

What is on the April 4, 2017 ballot?

One question that requests permission to borrow funds not to exceed \$39.93 million to address significant facility needs. The official ballot language is, "Shall the Grafton School District, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin be authorized to issue, pursuant to Chapter 67 of the Wisconsin Statutes, general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$39,930,000 for the improvement of all district facilities including additions and remodeling at the high school; remodeling and additions to the Woodview and Kennedy Elementary Schools; razing and removing the Grafton Elementary School; constructing a new District maintenance building; renovations to the District offices; District-wide site work and infrastructure upgrades; and equipment acquisition related to said projects."

Why is the district proposing this plan now?

The reality is that the district's facility needs will not go away, and costs will increase in time. The board feels the most fiscally responsible move is to address these issues now because of the immediate concerns with Grafton Elementary School.

What projects are included in the referendum?

Kennedy Elementary and Woodview Elementary will have new classrooms added to accommodate the students who will be moved from Grafton Elementary. Both schools will also have new gymnasiums, updated kitchens, heating and ventilation improvements, and new security infrastructure. John Long Middle School will receive ADA upgrades as well as infrastructure repairs. At Grafton High School updates are necessary for a number of academic areas, including career and technical education, science, music, and special education classrooms, in order to create student centered learning environments. With the removal of the GES gym, a one-station gym would be added to offset that loss of gym space. Additionally, extensive renovations will be made to the kitchen and locker room spaces. Improvements in traffic flow and parking will also be made at each building in the district. Grafton Elementary School will be closed and deconstructed.

How does this referendum benefit the community?

Investing in the Grafton School District has significant returns for all community members whether or not they have children in the school system. Strong schools create strong communities, which creates strong property values. The investment in this referendum will determine the future and shape of our community.

What is the cost of the referendum?

The total cost of the proposed projects is \$39.93 million (approximately \$7.8 million less than the cost presented to voters last April in a referendum that did not pass), plus approximate interest of \$23.3 million and loss of state aid of \$6.6 million; the impact of which is included in the total cost to taxpayers. The cost would result in a debt service tax levy increase of roughly \$66 per year for every \$100,000 of property value starting in 2018.

Property Value:	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$300,000
Current Debt Decrease	(\$72.00)	(\$144.00)	(\$216.00)
New Debt Increase	\$138.00	\$276.00	\$414.00
Annual Net Increase	\$66.00	\$132.00	\$198.00
Monthly Net Increase	\$5.50	\$11.00	\$16.50

How does this referendum differ from the one presented to voters last year?

The Facilities Advisory Committee and School Board reduced the **new** construction costs by eliminating some of the new construction (e.g., replaced the fieldhouse with a one station gym at GHS) and **remodeling** existing facilities when possible (e.g., remodeling and adding onto the Tech Ed area instead of building new facilities) from the previous referendum to reach the \$39.93 million cost. By doing more remodeling and less new construction, we are still able to achieve our goal of having ALL buildings become more flexible learning spaces for our students. We realize that students learn differently than they did 20 years ago and we are trying to design spaces that will allow us to continue educating students for years to come and make Grafton a destination district. Then when people look at Grafton, they will see not only a great community but also a great school system.

Are athletic field improvements included in the referendum?

No, the Board of Education has determined that athletic field improvements will be funded outside of the referendum. The projects included in this referendum only address the academic needs in the district.

Is the proposed facilities referendum a result of deferred maintenance?

No, the majority of proposed projects are capital projects, not deferred maintenance projects. The District has maintained many elements of its buildings well beyond their useful lives and they are now in need of replacement.

Additionally, budget shortfalls and declining enrollment have forced the District to prioritize spending. The District increased the annual maintenance budget over the last several years to address facility needs while continuing to invest most of its available revenue into each child's quality education. Over the past five years, we have budgeted an average of \$500,000 annually for maintenance, not including personnel costs. The top priority during these challenging fiscal times is to shield the classroom as much as possible in order to provide the highest quality education to our students.

While the District has done a good job maintaining its facilities, state school finance laws make it difficult for schools to save money over time to address maintenance and improvements in the same way that a homeowner might. As a result, school districts generally are compelled to seek a capital referendum to cover the costs of such items.

What is the timetable for construction?

Construction will begin at Kennedy, Woodview, and Grafton High School in September 2017, with the vast majority of the work completed by August 2018 (in time for the start of the 2018-19 school year). Some GHS classroom renovations and District Office work will be completed from September to December 2018. Grafton Elementary School will be deconstructed in August of 2018 after the construction at Kennedy and Woodview is complete.

How will attendance areas be determined for Kennedy and Woodview elementary schools?

If the referendum passes, district administrators will immediately study student population areas and consult with Riteway, the district's busing provider, to determine attendance areas in a way that will balance class sizes at the two schools and allow for efficient busing. The intention is to keep class sizes and bus route times consistent with what they currently are. The district is committed to ensuring smooth transitions for families and the School Board will work to finalize attendance areas before September 2017.

What will be the impact on elementary class sizes?

Elementary class sizes will not increase as a result of this plan.

What is the remaining debt associated with the 2000 referendum?

The remaining principal from the 2000 referendum is \$3,855,000. The last payment on this debt will occur in 2021.

What will the district save on maintenance costs once the buildings are repaired and updated?

A by-product of the proposed referendum will be an annual cost savings of over \$70,000 in energy costs as well as staffing savings of at least \$150,000. This additional money will be used in our operating budget to address facility needs and ongoing maintenance.

Is the district using all the available tools of Act 10?

Yes. Before Act 10 the District spent \$5.1 million on health and dental benefits. In 2015-16 the District spent \$3.3 million. This is a reduction of \$1.7 million, or 35%. This has involved changing carriers, increasing employee contributions, introducing a high deductible health plan, and no longer offering the benefit to new retirees and new classroom aides. In addition, employees pay the full amount of the employee contribution to the WRS.

What are the district's plans for future maintenance?

We have budgeted an average of over \$500,000 annually for maintenance over the last five years, not including personnel costs. We have also established Fund 46 (which the state created in 2013) that allows us to budget money for long-term maintenance projects. We currently have \$460,000 in the account and by June of 2021 we plan to have at least \$1,000,000 to address additional facility needs in our district.

How was the community involved in this decision?

The board has engaged the community throughout this process that spans over five years. Most recently, a Facilities Advisory Committee comprised of community members, parents, district staff, and Board members worked over the course of four months to develop the proposed plans, ultimately making a unanimous recommendation to the Board of Education.

Facilities Advisory Committee members: Topher Adams, Kevin Deering, Casey Didier, Eric Ellison, Fran Grant, Craig Gunderson, Carl Hader, Kate Hardt, Colleen Jordan, Pam King, Mark Koehler, Tom Lawrence, Matthew Lempke, Paul Lorge, Scott Mantei, Jeff Martyka, Robert Meier, Steve Nauta, Jeff Nelson, David Nestler, Stephen Oakes, Sarah Paque, Clayton Riddle, Jim Schmit, Jamie Scofield, John Scott, April Shanks, Brian Starr, Dave Tarasewicz, Kyle Thompson

What if the referendum does not pass?

The simple fact is that the district has some facility-related needs. The cost to address these needs will increase in time. If the referendum does not pass, the board will continue working to develop a plan that voters will support. To be fiscally responsible, any further plan would include the closure of GES.

Can I read the results of the community survey?

Go to the referendum page of the district website, <http://bit.ly/grafton-ref>, to read the results of the community survey administered in Fall 2015.

How can I stay informed about the referendum?

- Visit the referendum website at <http://bit.ly/grafon-ref>.
- Ask questions of Superintendent Jeff Nelson at AM Coffee:
 - Tuesday, March 28 8:00 – 10:00 am
 - Thursday, March 30 3:00 – 5:00 pm
 - Saturday, April 1 8:00 – 10:00 am
 - Monday, April 3 8:00 – 10:00 am