



Dear Families and Community Members:

For those of you I have not yet met, I just started my first year as the Superintendent of the Berlin Area School District. I am sincerely impressed with this community, the warmth that a small town brings, and a long history of support for our schools.

Our mission statement is to serve our community through a commitment to children by supporting them, challenging them, and preparing them for their futures. I ask parents and members of our school community to join me in shouldering this responsibility.

To help accomplish this goal, we need to establish our long-term plans, which must reflect the priorities of taxpayers. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey.

Your feedback is kept confidential. All survey data is returned to School Perceptions, an independent education research firm. The survey results will be shared with the Board of Education in December and will be available on the District's website.

TAKE THE SURVEY IN ONE OF TWO WAYS

Option 1: To reduce mailing expenses, please go online –

Go to the survey website:

www.Feedback2000.com

Enter your survey code:



Option 2: By paper – If you do not have internet access, please return the survey to any school office, or mail it to School Perceptions, PO Box 607, Slinger, WI 53086.

To obtain additional surveys for other adults in your household or to receive the survey in a different language please contact the District Office at 920-361-2004.

Para realizar la encuesta en español, vaya a www.Feedback2000.com, ingrese el código de arriba, luego haga clic en el enlace que se encuentra en la esquina superior derecha.

Please complete the survey before December 5.

I look forward to using these results to help finalize our long-term plans as we strive to provide a high-quality education for all of our students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Emmett Durtschi
Superintendent
Berlin Area School District

Today's Learners. Tomorrow's Leaders.

Local Funding Sources

There are two types of referendums school districts use to request additional funding.

A **capital referendum** asks voters to approve issuing debt (taking out a loan) to pay for major building projects, such as renovations or new construction. ***Berlin Area voters supported this type of referendum to build the high school in 1993 and to build the middle school in 2013.***

An **operational referendum** asks voters to approve funding above the annual revenue limit to maintain class sizes, programs, and student services. Funds secured are used within the year they are received. ***The Berlin Area School District has never pursued this type of referendum.*** In the last 20 years, more than 300 districts across the state (approximately 73%) have pursued this type of referendum.

Operational Challenges

There are several financial challenges facing the Berlin Area School District.

- Rural school districts like ours lack predictable, sustainable funding.
- For the past two years, we have not received any additional state funding on a per-student basis.
- We received federal ESSER funding (COVID-19 relief) that helped us balance recent budgets. However, this funding is ending.

Without any increase in state funding, the budget deficit will grow to more than \$14 million over the next five years. Therefore, the Board of Education is asking our community to consider an operational referendum. **If approved, the money would be used to address our most pressing needs:**

- ✓ Recruiting/Retaining Quality Staff: This has become a significant challenge due to the statewide teacher and support staff shortages.
- ✓ Paying for increasing costs: This includes utilities, insurance, transportation, fuel, and technology.
- ✓ Supporting students: Addressing learning gaps and mental health needs.

The District has been able to maintain a consistent property tax mill rate over the past five years. This practice has allowed us to pay debt early and reduce interest expenses.

<p>Would you support a \$2.5 million operational referendum to maintain most programs and services for each of the next five years?</p> <p><i>Approval <u>would not</u> increase the property tax mill rate over the current level.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Definitely yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Probably yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Undecided</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Probably no</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Definitely no</p>
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Comments/suggestions/questions:

Facility Planning: Highest Priority Projects

Earlier this spring, Performance Services conducted a thorough assessment at each school to evaluate the educational adequacy and condition of the major building systems. Based on this study, the District developed a plan to address the **highest priority needs**.

Clay Lamberton Elementary is our oldest school, built in 1962.

- ✓ Replace the heating system, which is inefficient and requires ongoing costly repairs.
- ✓ Add air conditioning to improve air quality and create a better learning environment.
- ✓ Rebuild playground structures to improve safety and accessibility.
- ✓ Renovate restrooms to reduce maintenance costs and improve accessibility.
- ✓ Remodel/expand the cafeteria to reduce the number of lunch periods.
- ✓ Create a large-group area for instruction and meetings.
- ✓ Replace worn-out classroom and hallway flooring.

District-wide

- ✓ Reconfigure traffic flow to better separate pedestrians and vehicles to improve safety.
- ✓ Replace the high school auditorium's lighting and sound systems that are failing.
- ✓ Upgrade security camera systems to improve student safety.
- ✓ Replace high school classroom and hallway flooring where needed.

Berlin area voters would need to support a capital referendum to pay for these projects. This type of referendum allows a district to issue debt (i.e., take out a loan) and would be financed over 20 years.

Would you support a \$20 million referendum to pay for the highest priority projects as described above?

Approval would result in an estimated tax increase of \$40 per year for each \$100,000 of property value over the current level.

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Undecided
- Probably no
- Definitely no

Comments/questions/suggestions:

Facility Planning: Additional Projects

In addition to the **highest priority projects** identified on the previous page, the facilities referendum could be expanded to:

- ✓ Remodel the elementary/high school libraries and create student collaboration areas.
- ✓ Replace the high school's heating and cooling equipment with more energy-efficient units.
- ✓ Repair or replace the oldest roofing sections, windows, and doors across the District as needed.
- ✓ Upgrade electrical and data network/wiring across the District to improve reliability.
- ✓ Replace remaining fluorescent lighting with energy-efficient LEDs at the high school.
- ✓ Install LED lights at the athletic fields.
- ✓ Replace the elevator at the elementary school.
- ✓ Create exterior public access to the fitness center at the middle school.

Would you support a referendum for a total of \$30 million to pay for the additional projects as described above AND the highest priority projects as described on the previous page?

Approval for both projects would result in an estimated tax increase of \$60 per year for each \$100,000 of property value over the current level.

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Undecided
- Probably no
- Definitely no

Comments/questions/suggestions:

Respondent Information

What is your age? 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

Is your primary residence in the Berlin Area School District? Yes No Not sure

In which municipality do you live?

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Berlin | <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Berlin | <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Rushford | <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Aurora |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Poy Sippi | <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Bloomfield | <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Saxeville | <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Leon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Warren | <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Marion | <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Brooklyn | <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Seneca |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of St. Marie | <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Nepeuskun | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do not live in the District | | | |

Are you an employee of the Berlin Area School District? Yes No

Do you have children attending a school in the District? Yes No

Please mark ALL OTHER relationships you have with the Berlin Area School District:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent of a child younger than elementary school age | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent of a Berlin graduate(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent of a Berlin student(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Berlin graduate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer at a Berlin school | |

How do you like to receive school/District information? (Mark all that apply.)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> School/District websites | <input type="checkbox"/> School/District newsletters | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone notifications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Emails | <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter/Facebook |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Berlin Journal</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> TV/radio | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

Thank you for your participation! We sincerely value your time and input.

Berlin Area School District
295 E. Marquette Street
Berlin, WI 54923

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**Today's Learners.
Tomorrow's Leaders.**

**IMPORTANT SCHOOL
SURVEY ENCLOSED**

***Please complete this
survey before December 5.***

**If you have questions, please visit
www.berlin.k12.wi.us**

*This publication was produced for the residents of the **Berlin Area School District**. Due to the overlap of postal routes, residents from neighboring school districts may receive this publication. Given the limitations of bulk mailing, this overlap was difficult to eliminate without significant cost. Thank you for your understanding.*