

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

District	2023-2024
Alma	73.4
C-FC	68.3
Pepin	66.7
Alma Center	65.5
Whitehall	65.0
Mel-Min	63.4
Augusta	63.2
Eleva	61.9
Indy	61.8
Osseo	60.6
B/T	58.6
Gilmanton	56.1

How is the school district performing academically?

We are doing great things for kids! Each year, the District reviews data from multiple sources, including state and local assessments, attendance, behavior, as well as staff and student perception surveys to assess our work and make goals for the upcoming school year. We are committed to supporting our students both academically and socially through a continuous improvement model.

We have implemented the “Portrait of a Pirate” readiness indicators, which are developed from research by world-class organizations, reflect the educational landscape of the 21st century, and define students as more than a test score. We want to ensure our graduates are ready for their next step in life including career, college, and as a community member.

The state’s school report card also shows we are doing well!

Based on the most recent data, we have the **second highest state report card score among our conference schools.**

What projects will be completed with the referendum funds?

The projects to be completed fit into 5 categories.

Complete Large Capital Maintenance Projects (50%)

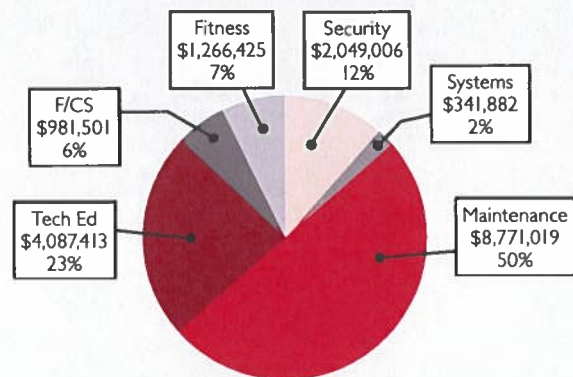
- Replace remaining roof sections
- Replace original damaged flooring + abate asbestos
- Replace ceilings to improve acoustics in identified classrooms and abate asbestos
- Replace failing and out of code interior doors
- Renovate bathrooms to meet Americans with Disability (ADA) code compliance
- Improve the parking lot

Replace Failing Building Systems (2%)

- Update remaining HVAC equipment + controls
- Replace the septic system

Update and Expand the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Area (29%)

- Increase space for new equipment and job-like experiences to better prepare students for high-demand jobs in the local trades
- Add appropriately sized classrooms and labs to teach woods/construction, metals, small engine repair, auto, family and consumer science, agri-science, and robotics



Improve Safety + Security (12%)

- Modify main entrance to better regulate visitors
- Install building access security system
- Replace emergency notification/public address system

Renovate Classrooms + Physical Education Spaces (7%)

- Update classroom finishes (paint, flooring, lighting, cabinetry)
- Expand fitness space to accommodate full physical education class and provide needed space for adaptive physical education class
- Create a dedicated entrance to fitness space for use outside of the school day

Why does the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Area need to be expanded?

In both 2023 and 2024 46% of C-FC graduates have entered a trade profession. We need the space to teach our students about the rapidly evolving workforce that is demanding new skills and training. Our CTE program must adapt to **equip students with relevant skills for in-demand jobs across various industries.** CTE programs can offer students practical, hands-on experience, industry certifications, and career pathways, preparing them for the workforce sooner.

Technical Education (Shop) Area

- In shop class, students learn tool and machinery operations along with skills in safety, collaboration, and communication. As in the past, our technical education classes continue to provide instruction in electricity, welding, plumbing, woodworking, and small engines. We have added 3-D printers, CAD design, and a plasma cutter, but the limited space makes their use challenging and prevents us from bringing in additional equipment.
- In the current space, we are unable to teach a full auto mechanics course or allow our single teacher to monitor the area effectively, efficiently, or safely. Hands-on activities with real-world applications enhance students' abilities to secure quality jobs with livable wages in design, production, and repair; additionally, they often leave with the skills to fix things in their own homes.

Family And Consumer Science (Home Economics) Area

- The majority of this classroom is original from the 50s. Updating this space will create a better atmosphere and enhance our ability to teach students critical life skills, including nutrition, child development, consumerism, and health sciences.

Does the plan include a new weight room?

The plan is to expand the existing weight room to create needed flexible space to allow special needs students to participate in adaptive physical education activities. This has been an identified need in the district for some time. Scientific research has repeatedly demonstrated that physical education can enhance academic performance and cognitive function. For children with special needs, it also improves communication, attention, behavior, and academic success. Students with special needs often enter the classroom feeling overwhelmed by sensory input. These distractions, which are inherent in every classroom, create a multitude of sensory stimuli for students to absorb and process. This expanded space would offer opportunities for students to regulate their bodies and provide a calming effect on them.

The expanded flexible space will also allow a full physical education class or team to utilize the space at one time. The space can also be designed to allow for ease of use during after school hours for students and the community.

The community-wide survey affirmed that residents, parents, and staff all supported an investment in this space.

What is the difference between a Capital Referendum and Operational Referendum?

All Wisconsin schools are subject to a revenue limit, which places a cap on the amount of money that can be raised through state aid and property taxes. This revenue limit is fixed, meaning it does not adjust for inflation. **A school referendum is a public vote held by a school district to seek approval from local taxpayers for additional funding to exceed the revenue limit.**

School districts may initiate two types of referendums to increase funding: capital referendums and operating referendums.

1. Capital Referendums:

A district may hold a referendum to issue debt for a specific purpose. These are often referred to as "capital referendums" because the funds are typically used for construction and other large capital projects. A capital referendum authorizes the district to issue a specific amount of bonds or notes to pay for such projects. This is much like a home mortgage and often financed over a series of years. Funds approved through a capital referendum can only be used for the projects listed on a ballot question and cannot be used to fund day-to-day operations of the school district.

2. Operating Referendums:

A district may also initiate a referendum to exceed its revenue limit without issuing new debt. These are known as "operating referendums" and fund operational expenses, such as utilities, routine maintenance, salaries and benefits for staff, insurance, and supplies.

The Cochrane-Fountain City School Referendum is seeking a capital referendum on April 1.

How were the projects identified to be included in the referendum? And, has the community been involved in this process?

Over the past several months, the Cochrane-Fountain City School District Board of Education has been engaged in a process to examine our district's needs and explore potential solutions. The Board of Education partnered with ISG Architecture and Engineering and Miron Construction to complete a thorough facility assessment. Then, a taskforce made up of community stakeholders met to discuss the facility assessment and provide feedback. In November a community survey was sent to each mailbox holder in the district. The survey results guided the school board to adopt a resolution for projects and \$17.49 million bond amount.

Updates have been provided regularly at school board meetings and the District's website has remained up-to-date with the process.

How did the building accumulate so many capital maintenance needs, aren't you doing annual maintenance on the building?

C-FC School District has an annual maintenance plan and budget to maintain the school facilities and address any urgent needs to keep the school and grounds functioning and safe. To maintain facilities on a larger scale, the Wisconsin school funding system relies on capital referendums.

While the district budgets for yearly maintenance and maintains a Fund 46 (capital improvement savings account) to save funds for larger capital projects, the majority of a school district's budget is needed to fund day-to-day operations including salaries/benefits, utilities, routine maintenance, insurance, supplies, etc.

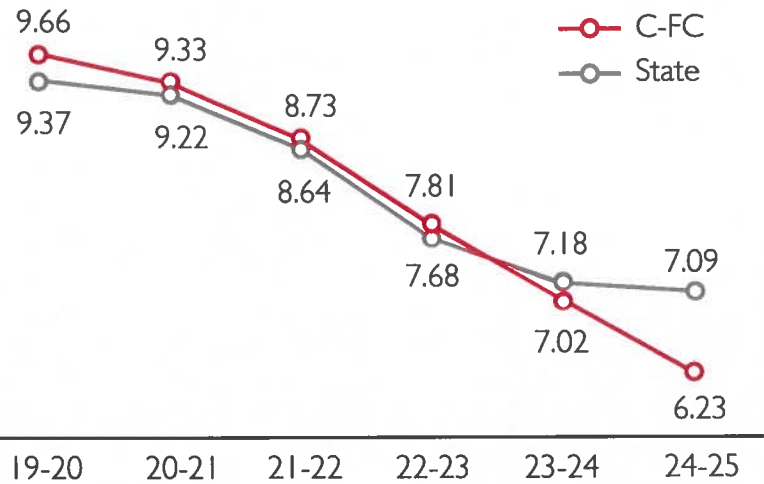
Wasn't the septic system supposed to have been replaced in the 2017 capital referendum?

The 1958 septic tank was identified to be replaced in the 2017 facility assessment. It was not included in the 2017 referendum based on feedback from the community at that time. The current facility assessment has again identified replacing the 1958 septic system. Therefore, based on these assessment, increased maintenance costs, and recent septic failures the septic system has been included in the proposed referendum.

What is mill rate and how does it impact my taxes?

The mill rate is the rate used to calculate property taxes within a jurisdiction. The mill rate represents the dollar amount of taxes collected per \$1,000 of the fair market value of the property upon which the taxes are paid. The fair market value of the property is determined by the Department of Revenue. The below graph shows the Cochrane-Fountain City School District historical mill rate vs the statewide K-12 Average mill rate.

Tax Rate Per \$1,000 of Equalized Value



How will the capital referendum impact my taxes?

The \$17.49 million dollar referendum is estimated to have a \$0.58 increase per \$1,000 of fair market value property over the 2024-2025 rate for debt. Please note, the school district does not control the fair market value

Estimated Market Value	Estimated Tax Impact	
	Annual	Monthly
\$100,000	\$58.00	\$4.83
\$200,000	\$116.00	\$9.67
\$300,000	\$174.00	\$14.50

Assumes multi-phased borrowing amortized over 20 years at a planning interest rate of 5.00%. *Impact represents the hypothetical change in referendum debt mill rate over the 2024-25 mill rate for referendum debt service of \$1.55.

Is there a balance on the 2017 referendum debt?

The debt for the 2017 Facilities Referendum was issued in 2018 and was originally scheduled to be paid off in 2028. Since 2022, the District has made prepayments on this loan to save interest costs. This strategy, if continued in 2025, could allow the debt to be paid off in 2027, one year early.

Book	School Board Policies
Section	600 Series: Fiscal Management
Title	Management of Tax-Exempt and Tax-Advantaged Obligations
Code	631.1
Status	_____
Adopted	_____

The District has a strong interest in maintaining its ability to issue tax-exempt and tax-advantaged obligations (“Obligations”) as a means of securing capital through borrowing at favorable rates. The District further wishes to ensure that such obligations, once issued, are managed and monitored in a manner that (1) preserves their tax-exempt or tax-advantaged status; (2) complies with applicable laws and regulations; and (3) demonstrates accountability with respect to the appropriate use of the proceeds of any offering.

The District Administrator shall serve as the District’s Compliance Officer with respect to the post-issuance management of the District’s Obligations. The Board recognizes that the compliance and recordkeeping measures that are associated with the issuance of such Obligations are extremely complex. Accordingly, the Compliance Officer is authorized to work with the District’s professional financial advisors and its designated bond counsel on an ongoing basis to:

1. Establish appropriate systems and procedures respecting post-issuance compliance and recordkeeping practices, covering matters such as (a) proper registration of the obligation; (b) continuing disclosure requirements; (c) calculating and monitoring arbitrage compliance and rebate requirements; (d) tracking the expenditure of proceeds by project/purpose; (e) ensuring proper management of funds to be used for debt service; (f) filing appropriate reports and tax forms; and (g) taking corrective actions if needed. To the extent recommended by the District’s professional advisors, such procedures may be adopted as a formal administrative or Board rule under this policy.
2. Occasionally review and recommend any appropriate changes to the systems and procedures respecting post-issuance compliance and recordkeeping that are implemented pursuant to this policy; and
3. Ensure that the Compliance Officer adequately understands and implements the systems and procedures that are established and implemented pursuant to this policy.

The Board understands that the professional service expenses associated with obtaining such advice and counsel are necessary costs associated with the decision to issue tax-exempt and tax-advantaged obligations. The Compliance Officer shall ensure that the District’s annual budget includes estimated costs for these services. The Compliance Officer shall inform the Board if issues arise that are likely to cause the District’s actual expenditures for such services to substantially exceed the amounts allocated in the applicable budget period.

Legal Reference

Wisconsin Statutes

Chapter 67	[municipal borrowing and municipal bonds]
Section 67.04	[purposes of issuing municipal bonds and notes]
Section 67.05	[bonds issues; procedures, including referendum]
Section 67.12	[temporary borrowing and borrowing on promissory notes]
Section 120.115	[DPI reporting requirements and report on debt service]

Federal Guidance

[IRS Publication 4079](#), Tax-Exempt Governmental Bonds

Book	School Board Policies
Section	600 Series: Fiscal Management
Title	Revenues from Investments
Code	652
Status	_____
Adopted	_____

The School Board authorizes a safe and sound investment program for the purpose of securing additional revenues in support of the District’s educational program. An investment program is viewed as a critical ingredient of sound fiscal management. District funds in excess of those maintained in demand deposits or savings accounts for near-term operating purposes shall be properly and prudently invested in accordance with provisions of this policy and as authorized by law.

The primary objectives of the District’s standard investment activities, in priority order, shall be:

1. **Safety** – Safety of principal is the foremost objective of the investment program. Investments shall be undertaken in a manner that seeks to preserve the amount of principal within the District’s overall investment portfolio.
2. **Legal** – All District investments are made in compliance with legal requirements.
3. **Liquidity** – The District’s investment portfolio shall remain sufficiently liquid to meet all operating requirements that might be reasonably anticipated.
4. **Return on Investments** – District funds are invested at the highest rate and under the best conditions as possible in official depositories designated by the Board.

The Board authorizes the District Administrator to direct all activities associated with the investment program in such a manner as to accomplish the objectives of this policy. This responsibility includes an annual review and assessment of the District’s investment program and recommendations for changes to this policy. The District Administrator may confer with reputable consultants regarding investment decisions when necessary.

Legal Reference

Wisconsin Statutes

- [Section 25.50](#) [local government pooled investment fund]
- [Section 34.05](#) [designation of public depositories]
- [Section 34.08](#) [payment for losses of public depository]
- [Section 66.0603](#) [investments]
- [Section 120.12\(7\)](#) [school board duty to designate public depositories for district funds]



2025-27 State Budget Talking Points

Spendable Resources

Explanation: An increase in “spendable” resources is one that allows a school district to increase its budget each year without having to go to referendum. School districts can receive increases in “spendable” resources through increases in per pupil revenue limits or increases in per pupil categorical aid or a combination of the two (AKA-combined resource change).

Governor’s Proposal: Provides a revenue limit adjustment of \$334 per pupil in 2025-26 and \$345 per pupil in 2026-27. Provides an increase in per pupil categorical aid payments of \$58 per pupil in 2025-26 and \$50 per pupil in 2026-27. Beginning in the 2025-26 school year and thereafter, indexes annual per pupil revenue limit adjustments to inflation. To decrease disparities between school district revenue limits (see Table) the governor’s proposal also increases the low revenue ceiling from \$11,000 per pupil, to \$12,000 in 2025-26 and to \$12,400 in 2026-27 and repeals the statutory prohibition of a school district to use the low revenue ceiling adjustment if the district has a failed referendum.

WASB Priority: Secure annual increases in *spendable* revenues for schools that meet or exceed the rate of inflation.

Talking Points:

- In 2003, K-12 school aids accounted for 43.1% of state budget allocations. In 2023, it was 36.6%.
- In 2002, Wisconsin was 11th in spending on K-12. By 2020, we had fallen to 25th.
- This continues a two-decade trend that has given Wisconsin the largest drop in the tax burden of any state and lowered its tax levels from the highest among its four neighboring states in 2000 to the second lowest in 2022 (above only those of Michigan). At the same time, this shift has also contributed to lower spending on K-12 education here compared to other states.
- Overall K-12 spending in Wisconsin rose 4.4% in 2022, but that was less than half of the 9.8% increase nationally. (Wisconsin Policy Forum)
- State-imposed revenue limits on school districts have not been adjusted in six of the last ten school years. (There were no adjustments in 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2021-22 or 2022-23.) Further, in the school years in which revenue limits were adjusted (2019-20, 2020-21, 2023-24 and 2024-25), they were adjusted by an amount that was less than the rate of inflation.
- Since 2011, allowable school spending under a combination of revenue limits and per pupil categorical aid trails inflation by over \$3,300 per pupil. (Legislative Fiscal Bureau, see chart)
- When revenue limits are not adjusted, the only way for a school district to raise additional funds locally has been to go to referendum. Not surprisingly, in the past decade the number of districts forced to go to their local taxpayers have reached historic highs. Passage rates have also been high, which has had a substantial impact on property taxes statewide. That is not a sustainable model for supporting our schools or our students.



2025-27 State Budget Talking Points

Special Education Funding

Governor's Proposal: Provides an increase in special education categorical aid sufficient to reimburse prior year eligible special education costs at 60% in those fiscal years, respectively.

The governor's proposed budget would also convert special education aid from a sum certain appropriation to a **sum sufficient appropriation**, to ensure that the promised percentage level of support will indeed be provided to school districts.

WASB Priority: Secure a significant increase in special education categorical aid with an *eventual* goal of reaching 90% reimbursement rate.

Talking Points:

- Increasing special education categorical aid benefits all districts since all districts provide special education services and have special education costs.
- School districts are mandated by state and federal law to provide special education programs and services to students with disabilities.
- Special education is the largest single underfunded mandate on Wisconsin schools.
- School districts must transfer from their general funds to cover special education costs that are not reimbursed by the state.
 - School district general funds are controlled by revenue limits and are intended to support regular education programs that serve all students.
 - Low reimbursement for mandated special education programs and services forces resources away from regular education programs.
- Increasing special education categorical aid benefits school districts in two ways:
 - School districts can use these funds to improve special education services for students with disabilities; and
 - It frees up resources in school district general funds, reducing the need for districts to cut regular education programs and services or to turn to referenda to exceed those limits.
- Special education aid was not increased for over a decade reaching an all-time low reimbursement of 24.9% in 2018-19. School leaders are appreciative of recent modest increases that have increased the reimbursement rate to around 30%. However, because of the increase in special education costs, the statewide total of unreimbursed special education costs borne by school districts each year has remained steady at about \$1.1 billion.

Book	School Board Policies
Section	300 Series: Instruction
Title	Field Trips
Code	352
Status	Active
Adopted	2/19/2020 Revised _____

Student field trips can enhance student learning, help to develop new interests and more excitement for learning, and provide useful opportunities for students to engage with people, environments, activities, and resources outside of the confines of the school campus. At the same time, field trips require substantial advance planning, can sometimes be costly, and introduce certain safety risks.

District employees and other agents of the District are always responsible for ensuring that they have been sufficiently authorized to allow students to participate in any off-premises, District-supervised trip, event, or activity. However, within this policy, a “field trip” means a District-approved and District-supervised off-premises activity for students, but excludes all of the following:

1. Off-premises activities that are an inherent and appropriately authorized aspect of a District-sponsored class or other activity, such that the student’s participation in the class or activity necessarily requires or reasonably implies the student’s participation in the off-premises aspect(s) of the class or other activity (e.g., an athletic team’s scheduled away contests are not “field trips”);
2. Trips/activities with an itinerary that includes one or more overnight stays or involving a one-way distance from the school of more than 200 miles;

The School Board may establish limited funding for fields trips within the District’s annual budget. The administration is responsible for monitoring the allocation of any such funding and for providing staff with guidelines that address the number and type(s) of field trips that are planned for specific schools, classes/grade levels within schools, and, if applicable, among District-sponsored co-curricular groups/activities. Such guidelines and any related administrative procedures shall be developed, implemented, and monitored to promote student safety and with sensitivity to equity considerations (such as possible perceptions that students in different schools or classes are not offered comparable opportunities).

Field trips under this policy are normally offered to students as a privilege that enhances or supplements the District’s core instructional activities and curriculum. With the approval of an administrator, the District may deny a student the opportunity to participate in a field trip as a consequence for misconduct, including for violations of school rules or violations of other District expectations that were communicated to the student.

Field Trip Proposals

Field trip requests shall be considered for possible approval if they are supported by a sufficient proposal that is submitted to an appropriate administrator by the staff member(s) who are responsible for planning and organizing the field trip. A field trip proposal shall consist of a description of at least the following:

1. The name(s) of the staff member(s) who are submitting who are responsible for the planning and organization of the proposed field trip;
2. Location (destination(s)/distance);
3. Proposed date;
4. Expected duration;
5. Identification of the eligible student group (e.g., by class, grade level(s), or activity);
6. Expected cost per student and identification of the proposed source(s) of funding (e.g., identifying any proposed District share and any student/family share);
7. A description of the connection between the planned activities and curricular/learning objective(s);
8. The plan for student supervision, which shall be consistent with the District policy related to District-authorized volunteers;
9. The plan for transportation;
10. The plan for meals/food (if needed);
11. Assessment of accessibility considerations for students with disabilities;
12. Assessment of such health and safety considerations as the approving authority may require, keeping in mind issues such as medication administration and emergency preparedness, including possible medical emergencies; and
13. The plan for the supervision of and alternative activities for any non-participating students.

District Authorization/Approval

The District Administrator or principal may approve a student field trip that otherwise complies with this policy, including the following guidelines:

1. General class or grade-level field trips that occur on non-school days, that depart from school before the students' normal arrival time, or that return to school after the students' normal departure time are discouraged, but may be approved by the administration if the administration determines that (1) the proposed trip has substantial value that cannot be easily replicated or replaced through an alternative activity; and (2) that it would be highly impractical to schedule the activity within a regular school day.
2. Field trips primarily for the purpose of entertainment and recreation are discouraged but may be approved by the District Administrator or principal as a behavioral incentive or as a capstone-type privilege (e.g., an end-of-year class trip for 8th grade students) provided that the approval of any such trip does not compromise the District's ability to meet mandatory instructional hours requirements.

The District Administrator may also elect, at his/her sole discretion, to refer a particular field trip proposal to the Board for its review and possible approval.

Permission of Parent or Guardian

Before any student ~~under 18 years of age~~ is permitted to participate in a school field trip, the District personnel who are organizing and supervising the field trip must ensure that the student's parent or guardian has given permission.

If approved by the principal, a school may request parent permission, via a single form or similar communication, for a student to participate in multiple intra-school-day field trips, provided that the trips occur within the same school year.

Parent or guardian permission must be in writing. School personnel may, at their sole discretion, accept an electronic communication that includes the pertinent information and that has sufficient indicators of authenticity. Any exceptional request to accept verbal permission by telephone must be approved by the principal, taking into account the reason for the exceptional request and relevant safety and liability factors.

If sufficient permission is not received by the school-communicated deadline, or if District personnel have reason to doubt the authenticity of a communication that purports to grant permission, District personnel may deny a student the opportunity to participate in the field trip. School personnel are not required to exhaust possibilities for obtaining or verifying sufficient permission and other required information after the established deadline has passed.

Fees Assessed to Students/Families

Class or Grade level Field Trips

- **Registration** – Students & Chaperones may be assessed fees to cover all or a portion of the actual costs associated with their participation in a field trip that is more than the yearly budgeted amount per grade or class. The amount of such fees, or a reasonable estimate thereof, must be approved in connection with approving the field trip. Material changes to an approved student fee must be submitted for re-approval.
- **Transportation** – No transportation costs will be charged for field trips sponsored by a grade or class in which all students are required to participate. Students & Chaperones may be assessed fees to cover all or a portion of the actual costs associated with their participation in a field trip that is more than the yearly budgeted amount per grade or class. The amount of such fees, or a reasonable estimate thereof, must be approved in connection with approving the field trip. Material changes to an approved student fee must be submitted for re-approval.
- **Meals and Lodging** – Students & Chaperones may be assessed fees for meals and lodging to cover all or a portion of the actual costs associated with their participation in a field trip that are in excess of any approved fundraised amount for the group.

Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO), WIAA-sponsored events, and board-approved co-curricular groups

- **Registration** – Students & Chaperones may be assessed fees to cover all or a portion of the actual costs associated with their participation beyond the district budgeted amount to cover registration costs for one competition of the same level through the state competition.
- **Transportation** – Students & Chaperones may be assessed fees to cover all or a portion of the actual costs associated with their participation beyond the district budgeted amount for district approved competitions through the state level.
- **Meals and Lodging** – Students & Chaperones may be assessed fees for meals and lodging to cover all or a portion of the actual costs associated with their participation in a field trip that are in excess of any approved fundraised amount for the group.
- **Subsequent registration and transportation costs may only be approved in advanced-level events for students who have qualified as a result of their performance.**

A parent or guardian in need of financial assistance may request a fee waiver for certain trips or trip expenses under applicable District policies. If a fee waiver is available and approved, any fees that are waived shall be covered by District funds or by another District-approved source.

Any school-supervised fundraising that is to be conducted to cover the costs of a field trip must have appropriate approval and follow the District's applicable policies and procedures regarding fundraising.

If fees are not fully paid by the school-communicated deadline, District personnel may deny a student the opportunity to participate in the field trip. The District cannot guarantee that pre-paid fees will be refundable in the event of a cancellation or if any student does not participate in a trip/activity as expected for any reason.

Transportation-Other Considerations

If permitted and authorized by the District, District-provided transportation of students for a field trip by any vehicle other than a district vehicle (e.g., via a private vehicle arranged by the District; via district-owned cars, SUVs, or vans) must comply with all legal requirements that apply to such vehicles and their drivers.

Online transportation requests should be submitted no later than one week before the date of the trip or activity to allow time for administrative approval and coordination of driver(s).

Teachers and/or other responsible adults shall chaperone students participating on trips in accordance with the following guidelines:

- In grades 4K through five (5), there shall be at least one (1) adult for every classroom.
- In grades six (6) through twelve (12), there shall be at least one (1) adult on each bus or van.

Alternative Activities; Make-Up Work

District personnel who are responsible for planning a field trip must also plan for the appropriate supervision of and alternative activities for non-participating students who are in the relevant class, activity, or group and who attend school on the day of the field trip.

When students participate in a field trip that is planned and approved by school officials, they are not considered absent from school and shall be permitted a reasonable period of time, not less than the time allowed for a student with an excused absence, to make up any school work that has been missed due to the trip. Such make-up work shall be arranged and accepted without penalty or any other undue disadvantage to the student.

Legal References:

Wisconsin Statutes

Section 118.13 [student nondiscrimination]

Section 121.54(7) [transportation of students for extracurricular activities, including school outings and field trips]

Wisconsin Administrative Code

PI 9 [student nondiscrimination]

Cross References:

Book	School Board Policies
Section	800 Series: School-Community Relations
Title	Visitors to the School
Code	860
Status	Active
Adopted	3/19/2025

Many individuals may want to enter school buildings during the school day for a variety of reasons. The District, however, has a responsibility to protect the safety of students, staff and others while they are in school buildings and to make sure the educational process is not disrupted.

Since the building principal is responsible for helping ensure the safety of all persons in the school and for maintaining a school environment conducive to learning, all visitors are expected to report to the school office for a visitor's pass before going anywhere in the building during the school day. Determination or disposition of an individual's request to visit the school will be made by the building principal or his/her designee in accordance with administrative procedures currently in force. The building principal may designate exceptions to the requirement that visitors report and register in the school office in connection with a school performance, assembly, or similar event that is open to members of the public and that occurs during the school day. Other exceptions may also be authorized by the District Administrator.

For purposes of this policy and its implementing procedures, any person other than a District student or a District employee who is present on school premises is regarded as a visitor. Visitors may include parents and guardians of students, School Board members, school volunteers, invited speakers, vendors, representatives of the news media, students not enrolled in or attending courses in the Cocrane-Fountain City School District, interested citizens, etc.

State law specifically prohibits registered sex offenders from being on public school premises unless they have provided the required prior notification to school officials or fall under one of the exceptions provided by law. It is the responsibility of the registered sex offender to provide the required school notification. After receiving the required prior notification, the building principal shall determine whether the registered sex offender will be allowed to be present on school premises for the proposed purpose or event and determine any conditions that may be placed on such permission for the safety of other persons present in the school environment.

Regardless of the time of day, the District Administrator or any building principal or his/her designee has the discretionary authority to exclude from the school premises any person who the District determines has no legitimate and approved purpose for being on school grounds, disrupts or appears likely to become a disruption to the educational program, or threatens the health or safety of students, staff or others in the school. Any such individual shall be directed to leave the school premises immediately and law enforcement authorities may be called if necessary.

Board Member Visits

Board members are encouraged to visit the schools. Individual Board members are required to arrange visits to the schools in advance by contacting the *[identify the appropriate position(s) – e.g., District Administrator and the building principal]*, except in situations where (1) the Board has specifically approved or directed the visit; or (2) the Board member is visiting a school in his/her capacity as a parent of a student in the school, in which case the request will be treated in the same manner as other parent requests. Visits by Board members shall be regarded as informal expressions of interest in the schools visited and not as inspections or visits for supervisory purposes. If an individual Board member and the administration are unable to address a request for a school visit to their mutual satisfaction, the individual Board member may ask the Board to evaluate his/her request.

Legal Reference

Wisconsin Statutes

Section 118.07(4)	[school safety plans]
Section 120.12(1)	[school board duty; care, control and management of school district property]
Section 120.13(35)	[school board power; authority to set rules governing individuals' presence in school buildings]
Section 121.02(1)(i)	[school district standard; provide safe and healthful facilities]
Section 301.475	[sex offender's presence on school premises; school administrator notification required]