

# Operational Referendum Fact Sheet

## January 2024

### Background

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 \$319,340 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 \$432,356 in four years.

### Current Needs

The district has identified operational needs that cannot be met under current funding levels, including:

- Maintaining current educational programs
- Retaining and recruiting high quality teachers
- Increasing mental health supports
- Improving safety and security
- Maintaining current extracurricular activities
- Supporting technology
- Maintaining facilities and repairs

### Proposed Solution

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.

### November Mill Rates

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Last 5-YR Ave
State	10.37	10.26	10.25	9.97	9.70	9.46	9.37	9.22	8.64	7.68	8.86
Mellen	10.36	10.23	9.42	10.07	10.84	8.84	8.69	9.81	7.99	6.41	8.34

## **Current Work**

- Share referendum overview and timeline, gather staff and community feedback
- Continue the budget and program evaluation process
- Finalized the 2023-24 budget for Board consideration on October 25, 2023
- Media releases on needs to inform community potential referendum question
- Community survey, compile results and present to School Board in December 2023
- Finalized and presented a referendum recommendation to the School Board in December for an April 2024 vote

## **What's Next**

- Community Forums and Coffee/Chat with Administration
- Create and publish a referendum page on the District website
- Digger Weekly e-newsletter stories
- Postcard invite to District residents for Community Forums
- FAQ's document
- Brochure/Flyer
- Create signs with messaging
- Create video messaging