

### **What projects are included in the referendum?**

The proposed plan will more than double the existing Tech Ed educational space. Renovations will include updating Metals, Wood Shop, Works Labs and Design and Fabrication Lab. Additional space will be added to create an Auto Lab and classroom. In order to make space for these updated learning environments, the existing locker rooms will be repurposed.

### **What is Career and Technical Education (CTE) or Tech Ed?**

Career and Technical Education (CTE) or Tech Ed programs offer students hands-on learning experiences in various career pathways, such as manufacturing, information technology, and skilled trades. These programs prepare students for both college and career success by providing industry-relevant skills and knowledge.

### **Why does the community need more space? Why not use the technical colleges?**

By state statute chapter 118.55 (Jump Start College), a student is permitted to attend a local technical college at the district's expense if a course is not offered at the local high school. We want to offer our high-demand courses on our campus, so we do not have the expense of paying student tuition at the technical college.

### **What is the Youth Apprenticeship program?**

The Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship (YA) program provides high school juniors and seniors with the opportunity to explore career pathways while gaining valuable work experience. This program blends academic instruction in the classroom with mentored, on-the-job training, helping students develop practical skills in various industries while simultaneously earning income.

YA is a one- or two-year elective program that integrates school-based and work-based learning. Students are employed by participating businesses and work under the guidance of skilled mentors. This program is designed to prepare students for future careers by offering pathways in specific fields.

For more information, visit the [Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's Youth Apprenticeship page](#).

**Are students getting paid for their work in the Youth Apprenticeship Program?**

Yes! Youth Apprenticeship (YA) participants gain hands-on experience while earning competitive wages before graduation. Through the program, students split their time between school and on-site training, allowing them to earn graduation credits, gain real-world skills, and receive an income.

For example, West De Pere Youth Apprentices are making a significant impact—67 participants collectively earned \$471,000 during the 2024-25 school year! By blending education with practical training, apprenticeships help students explore career pathways, set them up for long-term success, and strengthen our local workforce and economy.

**Q: What trade- focused certifications can students obtain at West DePere High School?**

Students have the opportunity to earn industry-recognized certifications that enhance their skills and career readiness, including:

- WORX Certification – Career Connections Skill Level 3 from the Carpenters Union
- Welding Certification – Sense Level 1 from the American Welding Society
- NWTC Fundamentals of Drawing
- NWTC Parametric Modeling
- UWGB Parametric Modeling
- UWGB Fundamentals of Drawing
- NWTC Intro to CNC Machining

These certifications provide students with valuable technical skills that can be applied in a variety of career pathways or post-secondary schooling options.

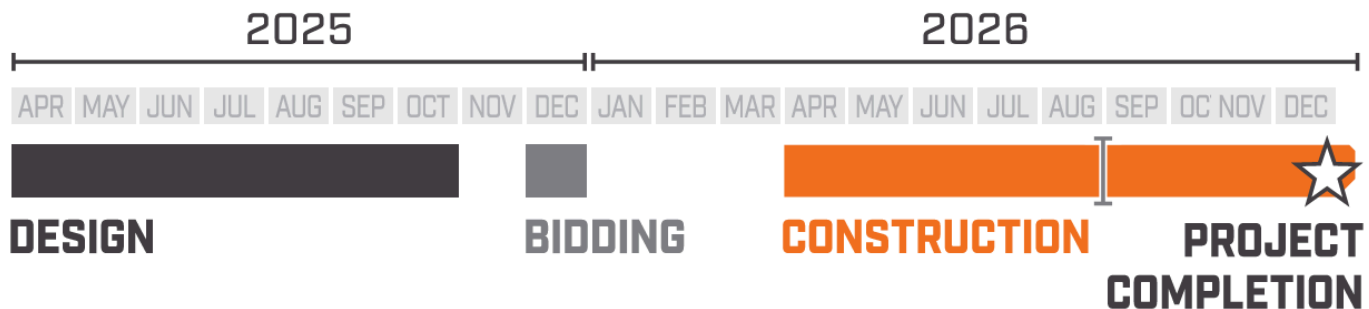
**What is the value of guiding students to explore careers in the trades?**

Many trade careers offer job security, competitive salaries, and growth opportunities without the burden of student loan debt. Hands-on learning and apprenticeships allow students to gain real-world experience while earning an income, all while still in high school.

Additionally, skilled trades are in high demand, meaning students can enter the workforce quickly and contribute to industries that are essential to society, such as construction, manufacturing, and mechanics. Encouraging students to explore these paths helps build a strong, skilled workforce while offering them fulfilling and financially stable career options.

**If approved, when will the spaces be complete?**

Pending voter approval, the design process will continue to refine project details. The preliminary timeline anticipates design completion by October 2025, followed by a competitive bidding process in December. Phased construction is expected to begin in Spring 2026, with project completion targeted for December 2026.



*Renovation of existing locker room into a classroom and Work Lab will be complete for the start of school 2026.*

*\*The timeline is preliminary and will be updated during the design phase. Construction will be done in stages, with areas being completed and occupied as they are finished. The project is expected to be complete by December 2026.*

**If the referendum passes, how much will property taxes increase?**

There will be a ZERO mill rate impact if this referendum passes. The district will make the final payment on a portion of the 2018 referendum debt, creating an opportunity to invest \$9.925 million without increasing the mill rate above the current rate of \$7.04, maintaining consistency with the rate from the past two years.

### **What is the mill rate and how is it calculated?**

The tax levy is the portion of the budget that is funded through local property taxes. Local property taxes and state aid are the two most significant sources of revenue for the school district. Federal aid and local fees are other revenue sources. The tax base is the total value of all property in the district that is subject to local property taxes. The tax levy divided by the tax base is the tax rate. It is expressed in terms of dollars per thousand, known as the mill rate.

### **If the district mill rate has been consistent, why are my taxes going up?**

The school district can only control the portion of your property tax related to school funding. The district has kept the mill rate steady at \$7.04 in both 2023 and 2024, a drop of more than 25% since 2020, when it was \$9.64.

If your property taxes increased from 2023 to 2024, it may be due to factors outside the district's control, such as:

- Changes in your property's fair market/equalized value
- Adjustments made by other taxing entities

While the district is committed to maintaining a stable mill rate, fluctuations in property values and taxes levied by other entities can still impact your total tax bill.

### **How does the school tax impact my property taxes?**

The school is just one of four taxing entities on your tax bill: town, school district, county, and technical college. The school can only control the mill rate assigned to the school portion of your taxes.

### **Why are fair market value and equalized value used to determine tax impact?**

Fair market value represents the estimated market worth of properties within a municipality or school district. Property assessments are determined by the individual municipality and will vary by municipality. Equalized value is used to standardize these assessments. This ensures that all property owners, regardless of location, are taxed equitably based on the actual value of their property. This approach helps create a more consistent and fair tax system across the district or region. A school district's equalized value is what is used to determine the mill rate for tax purposes.

### **What will happen to the mill rate if the referendum does not pass?**

In the past, the WDP Board of Education has paid off outstanding debt faster than originally planned, saving taxpayers over \$6.5 million since through 2024, with an additional \$2.5 million in savings to come in 2025 for a total of \$9 million. This strategy has allowed the district to maintain a stable mill rate and to plan for future projects. If this Tech Ed referendum passes, we can take on additional debt without increasing the current mill rate. This is possible because the district will redirect extra debt payments to pay down the new debt as quickly as possible. We expect this new debt to be fully paid off in two years, after which our intention is to continue paying off previous debt. The intention of the current board is to maintain the current mill rate.

### **Is there an opportunity for community members to see the spaces impacted by the referendum?**

Yes! Community members are invited to attend one of two informational meetings to learn more about the proposed plans, take a tour of the Tech-Ed spaces, and get questions answered. Join us on March 12 or March 20 at the High School, [click](#) here for details.

### **When can I vote?**

Election Day is Tuesday, April 1, and polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. However, there are additional opportunities to vote before Election Day:

- Absentee Voting: Voters can request an absentee ballot.
- In-Person Absentee Voting: Available starting Tuesday, March 18.

To learn more about your voting options, including absentee ballot requests and early voting locations, visit [MyVote Wisconsin](#).