



THE Phantastic PHANTOM

Mission Statement:
To work collaboratively to educate and empower ALL students to grow, achieve at high levels, and become independent, productive members of society.

Vision Statement:
Creating student success stories every day.

HOME OF THE
PHANTOMS



Understanding the Operational Referendum

This spring, the School District of West De Pere shared that it plans to pursue an operational referendum on **Tuesday, November 3, 2026**. The referendum will ask voters for permission to **exceed the state-imposed revenue limit by \$4.9 million each year for five years**, for a total of \$24.5 million.

This operational referendum is different from previous capital referendums, including the April 2025 referendum that supported a \$9.925 million addition at the high school for trades education. That project is expected to be completed and paid for in full by the end of the 2026-27 school year.

The proposed operational referendum also **does not require additional borrowing**. Instead, it would allow the district to shift a portion of funds currently used for debt payments to support day-to-day operating expenses, such as educational programming, student services, staffing, supplies, and other costs that help keep our schools running.

Like households and businesses, school districts are facing rising costs. At the same time, the district remains committed to providing the high-quality education our community expects while keeping the tax rate steady.

We understand that a request for \$4.9 million in additional operating authority is a serious question. Taxpayers are also managing higher costs, tighter budgets, and important financial decisions at home. That is why we want to be clear in stating that the **district is not asking to raise the mill rate**. Rather, we are asking for permission to use existing tax dollars differently so we can continue supporting students while maintaining long-term financial stability.

Over the past two school years, the district has taken several steps to reduce spending and operate more efficiently. Together, these steps have **reduced district spending by approximately \$1.5 million**.

Recent cost-saving measures have included:

- Reducing staffing in areas including math intervention, at-risk support, instructional aide support, clerical

support, student services, special education, English learner services, and extracurricular programming.

- Ending building leases for the District Office, West Academy, and Phantom Knight, as well as purchasing a building to reduce rental costs.
- Eliminating behind-the-wheel instruction from the driver education curriculum.
- Moving special education transportation from a third-party provider to district staff.
- Consolidating all 4K students into Westwood Elementary and the 4K Learning Center.
- Raising staff insurance premiums.
- Reducing curriculum, professional development, and supply budgets across the district.

We continue to examine ways to improve efficiency while limiting the impact on student programs and services.

A helpful way to understand the referendum is to compare it to a household budget.

Imagine you have a mortgage payment of \$2,000 per month, but you decide to pay an additional \$500 each month to reduce your debt faster and save money on interest. For a while, this may work well. You're paying down debt, saving on interest, and building savings.

Then, costs begin to rise. Groceries, utilities, insurance, and other expenses increase, but your income does not keep pace. You make adjustments to your spending and continue making the extra mortgage payment. Eventually, however, your savings begin to shrink and you realize you need to slow the pace of extra debt payments to maintain financial stability.



Dr. Lau
SUPERINTENDENT



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DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

Amy Schuh (920) 337-1393

ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR

Scott Eggart (920) 338-5229

WESTWOOD ELEMENTARY

Grades 4K-4

1155 Westwood Dr. (920) 337-1087

Fax: (920) 337-1091

Principal: Kristin Krahn

Associate Principal/4K Director:

Jay O’Konski

HEMLOCK CREEK ELEMENTARY

Grades K-4

1900 Williams Grant Dr. (920) 425-1900

Fax: (920) 425-1914

Principal: Kathleen Held

Associate Principal/Summer School

Director: Mike Kowalczyk

WEST DE PERE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Grades 5-6

901 S. Ninth St. (920) 425-1901

Fax: (920) 425-1902

Principal: Scott Marsden

Associate Principal: Chuck Brehm

WEST DE PERE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Grades 7-8

1177 S. Ninth St. (920) 337-1099

Fax: (920) 337-1380

Principal: Jim Finley, Ph. D.

Associate Principal/Athletic Director:

Jason Zielinski

WEST DE PERE HIGH SCHOOL

Grades 9-12

665 Grant St. (920) 338-5200

Fax: (920) 338-5310

Principal: Russ Gerke, Ed. D.

Associate Principal: Justinn Heraly

Associate Principal/Director of Student

Activities: Scott Eggart

PHANTOM KNIGHT

SCHOOL OF OPPORTUNITY

1674 Eisenhower Rd. (920) 425-1915

(920) Fax: 425-1919

Principal: Joseph Feldhausen

DISTRICT OFFICE

1674 Eisenhower Rd.

(920) 337-1393

Fax: (920) 337-1398

OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM *continued*

Instead of paying an extra \$500 each month, you decide to pay an extra \$200 toward your mortgage and use the remaining \$300 to cover operating expenses and rebuild savings.

That is similar to what the district is asking voters for permission to do through the operational referendum. The district would continue paying more than required toward its debt, which saves taxpayers money in interest. At the same time, voter approval would allow the district to use \$4.9 million that would otherwise go toward debt payments to support ongoing educational programs and services for students.

This approach would allow the district to maintain strong schools, support student learning, and preserve financial stability

without increasing the mill rate.

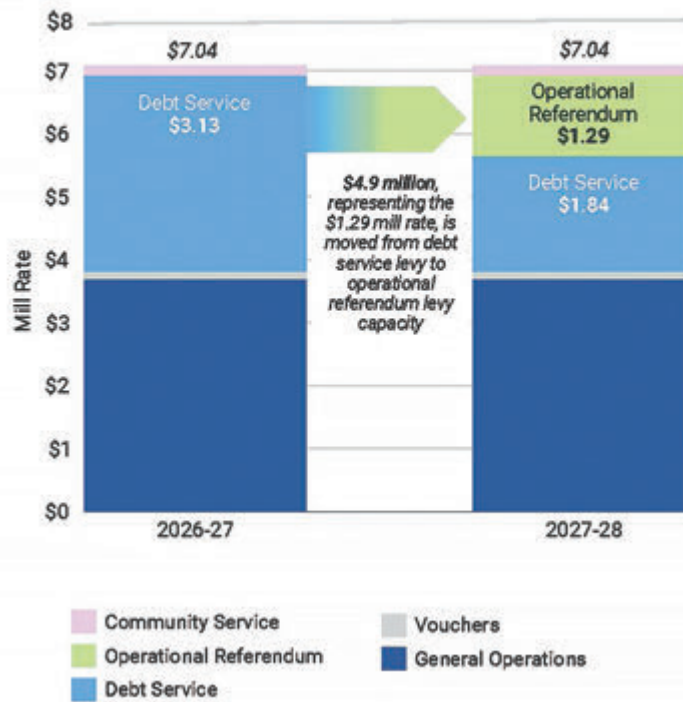
More information about the operational referendum is available at www.wdpreferendum.org. Additional updates are posted regularly on our Facebook page. More informational meetings will be held this fall, and details will be shared with families and community members after the start of the school year.

Community members with questions are also welcome to contact Superintendent Jason Lau or Business Manager Jason Melotte. We would be happy to meet with you, answer questions, and provide more information.

Thank you for your continued support of the students and staff of the School District of West De Pere. We are grateful for the partnership of our families and community, and we wish you a safe and relaxing summer.

OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM: NOVEMBER 3, 2026

Mill Rate Breakdown



LEARN MORE!

Find more information and answers to FAQs at: www.wdpreferendum.org



A CONSISTENT MILL RATE

If voters approve the November 3 referendum, the School District of West De Pere’s mill rate would remain the same.

What would change is how the district is allowed to use its tax dollars. As shown in the graphic, the debt service portion of the levy would decrease, while the operational referendum portion would increase. Other parts of the levy would remain consistent.

The Board of Education and district administration cannot make this change on their own. State law requires the district to ask voters for permission through a referendum.



Around The District

FRENCH FORENSICS 2026

Bonjour

This spring, West De Pere Middle School students competed in French Forensics: LE CONCOURS ORAL FRANÇAIS. This competition is a wonderful opportunity for students to improve their French skills, have fun while practicing and competing in French, and receive distinctive awards at the state level. All of our competitors came away with rave reviews from the judges and earned gold medals! Félicitations!



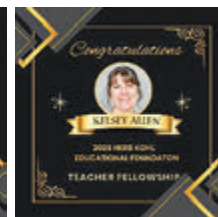
Kudos To Dr. Russ Gerke

Russ Gerke, Principal of West De Pere High School was named the 2026 Wisconsin High School Principal of the Year! The Principal of the Year award recognizes school leaders who have succeeded in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students and who have demonstrated exemplary contributions to the profession. Dr. Gerke also received the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation Principal Leadership Award.



Herb Kohl Teacher Fellowship Award Recipients

Congratulations to Kelsey Allen and Sue Lutz who received the Herb Kohl Teacher Fellowship Award. This is a prestigious award that recognizes outstanding Wisconsin PK-12 educators for their instructional excellence, leadership, and ability to inspire a love of learning.



Baseball Gives Back

The Varsity Baseball Team volunteered over spring break at Paul's Pantry and used the power of teamwork to bag hundreds of pounds of rice for the needy families. Team members include Ethan Collar, Holden Mulloy, Nolan Sell, Gavin Kempen, Laliwa Delgado, Sammy Berg, Caleb Scheller, Logan Wierzba, Micah Jaecks, Maddux Wagendorf, Reid Sands, Josh Kelley, Chase Kerrigan, Isaac Habetler, Caleb Calaway, Ian Clarke, Rockwell Rottier, Brodie Biening, Clay Maxam, Jake Rodewald, and Daniel Beaulieu.



Golden Apple Educators of Distinction Recipients



Congratulations to our district's five Golden Apple Educators of Distinction. Tony Zornow and Lucy Lozar from the Intermediate School, Kristin Blanchard from the Middle School, and Thomas Ashley and Erica Stindt from Phantom Knight.

Congrats to the High School Math Team

The High School Math team took first place overall at the UW-Oshkosh Problem Solving Contest. The underclassmen swept the ninth grade individual podium with Troy Rockman - 1st, Anthony Vissers - 2nd and Isaac Burns - 3rd. These three students, along with teammate Tyler Wagner, also secured a first-place finish in the afternoon's "Face Off" Jeopardy-style competition. Congratulations to these students as well as team members Isaiah Reabe, Josiah Reabe, and David Uttum, on their hard work and notable achievements at the competition.



Front (L to R): Tyler Wagner, David Uttum, Mrs. Clarke, Anthony Vissers
Back (L to R): Troy Rockman, Isaac Burns, Josiah Reabe, Isaiah Reabe

Sports

Bay Area Ice Bears



The Bay Area Ice Bears won their program's fourth state title and second in a row. Congratulations! What an accomplishment!

Varsity Football



West De Pere Football Team crushed their season to become Division II State Champions! Thank you for an unforgettable season!

Varsity Softball



The West De Pere Softball Team are Regional Champions! Congratulations on an amazing season.

Dance Team



Congratulations to the West De Pere Dance Team who competed in the WACPC State Championship in La Crosse. The team earned a state championship taking 1st place in D3 Pom & State Runner Up in D2 Kick!

De Pere Voyager Hockey



The De Pere Voyager hockey team made it the state competition for the first time in program history.

Varsity Tennis



The High School Boys Varsity Tennis Team are FRCC Conference Champions! Four members of the team went on to represent the team at the State Competition. Giovanni Zifferblatt, Brayden Hagenow, Liam Hankel, and Raphael Zifferblatt. Outstanding season!

Sports

High School Fishing Team

The West De Pere High School Fishing Team earned an impressive second-place finish at the Wisconsin Interscholastic Fishing Association (WIFA) State Ice Fishing Championship on the Wisconsin River System between Stevens Point and Wausau.

This year's state team was comprised of seniors Gavin Kempen, Max Pickett, Brayden Raboin, Braden Trombley, and Grant Wogsland; juniors Chase Kerrigan, Jake Rodewald, Cole Schiman, Andrew Tischer, Tristan Wadzinski, and Griffin Wehausen; and sophomore Logan Vanlanen-Erickson. The team was coached and mentored by Dan Luneau, Chad Federman, Corey Rodewald, Jason Trombley, Dave Kerrigan, Chase Raboin, and Owen Wadzinski.



Track and Field



Great job to our 19 Track and Field athletes that competed in the State Competition at La Crosse. Hard work and dedication was showcased at the event. Kaylin Thomson took 2nd in 100m hurdles and Daniel Nehls took 2nd in 100m wheelchair and shot put, and 3rd in 800m and 400m wheelchair.

State Wrestling



Congratulations to Thomas Heraly taking 4th place and Mercedes Kruse taking 2nd place at the State Wrestling Competition. Pictured in the middle is Coach Chris Gallegos.

Varsity Baseball



The High School Boys Varsity Baseball Team are Regional Champs! They finished their season with an 18-10 overall record, highlighted by a late-season surge, strong senior leadership, and a postseason playoff run in the WIAA Division 1 tournament.

High School Golf



Grant Parrett represented the Phantom Boys Golf at the State Tournament. What an impressive season for the whole team.

STUDENT CHANGE OF ADDRESS

It's imperative that we have the correct address information for students and parents/guardians. Any change of address and contact information should be promptly reported to the school office of attendance. Under certain circumstances, state law permits a student to continue to attend school in a district even after they move out of that district. Please contact the school office of your student's attendance or the district office for more information.

Class of 2026

Annual Grad Bash

The 5th annual Grad Bash celebration was a night of fun for approximately 200 graduates. The event included yard games in the turf facility, a DJ & photo booth, pick-up volleyball and basketball games in the fieldhouse, board games, inflatable bumper balls, food, senior send-off videos, and many, MANY fabulous prizes. It was a huge success thanks to the help of many parents and local businesses.

The West De Pere High School Class of 2026 would like to thank our generous sponsors whose donations helped to make this Grad Bash a memorable night.

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|--|---------------------------------|
| Advance Industrial Supply | Pepsi-Cola of Green Bay |
| Advanced Roofing Specialists | PDQ Car Wash |
| Ashwaubenon Bowling Alley | Plank Road Plate & Pour |
| BSN/Jeff Nordgaard | Professional Fabrications |
| Camera Corner Connecting Point | Rennes Group |
| Costco | Resource One Realty/Tom Monahan |
| De Pere Family Dentistry/Dr. Moira Kraft | Schreiber Foods |
| De Pere Voyageur Hockey Booster Club | Scott's Subs |
| Drexel Building Supply | Sidekicks Bar & Grill |
| Edward Jones | Stretch Zone |
| Festival Foods | The Bar |
| Five Star Insurance, LLC | The Driveway |
| Game One | The Exchange Parlor |
| Hilly Haven Golf Course | The Utech Group |
| IM Acoustics | Tweet Garot |
| Indiglo Med Spa | Two Men & A Truck |
| Jackson Pointe Citgo | United HealthCare |
| Janssen Law | Vintage Rose Bakery |
| Kwik Trip | VOS Electric |
| Lifestyle Chiropractic | Wagg Inn |
| Northland Electric | Waseda Farms |
| Novak Agency | Werner Financial Group |
| Orthodontic Specialists of Green Bay | Wisco Sips |



Scholarship Night

West De Pere High School hosted its annual Scholarship Night on May 27, and it was a truly wonderful evening dedicated to celebrating the hard work, dedication, and brilliance of our graduating seniors.

The highlight of the night? An incredible 64 students walked away with scholarships totaling more than \$1.8 million to help fund their next chapters!

Congratulations to all of our well-deserved scholarship recipients! You have made the Phantom community incredibly proud, and we can't wait to see what you achieve next.





Middle School marching band dazzled the community during the Memorial Day Parade



Westwood students visit Lambeau Field



Hemlock Creek students having fun with Keva planks



High School students visit Tidy View Dairy for a up-close look at large animal agriculture



Intermediate School students planted a maple tree at the school for Arbor Day



8th grade choir students visited Fox Cities P.A.C. to see the Broadway musical "Hamilton."



High School students competed in the Goody Duathlon



Intermediate School rolled up their sleeves and cleaned up school grounds for Earth Day



Middle School Functional Skills students worked hard running their donation-in-kind Phantom Fun Corner, and they went bowling to celebrate!



Phantom Knight students explore at Fallen Timbers



Westwood Artists



Westwood students enjoy Play 60



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF WEST DE PERE
1674 EISENHOWER RD.
DE PERE, WI 54115

THE
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Middle School students attended the Rahr School Forest for a day of inspiration at the Artistic Retreat



Hemlock Creek received playground equipment today (footballs and kickballs) from the Green Bay Blizzard and their generous partners at Total Energy Systems

OPEN HOUSES 2026

We invite you and your child to visit their school and drop off school supplies prior to your child's first day of school. Office staff will be available to answer questions and for school fees and lunch payments (please be prepared to pay these separately).

HEMLOCK CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

GRADES K-4

Wednesday, August 26, 2026 4:30-6 PM

WESTWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 4K LEARNING CENTER

Tuesday, August 25, 2026

(AM classes) 3-4:30 PM

(PM classes) 4:30-6 PM

GRADES K-4

Wednesday, August 26, 2026, 4:30-6 PM

WEST DE PERE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

GRADES 5-6

Wednesday, August 26, 2026, 5-7 PM

WEST DE PERE MIDDLE SCHOOL

GRADES 7-8

Wednesday, August 26, 2026, 6-8 PM

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

School District of West De Pere residents are cordially invited to attend regular board meetings held once a month, 5:30pm, at the District Office, 1674 Eisenhower Rd. De Pere, WI unless otherwise posted. An opportunity is provided at each meeting for citizens to address our Board of Education. Please visit our district webpage at: www.wdpsd.com/board-of-education or call the District Office (920) 337-1393 ext 8025 to confirm the meeting date, time, and location.



Maintaining **Excellence**
in West De Pere Schools

OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM

Tuesday, November 3, 2026



Learn more at www.wdpreferendum.org

Pre-School Developmental Screening

The School District of West De Pere offers developmental screening for preschool-aged children. The school district uses census data to mail out the Ages and Stages developmental questionnaires throughout the year, asking parents to complete the questionnaire and return it promptly by mail. As the questionnaires are returned, school professionals score them and provide written feedback to parents on the general developmental readiness of their child(ren). In certain circumstances, the school district will invite children to participate in an additional on-site screening. If you would like to request a developmental questionnaire, please call the Department of Student Services at (920) 337-1393 ext. 8012.

WEST DE PERE HIGH SCHOOL DONOR BRICK PAVERS

Cement the name of a loved one in West De Pere's history with a personalized brick that will be set in the plaza area of the football stadium or baseball field.

For more information, contact Stacy at sschaetz@wdpsd.com or (920) 337-1393 x8025