

WATERFORD UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

# 2026-27 Preliminary Budget

*A Balanced Plan at a Flat Tax Rate*

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Board of Education • June 2026

# The Headlines

**4.15**

**Mill rate — HELD FLAT**

No increase to the tax rate

**\$14.44M**

**Total tax levy**

All funds, at 4.15 mills

**837**

**Students (Sept 2026)**

3-yr avg 861, down from 874

**\$139K**

**Remaining gap**

Down from ~\$1.2M projected

*The budget is balanced across every fund at a flat 4.15 mill rate. A detailed review closed nearly all of the projected operating gap.*

# The Pressures Behind the Budget

## Declining Enrollment

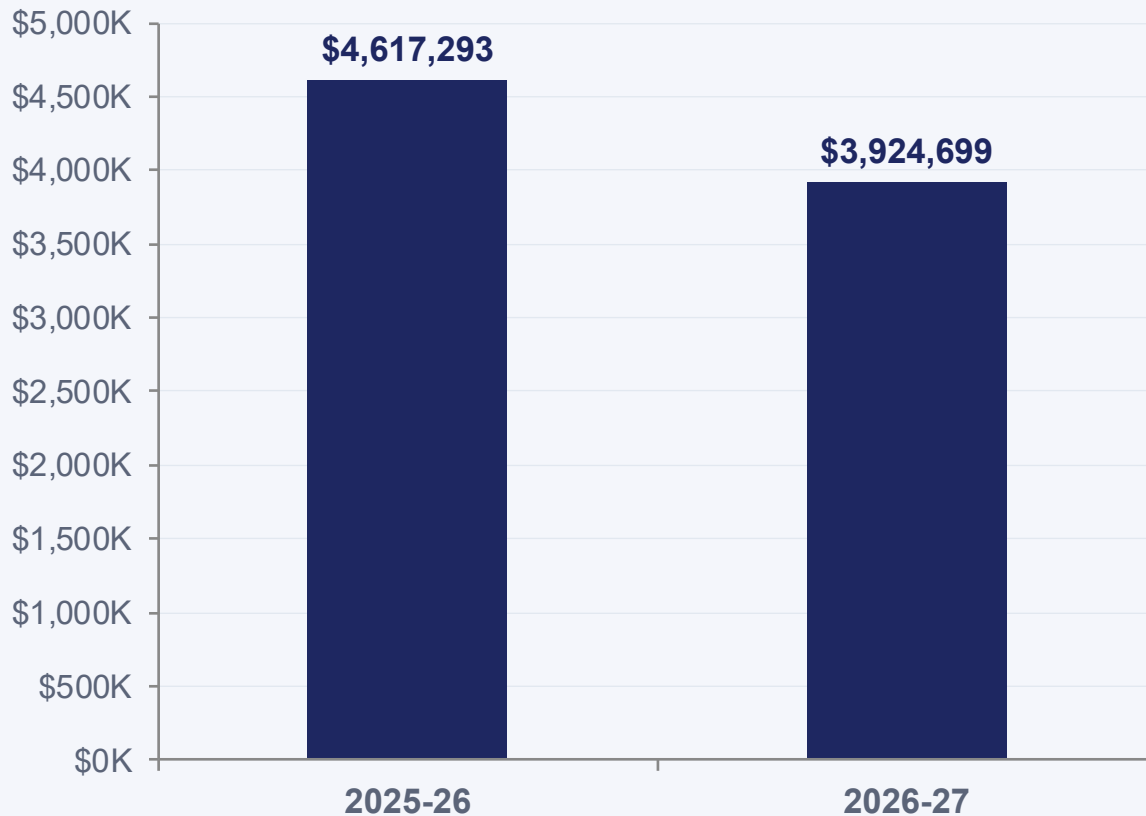
Membership fell from a 874 three-year average to 861, with an 837 headcount this fall. Under Wisconsin's revenue limit, fewer students means less revenue authority.

## Falling State Aid

Equalization aid dropped from \$4.62M to about \$3.92M — a ~15% cut — as property values rose and enrollment fell. We are now on the 85% hold-harmless floor; the state budget froze the aid pool and allowed only \$325 per member.

*These pressures created a projected ~\$1.2M operating gap. The budget process closed it to about \$139K — the rest of this deck shows how.*

# The State Aid Squeeze



**- \$692,594**  
less state aid in one year (-15%)

- State budget (Act 15) FROZE the statewide aid pool — no new equalization aid in 2026-27
- Revenue limit grew only \$325 per member; per-pupil aid flat at \$742
- We are now on the 85% hold-harmless floor — aid cannot fall faster, but won't recover on its own

# From a \$1.2M Gap to Balanced



BUDGET REVIEW

A horizontal yellow bar with the text 'BUDGET REVIEW' in a dark, bold font.



*Revenue \$16.83M vs Expense \$16.97M. Every fund now balances, with the mill rate held at 4.1500.*

# How We Closed the Gap



## Captured Act 15 special-ed aid

Higher reimbursement (45%, and 90% high-cost) plus a corrected aid estimate added meaningful revenue.



## Fixed a \$1.4M posting error

A miskeyed special-ed benefit line overstated expense by ~\$1.4M; correcting it lowered the required transfer.



## Shifted eligible costs to Fund 80

Moved SRO and community fitness center costs outside the revenue-limit cap while holding 4.15.



## Removed duplicates & trimmed

Caught a double-entered open-enrollment cost and trimmed ~\$97K of discretionary lines.

*Together these took the operating gap from ~\$1.2M to about \$139K — with no program cuts and no tax-rate increase.*

# Adopt the balanced budget; bridge the rest

1

## Cover the ~\$139K with fund balance

A roughly 2% draw on a healthy \$6.8M general-fund balance — no tax rate increase, no program cuts.

2

## Trim through attrition

Continue capturing savings as positions turn over — no layoffs, no contract disruption.

3

## Leverage upcoming retirements

18 staff (13%) are already retirement-eligible at age 55+, and one-third are 50 or older — replacing at lower placement creates lasting savings.

4

## Re-assess at the 2027-29 state budget

The next biennial budget could change aid and the revenue limit; revisit structural decisions then with real numbers.

# The Bottom Line

## Tax rate

4.1500 mills — flat, no increase

## Total levy

\$14,439,532 across all funds

## Operating budget

Balanced; ~\$139K bridged from reserves

## Fund balance after

~\$6.6M — strong, ~37% of spending

*A balanced budget at a flat rate, with reserves intact and a clear plan for the years ahead.*

# Fund-by-Fund Tie-Out

Fund	Purpose	Revenue	Expenditure	Net	Status
10	General Fund	16,830,280	16,969,167	(138,887)	Fund balance bridge
21	Special Revenue Trust	622,200	622,200	0	Balanced
27	Special Education	7,238,245	7,238,245	0	Balanced
39	Debt Service	3,676,933	3,668,413	8,520	To fund balance
46	Cap. Improvement Trust	26,000	—	26,000	Trust interest
49	Capital Projects	500,000	9,053,830	(8,553,830)	Bond proceeds (prior yrs)
50	Food Service	595,058	595,059	(1)	Balanced (rounding)
80	Community Service	789,014	789,014	0	Balanced

All operating funds balance. Fund 39 carries a small surplus to its debt-service balance; Fund 46 accrues trust interest.

Fund 49 reflects spend-down of bond proceeds received in prior years for the building project — funded from accumulated fund balance, not the FY27 levy.

**Total levy \$14,439,532 • Mill rate 4.1500 • Fund 10 ~\$139K bridged from a ~\$6.8M general-fund balance.**