



OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM

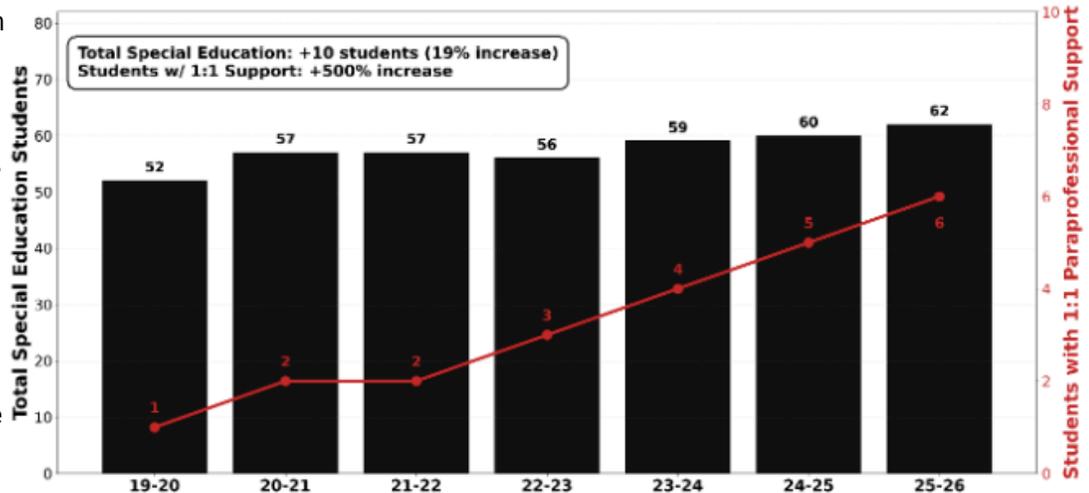
APRIL 7, 2026

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 #9 WHAT CHALLENGES MAKE FURTHER BUDGET REDUCTIONS DIFFICULT IN OUR DISTRICT?

Black Hawk Special Education Growth (2019-20 to 2025-26)

■ Total Special Education Students ● Students with 1:1 Paraprofessional Support



Increasing Numbers of Special Education Students- The district is experiencing a growing number of students requiring special education services, particularly at the elementary level. Special education teachers are managing increasingly larger caseloads, making it more challenging to provide the individualized support and services necessary to meet student needs effectively. In Wisconsin, public school districts are reimbursed for only 33% of their special education costs. In contrast, private voucher schools participating in the Special Needs Scholarship Program receive a reimbursement rate of 90% for special education services.

This discrepancy has led to increased financial strain on public schools, which must cover the remaining costs through local funding sources. This is called an unfunded mandate.

UNFUNDED MANDATE: These are government orders (either state or federal) requiring specific actions or meet certain standards, without providing an allocation of funds to cover the costs, forcing them to use their own budgets. These mandates often shift costs, potentially displacing other priorities and leading to higher property taxes or cuts in other services.

Limited options for teacher cuts - The district's reduction in teachers over the last 18 years has resulted in fewer elementary teachers, leading to a reallocation of staff and teachers that change grades from year to year, sometimes following larger classes. Grades K-5 now have less than two teachers per grade level. At the secondary level, cuts have affected course offerings. There are limited offerings in the music area for K-12th grade. Next year, foreign language will not be taught at Black Hawk. Students will have to take the courses online or with a shared teacher from another district. Black Hawk is already at the lowest level of teachers that it has been in recent history.

Substitute Shortages- The shortage of substitute teachers and paraprofessionals has been a persistent challenge for several years. Contributing factors include low wages, increased workload, and fewer individuals entering the education field. Qualified substitutes are essential for facilitating teacher training, maintaining uninterrupted instruction, and providing consistent student support during staff absences due to illness. Black Hawk has raised the daily substitute teacher pay from \$100 per day to \$125 per day. Wisconsin substitute pay ranges from \$125-\$245 per day. Additionally, the long term substitute teacher pay is now \$200 per day.

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