is Tuesday, April 3, 2018. To vote in Wisconsin you must first register to vote. You can start the registration process online at <https://myvote.wi.gov>. You can also register in person at your local municipal clerk's office, with a special registration deputy, or at the polling place on Election Day.

## WHERE TO VOTE:

### Village of Bay City

W6391 Main St.  
Bay City, WI 54723  
(715) 594-3168

### Town of Diamond Bluff

W9870 290th Ave.  
Hager City, WI 54014

### Town of El Paso

N5325 450th St.  
Ellsworth, WI 54011  
(715) 273-4811

### Town of Ellsworth

N6058 490th Ave.  
Ellsworth, WI 54011  
(715) 273-5006

### Village of Ellsworth

130 N. Chestnut St.  
Ellsworth, WI 54011  
(715) 273-4742

### Town of Gilman

W3616 770th Ave.  
Spring Valley, WI 54767  
(715) 778-4543

### Town of Hartland

W6170 County Rd EE  
Bay City, WI 54723  
(715) 594-3770

### Town of Isabelle

W7138 148th Ave.  
Bay City, WI 54723  
(715) 594-3041

### Town of Maiden Rock

W2096 County Rd CC  
Maiden Rock, WI 54750  
(715) 448-3587

### Village of Maiden Rock

N510 County Rd. S  
Maiden Rock, WI 54750  
(715) 448-2205

### Town of Martell

W5581 Hwy 63  
Spring Valley, WI 54767  
(715) 688-4645

### Town of Oak Grove

N4939 1100th St.  
Prescott, WI 54021  
(715) 262-4005

### Town of River Falls

W9015 770th Ave.  
River Falls, WI 54022

### Town of Salem

N3599 County Rd. A  
Maiden Rock, WI 54750  
(715) 647-3585

### Town of Trenton

W7926 250th Ave.  
Hager City, WI 54014

### Town of Trimbelle

N5310 800th St.  
Ellsworth, WI 54011  
(715) 273-5319

**Past surveys have shown the main reason people do not vote is because they are busy.**

If you lead a busy life, absentee voting is a great way to assure that you cast a ballot. With this method you can vote before Election Day to avoid missing out due to a busy schedule, vacation, or other conflict. Find out more at <http://gab.wi.gov/voters/absentee> or contact your municipality for more details.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM:

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**Visit our website at [www.ellsworth.k12.wi.us](http://www.ellsworth.k12.wi.us)**  
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## Key Priorities

Student education is first and foremost. Whether it is spending revenue responsibly or reducing budgets, a good education for the students in our communities is the top consideration. This means counting on our professionals to provide classrooms, busing, playgrounds, lunch rooms and programming that builds strong students with well-rounded experiences for their next stage in life.

Community support is also a very important priority - whether it is building trust, spending tax dollars wisely, or collaborating with residents of all the communities that make up Ellsworth Community School District. A demographically represented survey of our residents helped guide the decisions around the operational referendum:

# 89%

OF THOSE SURVEYED...

**Rated the quality of education provided by our school district as either good or excellent.**

# 91%

OF THOSE SURVEYED...

**Gave our teachers a positive rating.**  
Our principals received a 84% positive rating and our administration received a 74% positive rating

# 84%

OF THOSE SURVEYED...

**Believe the community receives a good value from its investment in our schools.**

November 2017  
Morris-Leatherman Company  
**RESIDENT SURVEY**  
Ellsworth Community School District

ACCORDING TO THE SURVEY...

**The most serious issue facing our schools is lack of funding.**