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COMMUNITY TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Thursday, Jan. 9, 2025 • 5:30 p.m.
Bradford High School
3700 Washington Road

Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025 • 5:30 p.m.
Reuther Central High School
913 57th St.

Thursday, Jan. 30, 2025 • 10:30 a.m.
Educational Support Center
3600 52nd St.

Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2025 • 5:30 p.m.
Lance Middle School
4515 80th St.



LEARN MORE: [KUSD.EDU/REFERENDUM](https://kUSD.EDU/REFERENDUM)



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Find more information and
answers to FAQs by scanning
the QR code or visiting:
kUSD.EDU/referendum



MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM

At Kenosha Unified, we are proud of our local schools and the generations of students we have served over the years. Unfortunately, our district is facing serious financial challenges that we must address soon to maintain a quality educational experience for our students.

We are far from alone in facing these challenges. An increasing number of Wisconsin school districts are finding themselves in a similar situation due to rising costs, an outdated state education funding system, and a lack of state aid to public schools in recent years.

As expenses like curriculum, utilities, health insurance, transportation, and salaries continue to increase, our budget challenges will continue to grow. Despite closing multiple schools and reducing staff to balance the 2024-25 budget, we will still face a projected \$19+ million deficit for the upcoming fiscal year and beyond.

WHY IS KUSD FACING FINANCIAL CHALLENGES?

Despite years of tough decisions—closing schools, reducing staff, adjusting employee health benefits, and delaying critical maintenance—we still face a \$19+ million deficit for the 2025-26 fiscal year. This budgetary shortfall threatens the quality of education and opportunities we can offer our students.

In the fall of 1993, Wisconsin instituted a limit on the revenue a school district can receive each year. The control applies to revenue received from the two primary sources: (1) state aid and (2) local property taxes.

A district’s revenue limit is directly linked to state-approved adjustments and enrollment. Due to declines in enrollment in KUSD and minimal state adjustments, our district’s revenue limit has not kept pace with inflation. In fact, had state funding kept pace, KUSD would have an additional \$31 million available, and an operational referendum would not be necessary.

Additionally, expenses like curriculum, utilities, health insurance, transportation, and salaries continue to increase. Schools cannot raise prices. Instead, we must reduce our costs, which means a reduced investment in our students.

Based on state funding formulas, an operational referendum provides an option to prevent additional cuts to programming and student opportunities. We can no longer wait for the state to direct funding toward education.

COST-SAVING MEASURES






Since the 2021-22 fiscal year, KUSD has:

- Reduced staffing to align with declining enrollment
- Reduced support staff
- Closed 7 schools and merged two others
- Eliminated the employer-paid HSA benefit
- Modified the employee health benefit plan
- Modified the prescription drug plan
- Reduced discretionary spending
- Reduced the major maintenance budget
- Reduced the curriculum adoption budget
- Reduced the technology refresh budget
- Provided wage increases below CPI
- Shifted costs temporarily to ESSER when possible


PROPOSED SOLUTION

On **Tuesday, February 18, 2025**, our community will vote on a proposed non-recurring referendum question for Kenosha Unified. If approved, the district will be able to increase its revenue limit by \$23 million per year through the 2029-30 school year. This increase will address the \$19+ million deficit and allow for additional safety enhancements.

This funding would allow us to:

-  **Substantially reduce the structural deficit** to protect class sizes, vital programs, and staff positions.
-  **Implement and meet our district goal** of increasing the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced in reading and math by 12%.
-  **Implement state-mandated programs**, such as Act 20 and its science of reading practices, to enrich reading instruction and increase student proficiency.
-  **Retain our high-quality staff**, whose dedicated professional time is essential for delivering exceptional education.
-  **Implement key upgrades to enhance safety and security** for students and staff, including upgrading controlled building entrances, modernizing surveillance systems, reinforcing exterior doors, installing shatter-resistant window film, upgrading digital video recorders, and implementing additional critical safety measures.

PROPERTY TAX IMPACT

-  If the operational referendum is approved, it would have an estimated initial property tax impact of **\$1.25 per year** on every \$1,000 of equalized property value in our community. For example, the owner of a home worth **\$250,000** would see a property tax increase of **\$313 per year** (or \$26 per month).

