

The Cochrane-Fountain City School District has not received any additional funding on a per-student basis in the past two years.

In addition, over the next three years, we are anticipating several financial challenges as a result of the following.

- **Inflation:** State aid has not kept up with increasing costs (such as transportation, utilities, technology, and services for special education).
- **Declining enrollment:** Our student enrollment has declined approximately 22% over the last 15 years. State funding is tied to enrollment. Thus, the fewer students we have, the less money we receive.
- **Revenue Limits:** School districts in Wisconsin have a cap on the amount of revenue we are allowed to receive.

To address these challenges, schools across the state seek funding through an operational referendum. This type of referendum asks local voters to approve additional funding above the revenue limit to maintain class sizes, recruit and retain staff, and continue to provide current programs and services.

The next state budget will likely be finalized late summer or mid-fall. There is a great deal of uncertainty about how the state will fund schools. As our expenses continue to rise, we predict our savings will be exhausted within the next two years. Therefore, we may need to consider an operational referendum for Cochrane-Fountain City in the near future.

What comments, questions, or suggestions do you have about Cochrane-Fountain City pursuing an operational referendum?

Many families in our community struggle to find care for their preschool children.

To help address this issue, we expanded our partnership with Headstart, a federal program that provides funding for infant and toddler care. In spring 2024, this program will serve 16 children.

We could expand this infant and toddler program to serve more families. However, this would require either renovating an area of our school or building a separate facility.

To pay for these updates, we would need to secure funding through a capital referendum. This type of referendum asks voters to approve a district taking out a loan (issuing debt). Like a home mortgage, this would be financed over many years.

Would your family use this childcare service if available?

Yes No Not sure/need more info

Would you support Cochrane-Fountain City exploring a capital referendum to pay the building projects needed to expand an early childcare program?

Yes No Not sure/need more info

If you are interested in partnering with the District to help provide this service, please call our office at 608.687.7771 or enter your contact information below.

Comments/questions/suggestions:

On a scale of 0 - 10, how likely would you be to recommend our school(s) to a friend or family member?

___ 0-Extremely unlikely ___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 Extremely likely

What are some of our school's strengths?

What are some areas in which our school could improve?