



November 2019 Referendum Frequently Asked Questions

When is the vote?

The referendum question will appear on the ballot for the November 5, 2019 election. Early and absentee voting is available starting September 20.

What is the referendum for?

The November 2019 ballot will have a single-question bond referendum asking for \$7.74 Million in support of security, HVAC and classroom renovations at Ogema Elementary and classroom renovations and additions, restroom remodel, locker room upgrades, HVAC and parking lot improvements and bus/maintenance garage improvements at the Waubun facility.

What is the current plan with the fourth grade?

Based on our current enrollment, the Ogema building has exceeded the number of students that it can effectively educate. The plan is to move fourth grade to Waubun starting in the fall of 2020. The school board has made the decision that this will happen regardless of the outcome of the referendum.

Why are we adding additional space if Waubun can house the 4th grade for 2020?

The Waubun facility does have some space to accommodate additional students. However, space is not in a location that will allow for adequate separation between the grade levels. With the proposed addition, the district will be able to provide a separate identity for the Waubun Elementary grades.

Why is more space needed?

Student enrollment has been growing steadily over the past five years and is projected to grow at a rate of 18% over the next 10 years. Our district has seen increased retention of our existing student population and a steady level of incoming kindergarten students who continue their education with WOVE through the upper grades. In order to keep class sizes small and continue to provide flexible learning, WOVE simply needs more space.



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What are the district's safety concerns?

The parking lots at Ogema Elementary and Waubun High School are undersized and do not adequately accommodate pick-up/drop-off of students. The quality of safety and security varies among our facilities. Students and staff in our district should be able to expect the same level of security and safety regardless of which facility they work and learn in.

How does the November 2019 plan address health issues?

All our facilities need HVAC improvements of some kind. Several classrooms offer no exposure to natural daylight. Portions of Ogema Elementary have air conditioning; however, about half the school does not provide a comfortable learning environment during the warmer months. Similar deficiencies are found in Waubun. The ALC has no fresh air ventilation or air conditioning. Plumbing systems at the ALC have leaked and created mechanical issues.

What does the plan do to enhance learning while accommodating higher enrollment trends?

Most of our facilities need improved learning spaces for small-group collaborative learning and modern teaching methods.

- WOVE takes pride in small class sizes. Our growing enrollment means we need to make the best use of our space to provide flexible learning environments for STEAM learning.
- Our specialty services thrive when we have room for one-on-one and small group learning.

What community input was gathered before the plan was developed?

The planning process for the November 2019 referendum began in October 2018. From the very start, this process centered on input from all stakeholders, including students, teachers, staff, and the community. These groups shared common priorities, including:

- Classrooms and overall space
- HVAC improvements
- Bus and Parent Pick-up/Drop-off
- Security
- Parking
- More space for specialty service (i.e. offices, resources, special education, etc.)
- Athletic Facility Improvements
- Updated playground and green space

What resulted from these learning sessions was a plan that addressed the most critical needs in the district. The proposed facilities improvements would help WOVE continue to provide educational opportunities for years to come.



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What will happen if the referendum fails?

This plan is the direct outcome of months of community effort and development. As such, there is no plan B ready to be implemented. If the referendum fails, the district will need to go into planning again to determine the next course of action. What we can say is this:

The 4th grade will still move to Waubun to create space in Ogema.

The needs won't go away. HVAC systems will not improve.

Our pick-up and drop-offs will still have safety concerns.

The time to address these issues is now – costs will only increase with time. If the district chooses to go back to the community to ask for support on the same issue again the costs will almost certainly be higher.

What is the timeline for the project?

The plan is to start the design phase when the funding is approved. As part of the design process, we will need to get valuable input from staff and the community. It is anticipated that the construction process will begin in the fall of 2020 and be completed for the start of the 2021 school year.

What is the review process for this work – does the Department of Education get involved?

WOWE has provided the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) with all the required documentation for the proposed improvements and referendum in the form of a "Review & Comment" submittal. The MDE will review all submitted information to ensure that the project is both fiscally sound and educationally appropriate. Once complete, they will notify the district of their review, and their approval will be published in the local paper prior to the referendum vote for confirmation by district residents.

I own a \$125,000 home. What would be my increase in taxes?

It would be \$53 per year or \$4 per month. You can additional information regarding the impact on your property through the "Tax Calculator" on the district website or by visiting <https://www.ehlers-inc.com/microsite/wowe2019/>.

What is the Ag2School credit and how does it apply to me?

The new School Building Bond Agricultural Tax Credit (Ag2School), was originally implemented by the state of MN in 2017 and was just updated in 2019. The new law states that 50% of the costs of existing, proposed, and future construction bond issues on agricultural land will be paid for by the State in 2020. This amount increases annually until it reaches 70% in 2023. Indirectly, Utilizing the Ag2School Credit Program helps us considerably offset the cost to the local taxpayers.



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How accurate are the cost estimates that were developed?

Detailed cost estimates have been developed for each component of the proposed referendum with the assistance of consultants to the district. Estimates were based on costs developed from local and regional cost indices and market conditions as well as current bid histories for work of comparable scope and size. The costs are considered “total project cost” and are inclusive of construction costs as well as necessary project-related costs such as design fees, permit and plan review fees, furniture, and equipment, etc. A modest contingency factor has also been included in the current project cost estimates.

Will there be an opportunity for the public to ask questions and hear information about the bond referendum?

Yes, there will be community meetings. As these are scheduled the district will provide additional information regarding dates and times for you to hear more about the project first hand. The district will also be present at many public gatherings. If you have a group that would like information, please contact the district office at 218.473.6171 to schedule an informational presentation.

If I can't make it to a public meeting, but I still have questions who can I contact?

You can call the district at 218.473.6171 with a specific question. We will attempt to provide answers to any question received.

Where can I get an absentee ballot?

You can either contact the district at 218.473.6171 or visit the district website, waubun.k12.mn.us, and look under the Referendum Documents section.

How can I get involved with helping the referendum pass?

The district can only provide information about the referendum and the process that led to it. Often a separate independent citizen committee forms to promote the referendum and communicate why they believe it is important for the district.



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Why is there only one place to vote in the District, being the Waubun school? In past referendums, there were multiple voting locations.

A new law requires districts to pass a resolution every year if they want to combine polling places for a special election in 2018 and approve it every year beyond. The resolution must be approved by December 31 of each year for elections not held on the statewide General Election date. The combined polling place option is a fiscally responsible way for the district to hold a special election. If the district were to have multiple polling locations, they would need to pay for the costs of each site for staff, training, equipment, ballots, rental, etc. The Combined Polling option was designed for special elections.

If residents are not able to make it to the Waubun District Office between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. on November 5th, how can they vote?

Anyone can take advantage of the early voting (absentee) option by:

Vote early in person: Stop into the Waubun District Office on weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. until November 4.

Vote early by mail: Stop into the Waubun District Office or call Julie at 218-473-6171 to obtain an absentee ballot application. If you are going to vote by mail, make sure that the ballot is returned to the District office by November 5.

Why didn't the District wait until there was a general election to hold this referendum?

We are experiencing growth and space constraints now. To wait until a future date would have only extended the period that we are educating in less than adequate environments. Also, construction costs will continue to rise the longer we wait, and there are currently very favorable interest rates.

On November 5th, where do we go to vote?

To vote on the election day, please stop by the District Office (Door E2) on 3rd Street between the hours of 7 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Located along 3rd Street, the District will have dedicated parking for voters in addition to handicap accessible spots adjacent to the entrance.

You will enter door E2 and vote right inside the door.