



A Note from the Superintendent

To residents of the Oconto Falls School District:

It's been said that the key to effective communication starts with listening. Quite frankly, I couldn't agree more.

This past fall we conducted a series of community conversations to gain a better understanding of our roadmap for the district over the next five to ten years. Through these discussions we learned there is a desire for the school district to improve its communication with parents and community members.

This newsletter is the first of several steps on behalf of the district to enhance the dialogue with our community. In the very near future, we will also be rolling out a new school district website, as well as resurrecting the Community Calendar.

As a district, we hold an unwavering belief in continuous improvement, which means that our team is constantly reflecting on how to best

have a dramatic, positive impact on our students and their future.

As a community, your input and support are critical to our district's continued success.

As you are likely aware, on April 4, the Oconto Falls School Board will ask district voters to

consider a referendum question. If passed, the referendum would allow the district to exceed its revenue limit by a total of \$11.5 million over five years to stabilize the district's finances and protect its educational offerings.

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input and support are
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Please take some time and read the following information which provides details regarding the proposed referendum. Thank you for taking an active role in our children's education.

Yours in education,

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OCONTO FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Commitment to Excellence

FACT SHEET

MARCH 2017

On April 4, the Oconto Falls School Board will ask district voters to consider a referendum question.

If passed, the referendum would allow the district to exceed its revenue limit by a total of \$11.5 million over five years in an effort to stabilize the district's finances and protect the district's offerings. The referendum would replace an expiring referendum that voters passed in 2014.



Vote on April 4!

BACKGROUND:

In recent years, the Oconto Falls School District has faced financial challenges. While the school board has taken action to address the district's most urgent financial needs, the district's long-term viability requires the attention of the entire community. Over the years, the district has used the authority provided by Act 10 to cut positions, reduce benefits, and implement salary freezes and below-the-cost-of-living increases. Despite these cost-saving measures, the district has continued to face financial challenges.



THE NEEDS:

In 2014, voters in the district approved a three-year operational referendum to increase the district's revenue-limit authority by \$400,000 in order to make roof repairs and address some technology needs. Yet, despite efforts to cut costs, the district's 2015-16 school year revenue-limit authority was \$17.2 million, which was lower than the 2010 level and included the \$400,000 provided by the referendum. In 2016-17, the district's financial projections showed a \$450,000 deficit, and the board balanced its budget through staffing reductions (resulting in higher pupil-teacher ratios), technology changes, changes/loss of programming and additional staff benefit changes.



WE LISTENED:

In the fall, the district conducted a survey in which nearly 900 community members participated. The input from the surveys was instrumental in the development of a solution, which will be placed on the April ballot.

What Are the Next Steps?

On April 4, members of the Oconto Falls School District will vote on a referendum question. If the referendum is approved, it will provide a total of \$11.5 million over five years in additional revenue-limit authority. **In an effort to protect the school district and local taxpayers, the referendum, if passed, will provide funding for four key areas.**



BUSES:

The school district's buses, while well maintained, are quite old, and many are nearing the end of useful service. As a result, the district could be forced to replace many buses simultaneously, which would create a challenging budget situation. We believe it is best to replace some of the buses now and create a replacement plan for the others; this approach would allow the district to better address budgeting for bus replacement.



TECHNOLOGY:

It is essential that the district's technology infrastructure is upgraded. Technology is increasingly important for our students, and we must create an environment in which technology is updated on an ongoing basis as a part of our budget process.



CURRICULUM:

In order to ensure that our students gain the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the future, we must continually update and improve our curriculum.



MAINTAINING FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS:

Simply put, as a result of declining revenue-limit authority, the board has been forced to defer maintenance on our facilities. The passage of the referendum would allow the board to address urgent facility issues.



What Are the Costs?

If passed, the referendum will result in an increase of \$23 per every \$100,000 of assessed property value for each of the next five years and help ensure the long-term viability of the Oconto Falls School District.

Upcoming Events

April 6 Illusionist Adam Trent
The Futurist

April 7 OFES All Arts Day

April 14-17 Holiday Break

April 25 Many Faces of
George Washington

April 29 An Evening with
George Winston

May 7 OFHS Band Concert

May 9 WMS Band Concert

May 11 Abrams Elementary
Concert

May 15 WMS Choral Concert

May 21 OFHS Choral Concert

May 28 High School Graduation

June 2 Last Day of School

*****ECRWSS****

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U.S. POSTAGE
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Attention Non-Residents of the Oconto Falls School District

This newsletter is provided to all residents of the Oconto Falls School District. The most affordable process used to circulate this newsletter throughout the district is to use saturation mailing. It is costly to avoid non-residents from receiving our newsletter. We apologize for your inconvenience but wish to provide important information to all residents. Thank you.



Nothing Says "FUN" Like a Blue Ribbon Pie in the Face

Oconto Falls Elementary School celebrated its place among the best in the nation with whipped cream pies galore.

The elementary school was one of only eight schools in Wisconsin and 329 in the nation to be named a Blue Ribbon School. The award was presented in 2016 to recognize the elementary school's progress in closing achievement gaps among disabled and non-disabled students and economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students.

School officials passed up a Blue Ribbon awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., choosing instead to involve everyone in a celebration on March 3 in the school's gymnasium.

Staff members speaking at the Blue Ribbon assembly emphasized four things students are asked to do:

- Work hard in academics
- Develop talents and be creative
- Help others
- Have fun

"Those are the things that make our school special. They make us a great school," Principal Dan Moore told the 500-plus kids at the assembly.

The pie-in-the-face party was all about fun – sweet, messy fun that filled the kids with glee. A student from each class was chosen to put a pie in the face of a staff member who volunteered to be the butt of the prank. The whole school shouted out a countdown and then cheered as the pies hit their targets, leaving the teachers wearing white masks of whipped cream and getting everyone laughing.

