

HLWW Schools

Theme, Messages, Talking Points



Tell your story in a few words, a few sentences, or a few paragraphs. This document includes three options for talking points, depending on how much time you are given by your audience.

I have time for a conversation

HLWW Referendum Theme

We're All Lakers

Key Messages

We're all about building (a school district that can compete with any other)

- Attract and retain quality staff

We're all about learning (providing a strong future for our students)

- Keep class sizes low
- Restore teaching positions that were recently cut
- Update and enhance reading curriculum, and
- increase music and art offerings, among other priorities

We're all in this together (to improve our communities through education)

- Community-based strategic planning process
- Long-term opportunities with new leadership, a new approach, and new possibilities

We're all new

- New Leadership
 - Superintendent
 - 2 new board members
- New Approach - Referendum
 - One question, not two
 - Responsible request - less than the average of neighboring schools
- New Possibilities
 - Strategic planning with community engagement component later this year
 - Long-term opportunities

Talking Points

- Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted School District will hold a one question referendum on the November 7 ballot: an operating levy for a revenue increase of \$600 per pupil, indexed to inflation for 10 years.

- We made \$550,000 in budget reductions for this school year and the state increased our revenue, but we have had a deficit budget the last two years, and we will be deficit spending again next year, which is unsustainable.
- Our fund balance, or savings account, will be zero in 2026 if nothing is done, due to:
 - Expiration of previous operating levy
 - State funding increases don't keep pace with inflation
 - End of COVID/ESSER funds
 - High cost of special education
- If fund balance drops to negative 2.5% of budget ("Statutory Operating Debt or SOD), the state will "take over" operations of our schools.
- The district has been a good steward of its resources, but state funding has not kept pace with inflation. If it had, the district would have received \$1,250 more per pupil in 2023 - equal to \$1.6 million this year alone.
- We have the third lowest total school taxes of our 10 neighbors. Our operating levy expired last year and compared to the state average, HLWW is collecting \$874 less per pupil in operating levy funds - equal to \$1.1 million this year alone.
- The revenue from the operating levy would:
 - Retain high quality staff
 - Keep class sizes low
 - Restore teaching positions that were recently cut
 - Update and enhance core curriculum, and
 - Increase music and art offerings, among other priorities
- If the referendum is approved the average priced home would see a tax increase of about \$17 monthly (\$206 annually on a \$300,000 home).
- If the referendum is not approved, significant budget reductions will be required for each of the next several years. As class sizes increase and programs and activities are cut, enrollment could suffer, further reducing state aid revenue.
- Agricultural property will only pay this increase on one acre on which a house sits.
- The Ag2School tax credit rose from 50% in 20XX to 70% in 20XX - overall school ag taxes have been decreasing.

I have a couple of minutes

We're All Lakers

At HLWW

We're all about building a school district that can compete with any other

We're all about learning by providing a strong future for our students

We're all in this together to improve our communities through education

We're all new

- New Leadership, a New Referendum Approach, New Possibilities as we begin Strategic planning as a community later this year

Talking Points

- Vote on or before Nov. 7 on a one-question referendum.
- Operating levy would increase revenue by \$600 per pupil, indexed to inflation for 10 years.
- \$550,000 in budget reductions this year.
- Deficit spending again next year - unsustainable!
- Our fund balance, or savings account, will be zero in 2026 if nothing is done.
- Financial situation is due to:
 - Expiration of previous operating levy
 - State funding increases don't keep pace with inflation
 - End of COVID/ESSER funds
 - High cost of special education
- If fund balance drops to negative 2.5% of budget ("Statutory Operating Debt or SOD), the state will "take over" operations of our schools.
- We have the third lowest total school taxes of our 10 neighbors.
- The revenue from the operating levy would:
 - Retain high quality staff
 - Keep class sizes low
 - Restore teaching positions that were recently cut
 - Update and enhance core curriculum, and
 - Increase music and art offerings, among other priorities
- If the referendum is approved the average priced home would see a tax increase of about \$17 monthly (\$206 annually on a \$300,000 home).
- If the referendum is not approved, significant budget reductions will be required.

I have a minute

We're All Lakers

At HLWW

We're all about building a school district that can compete with any other

We're all about learning by providing a strong future for our students

We're all in this together to improve our communities through education

We're all new with new leadership and a new one-question operating levy referendum

- \$550,000 in budget reductions this year.
- Deficit spending again next year - unsustainable!
- State funding increases don't keep pace with inflation
- Our fund balance, or savings account, will be zero in 2026

- If the referendum fails and we don't make massive cuts, the state could take over our district
- If it passes, we will:
 - Retain high quality staff
 - Keep class sizes low
 - Restore teaching positions that were recently cut
 - Update and enhance core curriculum, and
 - Increase music and art offerings, among other priorities

Elevator speech

Q. I hear there's another referendum this year - can I get the cliff notes version?

A. Sure,

- We're All Lakers, right?
- We're all in this together to improve our communities through education
- Our new leadership is proposing a new one-question operating levy referendum
- We made \$550,000 in budget reductions this year.
- Our fund balance, or savings account, will be zero in 2026
- If the referendum fails and we don't make massive cuts, the state could take over our district
- If it passes, we will:
 - Retain high quality staff
 - Keep class sizes low
 - Restore teaching positions that were recently cut, and
 - Enhance core curriculum