



# OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM

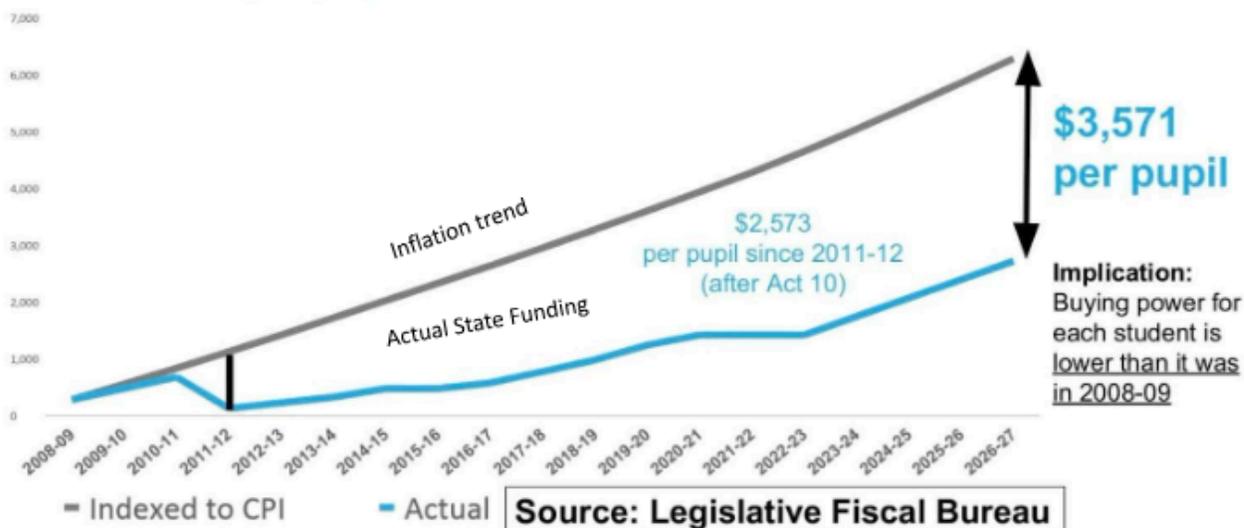
## APRIL 7, 2026

Our district is facing critical financial challenges that need to be addressed with additional revenue. Our communities will consider a \$800,000 recurring referendum.

### FAQ #1: WHY DOES BLACK HAWK NEED AN OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM?

Wisconsin's revenue limit increases have not kept pace with inflation for nearly two decades. If revenue limits had simply matched inflation over the last 18 years, Black Hawk would have received approximately \$3,573 more per student this year. With roughly 367 students, that equates to over \$1.3 million in additional annual funding that never showed up from the state.

**Cumulative annual adjustments in general school district revenues per pupil lag inflation by nearly \$3,600 since 2009**



The Black Hawk District is only asking for \$800,000 in additional revenue through referendum to help fill a portion of the gap. Black Hawk receives \$11,706 per student, which is capped and cannot be exceeded unless a referendum is passed or the state increases funding. The WI state average is \$12,492, with some other districts receiving as much as \$30,000 per student. Operational referenda are often the only local option to bridge this gap.

This funding is needed to continue the support of current programs. Over the last 18 years, programs, staff, faculty and administrators have been cut from Black Hawk's budget to adjust for decreases in funding and increases in costs. Black Hawk is currently supporting students and their needs. There are no other cuts that can be made to make up for revenue shortfalls. If additional cuts are made, significant high stakes programs will be cut, eventually leading to students leaving the district via school choice to find the programs they are interested in.

Wisconsin also trails the national average when it comes to per student state funding. Wisconsin has historically been known for our investment into our children's education. Unfortunately, Wisconsin is now below the national average.

Figure 1: Wisconsin Increasingly Trails on Per Pupil Spending

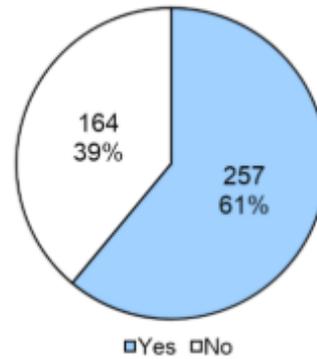
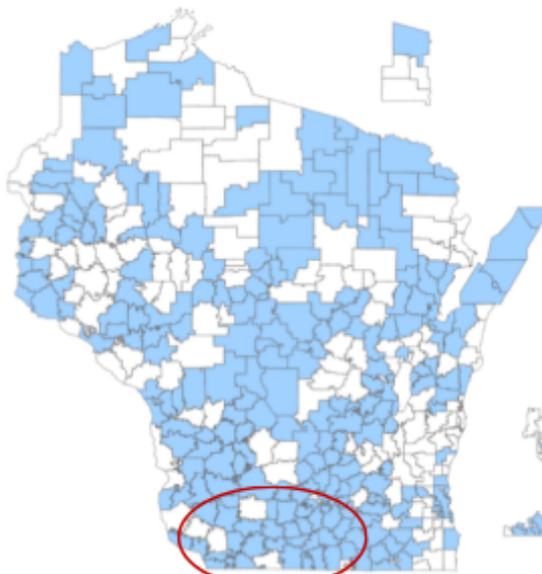
Per pupil spending, 2002-2023, 2023 dollars



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**NOTICE BLACK HAWK IS THE ONLY DISTRICT IN OUR AREA THAT HAS NOT PASSED A REFERENDUM SINCE 2015! IN FACT, BLACK HAWK HAS NOT PASSED AN OPERATING REFERENDUM SINCE 2007!**

Districts who have passed an Operational Referendum Question (since 2015)



Source: Department of Public Instruction, dated through April 2025

Recent Area School Referenda



District Name	Vote Date	Type	Total Amount	Yes Votes	No Votes	Result
Black Hawk	4/1/2025	Non-Recurring	\$2,550,000	405	591	Failed
Shullsburg	4/1/2025	Recurring	\$975,000	351	383	Failed
River Ridge	11/5/2024	Non-Recurring	\$3,300,000	868	1,024	Failed
Potosi	11/5/2024	Issue Debt	\$9,100,000	694	667	Passed
Albany	11/5/2024	Non-Recurring	\$3,750,000	959	891	Passed
Belmont Community	11/5/2024	Non-Recurring	\$2,200,000	647	416	Passed
Argyle	11/5/2024	Recurring	\$800,000	623	447	Passed
Juda	11/5/2024	Recurring	\$1,100,000	426	356	Passed
Juda	4/2/2024	Recurring	\$500,000	200	233	Failed
River Ridge	4/2/2024	Recurring	\$6,500,000	397	513	Failed
Barneveld	4/2/2024	Recurring	\$1,000,000	576	284	Passed
Highland	4/2/2024	Recurring	\$600,000	315	154	Passed
Potosi	4/2/2024	Recurring	\$700,000	290	208	Passed
Barneveld	4/4/2023	Non-Recurring	\$3,450,000	467	614	Failed
Pecatonica Area	4/4/2023	Issue Debt	\$18,800,000	625	611	Passed
Monticello	8/9/2022	Non-Recurring	\$1,120,000	393	206	Passed
Monticello	8/9/2022	Recurring	\$820,000	393	206	Passed
Black Hawk	4/5/2022	Issue Debt	\$8,500,000	460	386	Passed
Argyle	4/5/2022	Non-Recurring	\$1,960,000	262	168	Passed
Benton	4/5/2022	Non-Recurring	\$1,680,000	198	67	Passed
Black Hawk	4/6/2021	Issue Debt	\$14,225,000	258	559	Failed
Benton	4/6/2021	Issue Debt	\$43,000	198	44	Passed

Source: Department of Public Instruction

Black Hawk SD Referenda History



District Name	Vote Date	Type	Total Amount	Result
Black Hawk	4/1/2025	Non-Recurring	\$2,550,000	Failed
Black Hawk	4/5/2022	Issue Debt	\$8,500,000	Passed
Black Hawk	4/6/2021	Issue Debt	\$14,225,000	Failed
Black Hawk	4/3/2018	Issue Debt	\$500,000	Passed
Black Hawk	11/4/2014	Recurring	\$250,000	Failed
Black Hawk	9/14/2010	Non-Recurring	\$1,550,000	Failed
Black Hawk	4/6/2010	Recurring	\$800,000	Failed
Black Hawk	6/26/2007	Non-Recurring	\$2,095,000	Passed
Black Hawk	4/3/2007	Recurring	\$850,000	Failed

If you have questions please contact District Administrator, Willy Chambers at [chawil@blackhawk.k12.wi.us](mailto:chawil@blackhawk.k12.wi.us) or 608-234-1581