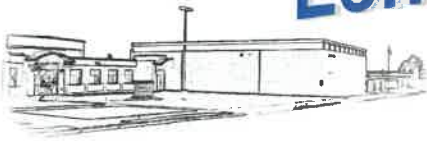


# Lena Public School District



Small Community, Great Opportunity

304 East Main Street

Lena, WI 54139

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920-829-5959 (3) Elementary Office

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**Ben Pytleski** – District Administrator  
Elementary Principal

**James Torzala** – MS/HS Principal/SPED Director

## **Board of Education**

Lori Dufek – President

Ed Huberty – Vice-President

Charles Imig – Clerk

Dave McNurlen - Treasurer

Tim Goldschmidt - Member

## **Lena Public School District - 2021**

### **5-Year Operational Referendum Information**

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, the Lena Public School District's Board of Education authorized a resolution to exceed the local revenue limit. As with past referendums, it will be the intention of the district to use this money to meet operational needs within the school district such as maintenance needs throughout the building as well as maintaining appropriate staffing levels. The district has been very respectful and responsible with our past referendum dollars and we will continue to put ourselves in a sound financial position for the future while also keeping our educational and extra-curricular programs strong and available to all of our students.

#### **What are we asking for?**

This referendum would allow the school district to exceed the revenue limit by \$750,000 in 2021-22, \$800,000 in 2022-23, \$850,000 in 2023-24, \$900,000 in 2024-25, and \$950,000 in 2025-26. These amounts will allow the district budget to remain stable as fixed costs continue to increase and future state budgets and enrollment numbers continue to be uncertain.

#### **How will this affect the mill rate or my taxes?**

While mill rates are directly correlated to property values, our Financial Team at Baird is forecasting mill rates to remain very stable and actually decrease slightly. Our mill rate back in 2016-17 was \$11.34 and in 2019-20 was \$11.32. 2020-21 is at \$10.41. Baird is forecasting \$10.33 in 2021-22, \$9.59 in 2022-23, \$9.79 in 2023-24, \$10.39 in 2024-25, and \$10.46 in 2025-26. This is a 5-year average mill rate of \$10.11, down from the \$10.97 average mill rate from 2016-21.

#### **When is the Referendum?**

Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This allows the district to utilize funds in the 2021-22 academic year.

#### **How will tax money be used to maintain the district facilities?**

There are no planned expansions for school facilities at this time. We have used past tax dollars for major upgrades in the past 5 years including, but certainly not limited to, a new school parking lot, a complete remodeling of our high school bathrooms, replacing two boilers at the high school, replacing an air conditioning unit at the high school, some major asbestos removal in several areas of the building, and new tile flooring in multiple areas of the school. The referendum money will be used for general operations and maintenance rather than asking tax payers to fund specific individual facility project needs. We will have continued HVAC upgrades to consider, continued technology upgrades, repairs and upgrades to our outdoor facilities, and the much-needed remodeling of our locker rooms.

#### **If the Referendum would fail, what budget cuts would the school need to make?**

Staffing decisions would be affected and program choices would be required. Each has a negative impact on the educational quality the Lena Public School District is able to provide. We would need to consider all areas.

**If the Referendum does NOT pass, would the school need to close?**

No! There is no intent to ever close the doors of the Lena Public School District. The Board and Administration are committed to providing students a high-quality education. Budget reductions would undoubtedly impact our greatest educational resource, our great staff and programs. We are very proud of the fact that, for a small school, we have so many things to offer our students and families. We want nothing more than for this to continue.

**The District continues to maintain a strong and healthy fund balance. What is the need?**

The tax dollars from the previous referendum has much to do with the positive state of the current fund balance. The District continues to spend tax dollars conservatively and will continue to do so with the following continued priorities:

- To continue to spend conservatively while keeping our educational programs, offerings, and curriculum strong.
- To continue to reserve a strong fund balance to be able to upgrade facilities and maintain our buildings.
- The strong fund balance helps us to offset the continued uncertainty of future state budgets, state aid, area property values, and declining enrollment.
- To avoid any high-interest, short-term borrowing for future projects and costs.
- The teacher shortage is very real.....we must have the ability to creatively compensate and retain our great staff and attract new teachers to the district.

**What efforts has the District taken to keep the budget in line?**

Other than simply spending conservatively in all areas, the District has been VERY creative to help combat the growing teacher shortage in the state and in the area. We wear many hats here at school and we have utilized this to create unique positions to continue to serve the needs of all of our students.

**What areas of the school district is experiencing an increase in costs?**

Our maintenance needs saw a significant increase due to preparing our buildings for students returning during COVID-19. Technology needs will continue to increase to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner. Insurance, food service, cleaning service, HVAC expenses, and transportation costs continue to rise.

**Do other school districts need to pass referendums?**

Yes. Each election cycle, spring and fall, many schools go to referendum. Since 2010, 86% of all Wisconsin School Districts have gone to referendum. In 2020, there were 111 referendum questions on the ballots statewide. Of the 42 school districts with similar, non-recurring referendum questions, 88% passed.

**Question and Answer Sessions Regarding the Referendum!**

We will host a number of public Q&A sessions regarding the referendum in February and March and I will also be attending area public meetings. We will post these sessions on School Messenger, Facebook, and our website. If you have any questions before then, do not hesitate to contact me.

It is a Great Day to Be a Wildcat!

Sincerely,



Ben J. Pytleski  
Superintendent  
Lena Public School District