

**Open Community Forum  
For the School District of Mellen  
Operational Referendum: 2024  
Moving Forward Together**

The School District of Mellen requires adequate financial resources to implement its strategic plan focused on student growth, staff development, responsible financial management, and community connections. The Administration has worked to complete a budget review process, staffing review process and program evaluation to identify areas that can be reduced to address the budget shortfall. Although some budget reductions have been made, the district still faces a \$319,000 budget deficit in the current year. Additionally, the district is funded at a lower rate than neighboring school districts and has not requested operational referendum funding since 2000. Without additional funding, projections indicate increasing budget deficits up to \$629,000 in four years.

To address these needs while minimizing taxpayer impact, the district recommends a 3 year \$500,000 nonrecurring operational referendum for 24-25, 25-26, and 26-27. This approach provides the time needed to allow the state to adequately address the school funding shortfall with minimal financial impact on the taxpayers of the District. The referendum would increase taxes by an estimated \$246 annually on a \$100,000 home.

The Mellen Board of Education and Administration invite district residents to an open community forum to be held on January 31, 2024 at 6:30pm in the Mellen School Library. This meeting will focus on school finance however, all questions regarding school operations are welcome.

Participants can also join virtually through Google Meet by using the link: <https://meet.google.com/cex-xrsf-wbr>. Those attending virtually can submit questions/comments using the Google Form on the School District Website - Board of Education Page. <https://www.mellendiggers.org/district/board-of-education.cfm>

For more information, contact Superintendent Rhonda Elmhurst-Friemoth at (715) 274-3601.

