

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

District	2023-2024
Alma	73.4
C-FC	68.3
Pepin	66.7
Alma Center	65.5
Whitehall	65.0
Mel-Min	63.4
Augusta	63.2
Eleva	61.9
Indy	61.8
Osseo	60.6
B/T	58.6
Gilmanton	56.1

How is the Cochrane-Fountain City School District performing academically?

We are doing great things for kids! Each year, the District reviews data from multiple sources, including state and local assessments, attendance, behavior, as well as staff and student perception surveys, to assess our work and make goals for the upcoming school year. We are committed to supporting our students both academically and socially through a continuous improvement model.

We have implemented the “Portrait of a Pirate” readiness indicators, which are developed from research by world-class organizations, reflect the educational landscape of the 21st century, and define students as more than a test score. We want to ensure our graduates are ready for their next steps in life including career, college, and as a community member.

The state's school report card also shows we are doing well!

Based on the most recent data, **we have the second highest state report card score among our conference schools.**

What projects will be completed with the referendum funds?

The projects to be completed fit into 5 categories.

Complete Large Capital Maintenance Projects (50%)

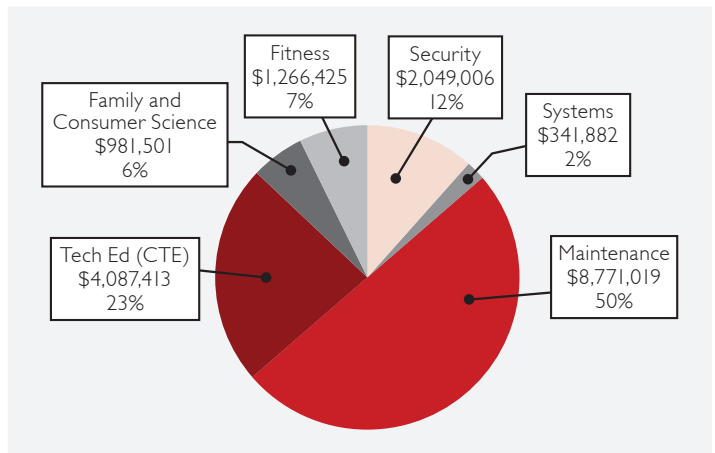
- Replace remaining roof sections
- Replace original damaged flooring + abate asbestos
- Replace ceilings to improve acoustics in identified classrooms and abate asbestos
- Replace failing and out of code interior doors
- Renovate bathrooms to meet Americans with Disabilities (ADA) code compliance
- Improve the parking lot

Replace Failing Building Systems (2%)

- Update remaining HVAC equipment + controls
- Replace the septic system

Update + Expand the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Area (29%)

- Increase space for new equipment and job-like experiences to better prepare students for high-demand jobs in the local trades
- Add appropriately sized classrooms and labs to teach woods/construction, metals, small engine repair, auto, family and consumer science, agri-science, and robotics



Improve Safety + Security (12%)

- Modify main entrance to better regulate visitors
- Install building access security system
- Replace emergency notification/public address system

Renovate Classrooms + Physical Education Spaces (7%)

- Update classroom finishes (paint, flooring, lighting, cabinetry)
- Expand fitness space to accommodate full physical education class and provide needed space for adaptive physical education class
- Create a dedicated entrance to fitness space for use outside of the school day

Why does the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Area need to be expanded?

In both 2023 and 2024, 46% of C-FC graduates have entered a trade profession. We need the space to teach our students about the rapidly evolving workforce that is demanding new skills and training. Our CTE program must adapt to **equip students with relevant skills for in-demand jobs across various industries**. CTE programs can offer students practical, hands-on experience, industry certifications, and career pathways, preparing them for the workforce sooner.

Technical Education (Shop) Area

- In shop class, students learn tool and machinery operations along with skills in safety, collaboration, and communication. As in the past, our technical education classes continue to provide instruction in electricity, welding, plumbing, woodworking, and small engines. We have added 3-D printers, CAD design, and a plasma cutter, but the limited space makes their use challenging and prevents us from bringing in additional equipment.
- In the current space, we are unable to teach a full auto mechanics course or allow our single teacher to monitor the area effectively, efficiently, or safely. Hands-on activities with real-world applications enhance students' abilities to secure quality jobs with livable wages in design, production, and repair; additionally, they often leave with the skills to fix things in their own homes.

Family And Consumer Science (Home Economics) Area

- The majority of this classroom is original from the 1950s. Updating this space will create a better atmosphere and enhance our ability to teach students critical life skills, including nutrition, child development, consumerism, and health sciences.

Does the plan include a new weight room?

The plan is to expand the existing weight room to create needed flexible space to allow special needs students to participate in adaptive physical education activities. This has been an identified need in the district for some time. Scientific research has repeatedly demonstrated that physical education can enhance academic performance and cognitive function. For children with special needs, it also improves communication, attention, behavior, and academic success. Students with special needs often enter the classroom feeling overwhelmed by sensory input. These distractions, which are inherent in every classroom, create a multitude of sensory stimuli for students to absorb and process. This expanded space would offer opportunities for students to regulate their bodies and provide a calming effect on them.

The expanded flexible space will also allow a full physical education class or team to utilize the space at one time. The space can also be designed to allow for ease of use during after school hours for students and the community.

The community-wide survey affirmed that residents, parents, and staff all supported an investment in this space.

What is the difference between a Capital Referendum and Operational Referendum?

All Wisconsin schools are subject to a revenue limit, which places a cap on the amount of money that can be raised through state aid and property taxes. This revenue limit is fixed, meaning it does not adjust for inflation. **A school referendum is a public vote held by a school district to seek approval from local taxpayers for additional funding to exceed the revenue limit.**

School districts may initiate two types of referendums to increase funding: capital and operating referendums.

1. Capital Referendums:

A district may hold a referendum to issue debt for a specific purpose. These are often referred to as "capital referendums" because the funds are typically used for construction and other large capital projects. A capital referendum authorizes the district to issue a specific amount of bonds or notes to pay for such projects. This is much like a home mortgage and often financed over a series of years. Funds approved through a capital referendum can only be used for the projects listed on a ballot question and cannot be used to fund day-to-day operations of the school district.

2. Operating Referendums:

A district may also initiate a referendum to exceed its revenue limit without issuing new debt. These are known as "operating referendum" and fund operational expenses, such as utilities, routine maintenance, salaries and benefits for staff, insurance, and supplies.

The Cochrane-Fountain City School Referendum is seeking a capital referendum on April 1.

How were the projects identified to be included in the referendum? And, has the community been involved in this process?

Over the past several months, the Cochrane-Fountain City School District Board of Education has been engaged in a process to examine our district's needs and explore potential solutions. The Board of Education partnered with ISG Architecture and Engineering and Miron Construction to complete a thorough facility assessment. Then, a taskforce made up of community stakeholders met to discuss the facility assessment and provide feedback. In November, a community survey was sent to each mailbox holder in the district. The survey results guided the school board to adopt a resolution for projects and \$17.49 million bond amount.

Updates have been provided regularly at school board meetings and the District's website has remained up-to-date with the process.

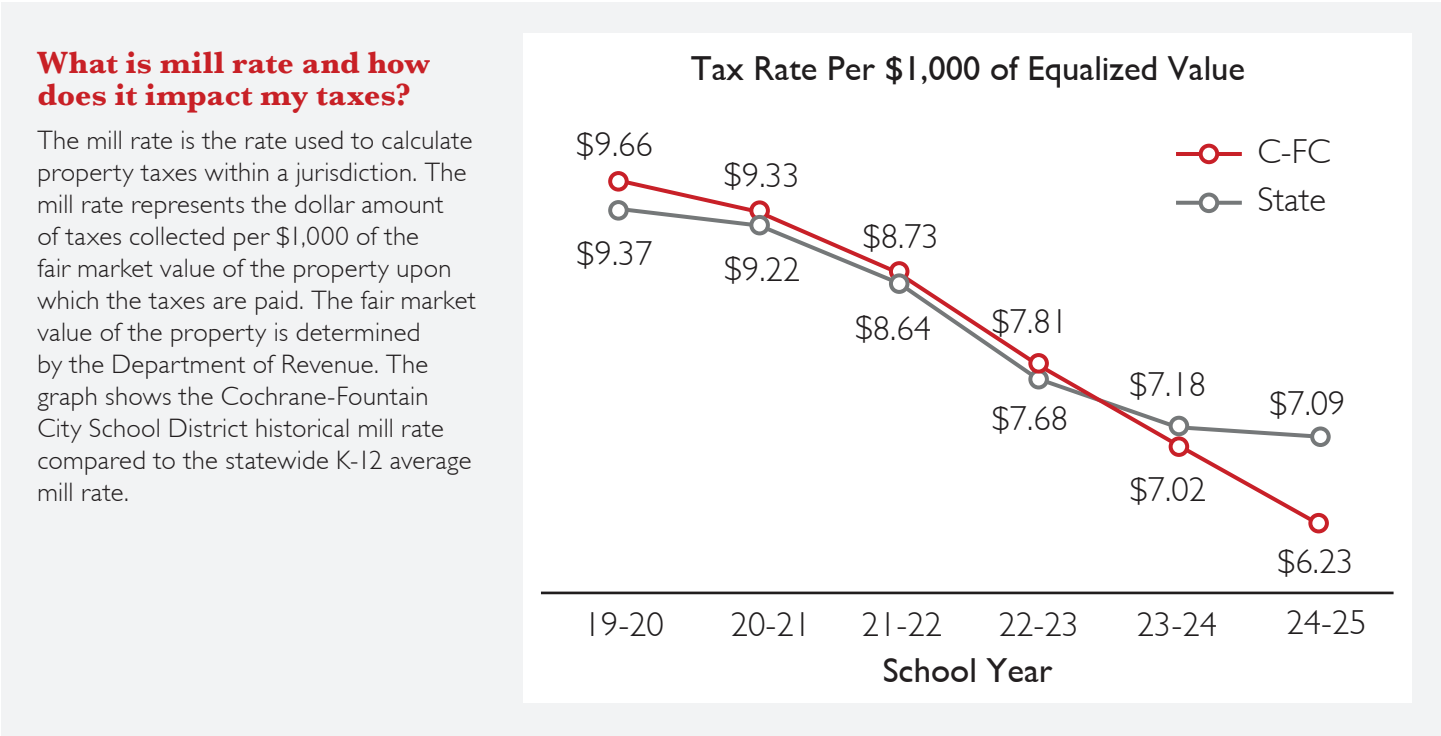
How did the building accumulate so many capital maintenance needs, aren't you doing annual maintenance on the building?

C-FC School District has an annual maintenance plan and budget to maintain the school facilities and address any urgent needs to keep the school and grounds functioning and safe. To maintain facilities on a larger scale, the Wisconsin school funding system relies on capital referendums.

While the district budgets for yearly maintenance and maintains a Fund 46 (capital improvement savings account) to save funds for larger capital projects, the majority of a school district's budget is needed to fund day-to-day operations including salaries/benefits, utilities, routine maintenance, insurance, supplies, etc.

Wasn't the septic system supposed to have been replaced in the 2017 capital referendum?

The 1958 septic tank was identified to be replaced in the 2017 facility assessment. However, it was not included in the 2017 referendum based on feedback from the community at that time. The current facility assessment has again identified replacing the 1958 septic system. Therefore, based on these assessments, increased maintenance costs, and recent septic failures the septic system has been included in the proposed referendum.



How will the capital referendum impact my taxes?

The \$17.49 million dollar referendum is estimated to have a \$0.58 increase per \$1,000 of fair market value property over the 2024-2025 rate for debt. Please note, the school district does not control the fair market value.

Estimated Market Value	Estimated Tax Impact	
	Annual	Monthly
\$100,000	\$58.00	\$4.83
\$200,000	\$116.00	\$9.67
\$300,000	\$174.00	\$14.50

Assumes multi-phased borrowing amortized over 20 years at a planning interest rate of 5.00%. *Impact represents the hypothetical change in referendum debt mill rate over the 2024-25 mill rate for referendum debt service of \$1.55.

Is there a balance on the 2017 referendum debt?

The debt for the 2017 Capital Referendum was issued in 2018 and was originally scheduled to be paid off in 2028. Since 2022, the District has made prepayments on this loan to save interest costs. This strategy, if continued in 2025, could allow the debt to be paid off in 2027, one year early.

What is the project timeline?

Should the referendum be successful, the below timeline shows a tentative design and construction schedule.

