WESTON SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Passing Referenda #TheWestonWay
Gold Medallion Entry - Bond/Finance Campaign

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Cooperative Educational Service Agency
SYNOPSIS

Weston School District is situated on 60 acres of cornfields and woodlands in beautiful southwestern Wisconsin. Even though the District is small, its 300 pre-K through 12th-grade students experience a hands-on curriculum that keeps them excited about learning. The District’s motto is #TheWestonWay which encourages building relationships, promoting acceptance, and providing opportunities for students and the community to succeed.

The District was stuck in a referendum cycle for 12-15 years. They needed to pass operational referenda every three to five years to continue to offer the same programs and personnel. Little to no funds were left over to address building maintenance concerns, and significant issues, such as cracked asbestos flooring and leaky roofs, began to pile up. The District also faced low enrollment and an inflated mill rate, and talks of shutting down the school and consolidating with nearby districts were frequent.

The District knew if it wanted to keep its doors open, it had to do something. It put two referenda questions on the April 6, 2021, ballot. The first was for an operational referendum for $975,000 per year over four years, and the second was for $1.9 million in capital improvements. The District knew it had to create a clear and comprehensive communication campaign to avoid confusion over the scope of work and tax implications associated with each question.

Referendum campaigns often focus on print and digital pieces, but Weston School District was a personable place. It wanted to get in front of its taxpayers and planned a referendum roadshow that did just that. Morning radio interviews and town hall meetings occurred weekly. It wasn’t uncommon for a Board of Education member to sit in the local McDonald’s and explain school financing over a cup of coffee. The community embraced this welcoming approach to campaigning and passed both referenda with a 60+% approval rating.
RESEARCH

Weston School District was in a unique predicament with its taxpayers. In November 2019, a clerical error was discovered where taxpayers were over levied on their taxes. The District had planned to pursue an operational referendum in April 2020. However, after uncovering the discrepancy, the Board of Education decided to forgo it and instead funded the school year with the District’s fund balance. As a result, residents saw their mill rate drop dramatically.

While a tax holiday is nice, a low mill rate could not sustain the District. Unfortunately, the District was also experiencing failing equipment during this time. Passing an operational referendum was vital. Without it, the District could dissolve within the next two years. However, the Board of Education felt the capital improvements were also necessary for student and staff health and safety.

The District brought in CESA 10 to perform a preliminary facility audit and identify only equipment needing significant repair to keep costs within the District’s tight budget. The study showcased 14 areas of concern with an estimated referendum budget of $3.35 million. The most pressing issues were the asbestos flooring and leaking roof in the high school and the old boilers and controls in the elementary school.

PLANNING

After the District pinpointed the most urgent facility concerns, it turned to the community for answers. The District partnered with School Perceptions LLC to conduct a community survey in December 2020. The study’s goal was to determine the level of support for each referendum and the maximum accepted dollar amount for the capital referendum.

A community newsletter was sent to all registered voters, informing them of the survey and inviting them to attend an initial community meeting to discuss survey components. The community meeting was held in person at the school and available online.

The survey garnered 248 responses for a 20% participation rate. Results showed 61.75% of respondents would support an operational referendum, and the highest capital amount the community would support was $2 million.
The District listened to the survey findings and pursued a $975,000/year operational referendum and a $1.9 million capital referendum. While many items had to be cut from the original project list, the District could still include the most critical projects in the scope of work.

After defining the projects and dollar amounts, it was time to develop outreach efforts for the referendum campaign. The District created a referendum timeline breaking down marketing deliverables by month. This helpful tool ensured the District was sending consistent communication through various avenues to hit the highest number of voters for the lowest possible cost.

The target audience included all residents ages 18+ in Cazenovia and its ten surrounding municipalities in Sauk and Richland Counties. The District believed the heaviest percentage of voters would be parents of students in the 36-45 age range and retired residents with limited incomes. Word of mouth is important to local constituents. Therefore, the District relied heavily on radio interviews and in-person community meetings as delivery methods to target these two demographics. The District set a goal to attend at least five community meetings throughout the campaign and conduct two radio interviews.

The District knew that the COVID-19 pandemic would impact the polls. Its last referendum in 2015 received 566 total votes. The District set a goal to encourage the same number of residents to vote in April 2021.

The overarching theme for this campaign was the District’s motto, #TheWestonWay. Since the slogan encourages building relationships, promoting acceptance, and providing opportunities for students and the community to succeed, it was the perfect focal point for the campaign. #TheWestonWay was included on all marketing collateral throughout the crusade.
IMPLEMENTATION

The District followed brand standards for all the materials created through this campaign. Raleway was the font used on all headings, and Myriad Pro was used for body text. The District’s dark blue (#10142e) was used as the primary color on materials, and the lighter blue (#6fafd7) was used to complement the palate. Icons were created for the roofing project, asbestos floor tile, boiler system, and operating funds. The District used these icons in various pieces for consistency.

The District knew the tax impact was the most confusing part of the referendum. If one question passed and the other didn’t, the tax impact was affected. The District’s mill rate was also at an all-time low due to the District using its fund balance in 2020 instead of pursuing an operational referendum. The District spent a lot of time crafting language surrounding the tax impact and creating color-coded charts that clearly communicated the financials.

An internal presentation was held to discuss referendum components with District staff. Many staff members were aware of the need for capital improvement projects but were unaware of the ethics surrounding staff dos and don’ts during a referendum. The presentation highlighted which activities were acceptable in a school setting and those to be pursued outside of work. Since the District is in such a rural area, including the teachers and office staff in the process helped answer questions from their families and friends.

An asbestos fact sheet was created and disseminated early in the campaign. Asbestos testing and abatement can carry high remediation costs. The District wanted the community to be aware of the health risks of having cracked and broken asbestos tile in the school and the accompanying costs to remove it safely.

The District also spent a good deal of time creating a comprehensive Frequency Asked Questions (FAQ) document housed on its website. Since there were multiple questions with varying tax impacts, the District wanted to clarify the implications associated with each question. The FAQ sheet was broken into three sections: communications, operational questions, and capital improvement queries. The FAQ document was updated often throughout the referendum as new questions arose.
Now that the District had begun compiling pertinent information, it needed a straightforward way for constituents to access the information. The District was fortunate to have a staff member knowledgeable in IT and marketing fields. A referendum webpage was created that housed all the documents. The webpage had an easy-to-navigate menu on the left-hand side and included links for community members to live stream any meetings. The virtual element was especially important since the referendum took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. The District made a conscious effort to keep all new information at the top of the webpage so community members didn’t have any issues staying up-to-date with campaign progress.

One of the most influential parts of this referendum campaign was the referendum roadshow the District pursued to get the word out. WRCO Radio in Richland Center and WNFM Radio in Reedsburg interviewed the District Administrator on their morning shows. Reedsburg Utilities Cable Channel and LaValle Telephone Cable Channel were both sent information to include in their sets. Community meetings were held at the fire departments, VFWs, Village board meetings, and the elementary school gym.

**EVALUATION**

The campaign was a success! Both referenda passed with a 60+% approval rating. Furthermore, the District achieved all its objectives by attending six community meetings, conducting two radio interviews, and collecting 584 votes. The word-of-mouth strategy carried the District to the end of the campaign when the District Administrator gave an interview in his basement at 11 pm on election night, thanking the voters for passing both questions.

The District was ecstatic its proactive planning had paid off. Now in the construction phase of the project, the District has kept the referendum webpage up and continues to update it with bid package announcements and other construction-related notices. The District plans to continue to involve the community with monthly construction update videos showcasing progress.

Through providing opportunities for ongoing communication and relationship-building with the community, the District was able to pass both referenda #TheWestonWay. They plan to include the community through the project’s completion with continued appreciation and respect.
ESTIMATED REFERENDUM BUDGET

Early on in the process, CESA 10 created a list of potential projects and estimated costs. This document drove the conversation at the first community meeting and helped shape the content of the external survey.

### Estimated Referendum Budget

The table below contains estimated referendum costs based on the proposed scope of work. These projects were identified and prioritized based on conversations between CESA 10 and district administration. Costs may fluctuate based on project schedule, finishes, fixtures, equipment, and contractor availability.

#### Scope of Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Scope Description</th>
<th>Referendum Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HS Music Room Audio</td>
<td>HS Music Room (Room 225) Sound system upgrade. The sound system will provide high-quality, high intelligibility sound in even and adequate quantities to reinforce both speech and pre-recorded audio in the room. There will also be in room audio recording and a wireless handheld microphone system installed.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Auxiliary Gym Audio</td>
<td>Gym sound system update will provide high-quality, high intelligibility sound in even and adequate quantities to reinforce both speech and music. The update includes a video projection system that will be located in the stage area of the gym.</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Auxiliary Gym Wood Floor Upgrade</td>
<td>Install new wood flooring in the gym that will enhance safety and performance.</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Auxiliary Gym Abatement of Existing Floor</td>
<td>Remove roughly 7,000 sq. ft. of asbestos flooring in the gym.</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Auxiliary Gym Bleacher Upgrade</td>
<td>Remove existing bleachers and install new ADA compliant bleachers. Seating will remain the same size.</td>
<td>$115,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Auxiliary Gym Scoreboard</td>
<td>Install a new scoreboard in the auxiliary gym that is functional for all necessary sports.</td>
<td>$23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Gym Bleacher Upgrade</td>
<td>Remove existing bleachers and install new ADA compliant bleachers. Seating will remain the same size as the existing.</td>
<td>$185,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Scope of Work - External

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Scope Description</th>
<th>Referendum Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HS Office Remodel - Secure Entry</td>
<td>Includes remodeling the current office area to be more efficient with the space. This includes a secure vestibule area for safety purposes and to have all visitors pass through the office before entering the building.</td>
<td>$625,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary New Secure Office Remodel in Room 121 (Art Room)</td>
<td>Convert room 121 (Art Room) into a new secure office. All visitors will need to pass through the new office area before entering the building.</td>
<td>$468,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abatement of HS Floor</td>
<td>This includes all the 12” x 12” and 9” x 9” tiles. At this time the 12” x 12” tile is assumed to contain asbestos. In some areas of the building, there is known asbestos-containing flooring that is cracked and chipped. The abatement removal process will eliminate the health concerns with the flooring.</td>
<td>$168,962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Floor Cover</td>
<td>New tile flooring in areas that were removed.</td>
<td>$222,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Roofing</td>
<td>Replace the HS roof past its useful life with a new 20-year warranty fully adhered tile/low-pitch/monument (ETD4) roofing.</td>
<td>$889,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Boiler and Controls Retrofit</td>
<td>Replace existing boilers with high efficiency condensing boilers. Replace remaining pneumatic control with direct digital controls (DDC).</td>
<td>$495,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Lockers</td>
<td>Replace the HS girls and boys Phys Ed athletics lockers.</td>
<td>$77,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Total Project Cost

$3,250,030

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Learn more

CESA 10 Facilities Management team provides assistance to schools and municipalities throughout Wisconsin in the areas of environmental health and safety, energy efficiency, referendum planning, facilities consulting and construction management for projects of any size. To learn more about CESA 10 visit our website: [www.cesa10.wi.us/services/facilities](http://www.cesa10.wi.us/services/facilities)
CESA 10 sent out an initial newsletter in November 2020. The newsletter housed a message from the Superintendent identifying long-range facility plan priorities and an invitation to attend an informative community meeting regarding future needs. The newsletter was sent to 163 residents from the District’s Community Connections mailing list.
COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Community meetings were held at the District in November 2020 and March 2021. The District also wanted to travel to different municipalities to help spread the word. So, the District created a Referendum Roadshow of events. This included visiting places such as the Lime Ridge Village Board Meeting, the Cazenovia Village Board Meeting, and the Cazenovia Fire Department. This strategy resonated with residents and gave them a comfortable forum to ask questions to become better informed.
The District partnered with School Perceptions LLC to conduct a **community survey** in December of 2020. The study’s goal was to determine the level of support for each referendum and the maximum dollar amount for the capital one. The survey garnered 248 responses for a 20% participation rate. Results showed 61.75% of respondents would support an operational referendum, and the highest capital amount the community would support was $2 million. The District followed this advice and pursued a $975,000/year operational referendum and a $1.9 million capital referendum.

### Community Survey Results

**Weston School District**

Late Fall 2020

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**Would you support reinstating a $975,000 operational referendum in order to maintain current programs and services for each of the next four years?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably no</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely no</td>
<td>24% No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Survey Results Graph]

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**How likely would you be to support a capital referendum that provides funding to...**

Very likely (3), Somewhat likely (2), Not likely (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>All Residents</th>
<th>Staff Residents</th>
<th>Parent Residents (Non-Staff)</th>
<th>Non-Parent Residents (Non-Staf)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>replace the high school roof? Estimated cost: $800,000</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>replace the elementary school boiler and update the controls? Estimated cost: $495,000</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upgrade the high school gym floor? Estimated cost: $125,000</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>replace the flooring in the high school classrooms and hallways? Estimated cost: $291,000</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improve school safety and security? Estimated cost: $1.094 million</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>update audio and visual systems in the District? Estimated cost: $45,000</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>replace the bleachers and scoreboard in the high school gym? Estimated cost: $140,000</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>replace the high school lockers? Estimated cost: $75,000</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>update the elementary gym bleachers? Estimated cost: $185,000</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STAFF PRESENTATION

Early in the campaign, the District gave a staff presentation on employee ethics during elections. Public employee rights, staff do's and don'ts, and gray areas were all covered during the demonstration.

Staff FAQs

- How should I respond if a student asks about the referendum?
- What if a parent asks me about the referendum during conferences, at other times during the school day, or on field trips?
- Can I talk about the referendum with my class?
- Can I give out factual information to my class?
- Can I send home brochures or factual information with my students?

Public Employees May Not

- Campaign for or against a candidate or referendum during employment hours.
- Use public funds for campaign purposes.
  - Printing or copying materials
  - Use of school equipment
  - Use of school resources
- Post campaign signs on school property.
COMMUNICATIONS CALENDAR

CESA 10 made a three-month communication calendar leading up to the referendum. The timeline detailed when to update website content, release social media posts, schedule radio promotions, and send out direct mail pieces.
A large portion of the capital improvement referendum was to replace asbestos flooring throughout the building. The District wanted to educate the community on asbestos, how it is managed, and why it should be removed. CESA 10 created an informative fact sheet with asbestos information that was shared on the District’s website and used as a handout when questions arose.

**WHAT IS ASBESTOS?**
Asbestos refers to six types of silicate minerals. Before anyone realized asbestos was linked to illnesses like mesothelioma, this naturally-occurring fiber was used extensively in construction, mainly because it was lightweight, heat-resistant, inexpensive, and readily available. Most schools built before 1980 contain asbestos. Common areas include insulation, drywall, siding, roofing, ceiling tiles, flooring, adhesives, and chalkboards.

Asbestos-containing materials are not considered harmful unless they release dust or fibers into the air. Inhaling these fibers can cause long-term health effects, such as respiratory diseases and cancer.

**HOW IS IT MANAGED?**
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has strict federal laws relating to asbestos in school buildings. Asbestos in well-maintained areas can be carefully monitored and managed in-place to reduce exposure. However, if an asbestos-containing material becomes damaged or is at risk of being disturbed by renovation or demolition, it must be removed. Anyone working with asbestos must be trained and accredited.

**WHY REMOVE IT NOW?**
Due to its age, Weston School District contains asbestos in floor tile throughout the Middle/High School. The majority of this flooring is in great shape, and with consistent monitoring, can be managed in-place. However, floor tiles in the high school wing are beginning to cause concern.

Several areas throughout the hallways, classrooms, and especially the cafeteria contain floating tile, meaning the tile has separated from the mastic underneath. If a floor tile is broken in these areas, asbestos fibers can be released into the air and ingested by building occupants. Floor tiles can be cracked as easily as scraping a desk chair, dropping an object, or persistent use.

As a result of the floor tiles’ current condition and the risk it poses, the Weston School District is looking to remove the high school’s asbestos flooring. If passed, funds from the April 2021 capital referendum will be used to complete this project.

For more information on the 2021 spring referendum, visit weston.k12.wi.us/referendum
WEBSITE

The District’s website was a driving force behind the campaign. The site featured live streams of community meetings, survey results, a link to polling locations, frequently asked questions, pictures of proposed building improvements, a tax impact chart, and the referendum newsletters. The website was updated early and often with information, and all marketing collateral listed the URL to help drive traffic.
FAQ DOCUMENT

CESA 10 created a frequently asked questions document for the referendum website. This helpful manuscript answered commonly asked questions regarding the April 2021 referendum, including those received from the School Perceptions survey. Questions were broken out by category.

WESTON SCHOOL REFERENDUM

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Weston School District presents this FAQ document to answer commonly asked questions regarding the April 2021 referendum, including those received from the School Perceptions survey.

If you have any further questions, please reach out to the Weston School District Administrative, Gary Sylvestre, at 608-998-2131 or email at sylvestre@weston.k12.wi.us.

Thank you for your consideration, and remember to vote on April 6, 2021.

WESTON K12 WI/US/REFERRENDUM

COMMUNICATION

1. Why did the November newsletter promote the public forum not arrive sooner before the actual event?
   Unfortunately, a technical issue occurred with the print company we used to develop the newsletter which resulted in a later mailing date. Since we had the capacity to record the meeting, we decided to proceed with the forum and uploaded the recording to the Referendum webpage for public viewing at a later time.

2. Why do the text and events that come from the District not fully communicate the same message that the phone calls and emails from the district do?
   The company we use to put out the phone messages (concerning school COVID messages etc.) previously did not allow emails or texts exceeding 160 characters. The District communicated with the company and are now able to expand characters. Moving forward communication in text and emails will closely mirror the phone messages.

3. What kind of communication can we expect moving forward?
   The survey showed the community favors a variety of communication from the Weston School District. The community want to see the Weston School District website more regularly updated and the community expect to see another newsletter and surveys being sent home with students. We will also continue to keep the information on the referendum webpage, Facebook page, and the Weston App. We will also be sending out the App for updates on all Weston School District information. The District will also see the Newsday, Independent and the Richland Observer for print news while utilizing ROKIO and ROKIO for broadcast communication.

WASHINGTON SCHOOL REFERENDUM

1. How did the District arrive at the 1% referendum
   CESA 10 has been working with Board Financial, School Perceptions, and Weston School District to arrive at a 1% referendum.

2. How did the District arrive at the 1% referendum
   The referendum was put on the ballot following the Spring 2020 referendum.

3. What was the referendum
   The referendum was put on the ballot following the Spring 2020 referendum.

WESTON K12 WI/US/REFERRENDUM

OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM

1. If the referendum operates properly, will it save money?
   Yes, it will save money in the long run.

2. If the referendum operates properly, will it save money?
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3. What was the referendum
   The referendum was put on the ballot following the Spring 2020 referendum.

WESTON K12 WI/US/REFERRENDUM

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3. What was the referendum
   The referendum was put on the ballot following the Spring 2020 referendum.

WESTON K12 WI/US/REFERRENDUM

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT REFERENDUM

1. How did the District arrive at the 1% capital improvement
   The District has been working with Board Financial, School Perceptions, and Weston School District to arrive at a 1% capital improvement.

2. How did the District arrive at the 1% capital improvement
   The District has been working with Board Financial, School Perceptions, and Weston School District to arrive at a 1% capital improvement.

3. What was the referendum
   The referendum was put on the ballot following the Spring 2020 referendum.

WESTON K12 WI/US/REFERRENDUM

3. What was the referendum
   The referendum was put on the ballot following the Spring 2020 referendum.
VIDEO

CESA 10 created a four-minute informational video detailing historical mill rates, project scopes, and financial impacts. The video was released on the District’s Facebook page and website.
The District wanted to take a deeper dive into the project scope and financial impact of each question. An op-ed article was released in February 2021 with this information. Residents were thanked for their participation in the community survey and asked to visit the District’s website to become better informed.

Weston Referendum – A Deeper Dive
By: Gary Syftestad

Weston School District is putting two referendum questions on the April 6, 2021 ballot. The first is an operational referendum for $975,000 over four years, and the second is for $1.9 million in capital improvements. To avoid any confusion, I want to dive deeper into the scope of work and tax implications associated with each question.

The District has been in a referendum cycle for the last 12-15 years. Every three to five years, we pass operational referendums to continue offering the same programs and personnel. Continuously declining state aid and enrollment fluctuations lead to budget shortfalls and the need to pursue these referendums.

In November 2019, a clerical error was discovered, where taxpayers were over levied on their taxes. The District had planned to pursue an operational referendum in April 2020. However, after uncovering this discrepancy, the Board of Education decided to forgo it and instead run the school year off the District’s fund balance. As a result, residents saw their mill rate fall from $11.76 per $1,000 of property value to $6.25. While a tax holiday is nice, unfortunately, a low mill rate cannot sustain the District.

Therefore, the District is pursuing a $975,000 over four years operational referendum. Funds will be used to maintain educational programming, staffing levels, and a literacy initiative. If passed, the mill rate would increase to $11.74. This amount would be less than it was in 2020, substantially less than it was in 2019 when it was $13.27, but significantly higher than the current $6.25. If the operational referendum does not pass, the District could dissolve within the next two years.

The District is also looking at a second question for $1.9 million in capital improvements. We arrived at this amount through a recent community survey with School Perceptions. Survey results showed respondents felt replacing the high school roof, elementary boilers, and high school flooring, including the gym floor, should be the District’s top priorities.

When I think about these items, it is much like owning a house. If you own a home for 40 years, you expect there will be systems that need to be replaced. That is where we are at with a lot of things in the building. Much of the high school tile is from when the building opened in 1955 and contains asbestos. The elementary boilers are 30 years old. While we are unsure of the high school roof’s actual age, we know it is starting to leak.

If the capital improvement referendum passes, the $11.74 mill rate (if the operational referendum were to pass) will increase to $12.41. It would be approximately a $67 increase over the year or less than $6 per month for most households.

The most vital question is the $975,000 over four years operational referendum. However, the Board of Education feels the capital improvements are also important for occupant health and safety. Therefore, the Board voted unanimously to pursue both questions.

I want to thank everyone who participated in the survey or contributed to the conversation thus far. Your feedback throughout this process has been invaluable. Moving forward, I encourage everyone to become informed on both these referendum questions by visiting www.weston.k12.wi.us/referendum.
Business flyers were handed out to local establishments at the beginning of March. These flyers included the ballot language, tax impacts, and ways for residents to learn more.
CESA 10 sent a second newsletter in March 2021 sharing the results of the School Perception survey, listing each referendum’s amount, discussing the difference between operations and capital improvement needs, providing the estimated property tax impact and referendum question wording, and inviting community members to another informational meeting.
At the end of 2020, the Weston School District asked for input on the District’s operation and maintenance needs through a broad-based community survey. Based on the feedback, the District finalized two referendum questions. Residents will have the opportunity to vote on both questions on Tuesday, April 6, 2021. The first is for a $975,000 operational referendum, and the second is for a $1.9 million capital improvement referendum.

The Weston School District is committed to empowering all students to reach their full potential in an ever-changing world. Thank you to everyone who participated in the conversation so far. Your feedback throughout this endeavor has been invaluable.

**DISTRICT PRIORITIES**

**OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM**

- Maintaining the District’s daily operations, including academic instruction, student assistance, staffing, facility maintenance, and various improvement projects for the next four years.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT REFERENDUM**

- Replacing the fully adhered High School roof that has exceeded its useful life with the potential to cause structural damage to the school if not fixed.
- Updating the High School flooring, including the gym, hallways, and classrooms, which currently contain asbestos floor tile and mastic.
- Installing new Elementary School boilers and upgrading existing pneumatic controls to direct digital controls to gain efficiency and improve air quality.

**LEARN MORE:** weston.k12.wi.us/referendum

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**TAX IMPACT**

The average estimated tax impact of approving the operational and capital referendum questions is shown in the chart on the right. The new referendums would return the mill rate to levels similar to 2020, while maintaining daily operations for the next four years in addition to addressing building infrastructure improvements.

**BALLOT QUESTIONS**

**QUESTION 1 - OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM**

Shall the School Board of the School District of Weston, Sauk and Richland Counties, Wisconsin be authorized to exceed the revenue limit specified in Section 121.91, Wisconsin Statutes, by $975,000 per year for four years beginning with the 2021-2022 school year and ending with the 2024-2025 school year, for non-recurring purposes consisting of operational expenses, including maintaining existing programs?

**QUESTION 2 - CAPITAL REFERENDUM**

Shall the School Board of the School District of Weston, Sauk and Richland Counties, Wisconsin be issued general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed $1,900,000 for the public purpose of paying the cost of the district-wide capital maintenance and building infrastructure improvements, including a roof and flooring at the High School, and a boiler and control updates at the Elementary School, and acquisition of furnishings, fixtures and equipment?

**COMMUNITY MEETING**

The Weston School District invites you to attend an informational meeting regarding the referendum:

**Tuesday, March 23: 6:30 PM - Weston Elementary Gymnasium**

The community meeting will also be streamed live on the District’s YouTube account:

**MEETING LINK:** bit.ly/WestonCommunityMeeting

**LEARN MORE:** weston.k12.wi.us/referendum
SOCIAL MEDIA

Numerous social media posts were created and used in the month leading up to the election. Social media posts highlighted potential projects, promoted upcoming community meetings, included ballot language, and encouraged constituents to vote. The District also released a thank you post the day after the election.
A postcard was mailed in March 2021, reminding people of the two different dollar amounts, the estimated tax impact, and the various projects funds would support. CESA 10 used the same project icons from other marketing collateral to ensure consistency throughout the campaign.