

Frequently Asked Questions

2023–24 PROPOSED BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS



Q Why is the District proposing \$4.75 million in budget adjustments?

A Due to relatively flat enrollment and expenditures outpacing revenues, the District has been in Statutory Operating Debt and has maintained a negative general fund balance since the 2017–18 fiscal year. Current projections show that the District will end the current fiscal year with a negative \$6.2 million general fund balance. Best practices suggest that school districts maintain a fund balance between 8–10% of their fiscal year budget. For more background information about the history of how we got here, stakeholders can view the [August 22, 2022 School Board Meeting](#) when results from the District’s forensic audit report were presented.

Q What is Statutory Operating Debt (SOD) and when will the District be out of it?

A According to Minnesota statutes, a school district is considered to be in SOD if the district’s unreserved fund balance is more than negative 2.5% of the most recent year’s expenditure amount. It’s important to note that with the proposed adjustments of \$4.75 million, \$2.75 million of those adjustments are necessary for the District to achieve a balanced budget for the 2023–24 fiscal year, while the remaining \$2.0 million will go toward reducing the District’s overall debt. The \$4.75 million in adjustments is a first step toward a healthy financial position, but the District is still several years away from achieving a healthy fund balance.

Q What is the plan’s general impact on class sizes?

A While the District will undoubtedly see a rise in some class sizes due to these budget adjustments, stakeholders should be assured that District and building leaders will be constantly reviewing and analyzing class sizes and making adjustments to ensure that class sizes don’t significantly surpass targeted numbers. Class sizes will not be increased for kindergarten, first grade and second grade classrooms across the district.

Q How were the recommended amounts of adjustments in the six areas determined?

A The process to identify budget adjustments used a balanced approach where teams were asked to review the budgets for each of the six areas (administration, instructional & pupil support, operations & maintenance, elementary, secondary, and athletics & activities) and identify adjustments based on the percentage of the district budget spent in each category. After the initial creation of lists, the administrative team then reviewed and discussed the big picture, district impact of the adjustments to finalize the recommendation. Some areas were given a high priority including maintaining smaller primary grade class sizes and pupil supports for our community including school counselors.

Q What programs or services are not part of the general fund and therefore are not part of the budget adjustment plan?

A Food Services and Community Education are programs that have their own funds separate from the General Fund, as is mandated by state law. In Waconia, both Food Service and Community Education have healthy fund balances and historically have been revenue generators for the District. While reductions to Food Service and Community Education were not considered as part of the plan, they can help relieve some pressure on the General Fund by absorbing some costs that are related to their programs.

Q Why are you proposing to reduce so many staff positions/teachers?

A Approximately 80% of the District’s budget goes toward salaries and benefits for our employees. It would be nearly impossible to make significant budget adjustments and make an impact on our debt without reducing some staff.

Use this QR Code to access more information about the current budget adjustment proposals.



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Q Is the District putting the safety and security of WHS & WMS students at risk by reducing Security Monitor positions?

A Safety and security of students and staff remains a top priority for the District and we are confident that the proposed plan does not change that. The Middle School security monitor position that appears in the list of adjustments has been vacant for a long time, and therefore has no impact compared to the current model. At the High School, the change involves the retirement of the current security monitor and the District plans to engage in conversations with the Carver County Sheriff's Office about the potential to add a School Resource Officer (SRO). Additionally, both the Middle and High School will continue to have a dean of students for the 2023–24 school year, supported by federal dollars granted to the district.

Q One of the more significant changes in the proposal is the structural change to the Middle School schedule. Can you further explain how these changes will affect students?

A [Click here](#) to view a clip from the March 13 School Board Work Session where Middle School Principal Shane Clausen explains the impact of these changes.

Q With the elimination of the elementary Spanish program and a specialist restructure, what will the specialist rotation look like at the three elementary schools going forward?

A Under the current proposal, the elementary specialist model will be restructured. The specialist rotation would be adjusted from a 4–day rotation to a 3–day rotation. This change includes the elimination of elementary Spanish, a reduction in art instruction, and an increase in media literacy, physical education, and music instruction. See the table below for a visual for more information:

	Trimester 1			Trimester 2			Trimester 3		
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
School #1	PE/Music	Art	PE/Music	PE/Music	Media	PE/Music	PE/Music	Media	PE/Music
School #2	PE/Music	Media	PE/Music	PE/Music	Art	PE/Music	PE/Music	Media	PE/Music
School # 3	PE/Music	Media	PE/Music	PE/Music	Media	PE/Music	PE/Music	Art	PE/Music

Q Why is the District increasing fees around activities, athletics, high school parking, and yearbooks?

A The increase in fees that are proposed will bring the District more in line with neighboring school districts. For example, the proposed high school parking fee of \$50/trimester or \$150/year is still lower than what neighboring districts such as Eastern Carver County (\$242), Minnetonka (\$300) and Westonka (\$175) charge. A priority during the budget adjustment process, wherever possible, was to maintain opportunities and activities available to students. Feedback from the January community survey showed a clear desire to maintain extra-curricular offerings as well, and also indicated a willingness by stakeholders to pay some additional fees to avoid the elimination of those programs.

Important Links

Fact Sheet



School Board Video

