



# Inside Unified

Your Guide to the Racine Unified School District

Spring 2011, Special Referendum Issue

## Referendum<sup>2011</sup>

### At A Glance

#### Three Questions

1. \$83.5 million building referendum for construction of five new (replacement) elementary schools and renovation and additions to five existing elementary schools
2. Operating funds through 2018 that start at \$2.5 million and increase to \$6 million in 2013 to maintain programs and add teachers to lower class size in the primary grades
3. Renewal of fund balance referendum of \$1 million per year for 10 years to improve the District's financial stability

#### Taxpayer Investment

Approximately \$116 for a \$100,000 home or \$9.67/month

#### Expected Results

- Five new schools; five remodeled schools
- 90 percent of third graders reading at grade level or advanced by 2016
- All students graduating career and/or college ready
- Smaller elementary class sizes
- School buildings that instill pride
- 300 new jobs for local tradespeople

#### Voting Information

Find out where you vote and how to register at [www.racineco.com/voting](http://www.racineco.com/voting).

#### More Information

Visit [www.racine.k12.wi.us](http://www.racine.k12.wi.us) or e-mail [referendum@racine.k12.wi.us](mailto:referendum@racine.k12.wi.us).

**Election Day is Tuesday, April 5!**

## A Message From the Superintendent

I am proud to be the superintendent of the Racine Unified School District. Because we have in place the powerful North Star Vision – that all students will graduate career and/or college ready – and are committed to working together to achieve this vision, I truly believe we are the best urban district in Wisconsin.

We have started to make progress toward the North Star. We have seen improvements in student achievement on state tests, we are improving the way staff work together, we are partnering with the community and most importantly, we are raising the bar for all students with the reduction of basic classes and expanded IB and AP curriculum. We are also raising the bar for ourselves – challenging our staff to take on leadership roles, collaborate and develop Master Teacher and Master Principal programs.

Right now, Racine Unified is at a crossroads. The referendum that will be on the ballot on April 5 would provide support for the efforts we are already making and accelerate progress. It would provide new schools of which our students, staff and community could be proud. It would provide more resources to support smaller class sizes of 15 to 1 at the early childhood, kindergarten and first-grade levels. It would allow us to provide secondary-level students more choice and opportunity.

Ultimately, the future of Racine's economy is directly tied to the quality of our schools. As we continue to see improved student achievement, we will see more students well-prepared to enter the workforce and make a positive contribution to Racine. We'll see businesses choosing to stay in our city and we'll attract new ones. Racine will also gain new jobs (more than 300 construction jobs from the referendum projects alone).

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve as superintendent for Racine Unified and I am committed to continuing the progress to improve education for all students.

Sincerely,

*Dr. James Shaw*  
Superintendent of Schools



“Ultimately, the future of Racine's economy is directly tied to the quality of our schools. As we continue to see improved student achievement, we will see more students make a positive contribution to the community.”

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Why is this referendum needed?

- To accelerate the success Racine Unified has achieved in improving student performance over the past few years, we must reinvest in our School District now.
- The future of Racine's economy is directly tied to the quality of its schools.
- To keep local businesses successful and attract new companies and jobs, we must graduate students who are well-prepared to enter the workforce and contribute to society.
- Communities with strong schools have increased property values.

## What results can we expect?

- 90 percent of third graders reading at grade level or advanced by 2016
- Smaller elementary class sizes
- New and updated school buildings that instill pride in our students, staff and community
- All students career and/or college ready at graduation
- More than 300 new jobs for local tradespeople

## What are the questions?

- \$83.5 million building referendum for construction of five new (replacement) elementary schools and renovation and additions to five existing elementary schools
- Operating funds starting at \$2.5 million for the 2011-2013 school years, increasing to \$6 million beginning in the 2013-2014 school year and ending in 2018
- Renewal of fund balance referendum of \$1 million per year for 10 years, beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, to improve District's financial stability

## What is the taxpayer investment?

See the District website at [www.racine.k12.wi.us](http://www.racine.k12.wi.us) for a property tax calculator.

Mill Rate Impact per \$1,000 of Property Value		\$1.16
Home Value	Cost Per Year	Cost Per Month
\$75,000	\$87	\$7.25
\$100,000	\$116	\$9.67
\$125,000	\$145	\$12.08
\$150,000	\$174	\$14.50
\$175,000	\$203	\$16.92
\$200,000	\$232	\$19.33
\$250,000	\$290	\$24.17
\$300,000	\$348	\$29.00

## Why address elementaries first?

- When considering construction costs, it is more economical to start with elementary schools.
- Creating elementary space will free up the Olympia Brown site for use as a secondary school in Phase II.

## What schools will be replaced?

Bull Fine Arts, Knapp, Olympia Brown, Roosevelt and Wind Point Elementary Schools

## What schools will be remodeled?

Jerstad-Agerholm, Mitchell, North Park, Schulte and West Ridge Elementary Schools

## What is the importance of small class sizes?

Small class sizes allow for individualized instruction. Along with quality teachers, they provide a very powerful educational model. The April 2011 referendum would allow for targeted class sizes of 15:1 at the kindergarten and first-grade levels.

## How was the community involved in developing a long-term plan?

A committee of more than 70 community members (including business, labor and educational leaders) was integral in developing a three-phase, long-term reinvesting plan over the past three years.

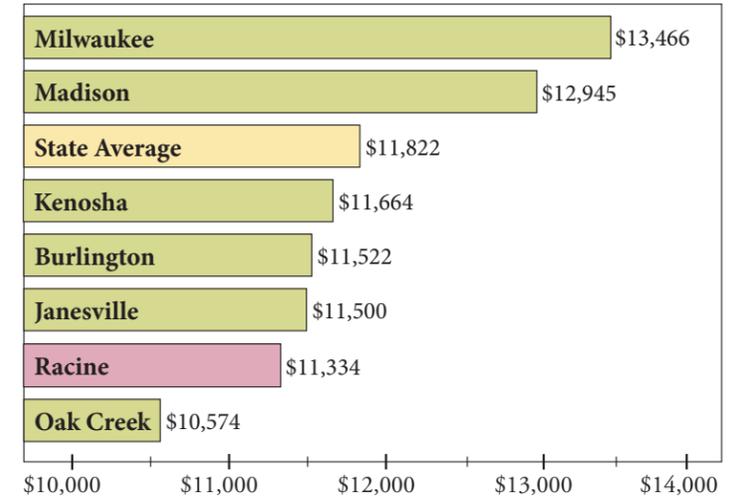
## What are the phases of the long-term plan?

- Phase I** (April 2011 referendum): Five elementary schools remodeled, five replaced – to create educational flexibility and space for smaller class sizes
- Phase II** (future referendum): Disperse enrollment at secondary level by offering more choice and alternative sites, allowing more educational programs to have career and college focus
- Phase III** (future referendum): Address additional school facilities in need of renovation or replacement

The District will hold itself accountable for achieving results after Phase I is implemented and prior to asking the community to support any additional referendums.

## How does RUSD's spending compare to other districts?

When comparing the **total educational cost spent per student per year** to districts in similar areas and with similar demographics, RUSD ranks among the lowest. Data is for the 2008-2009 school year, the most recent data available from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

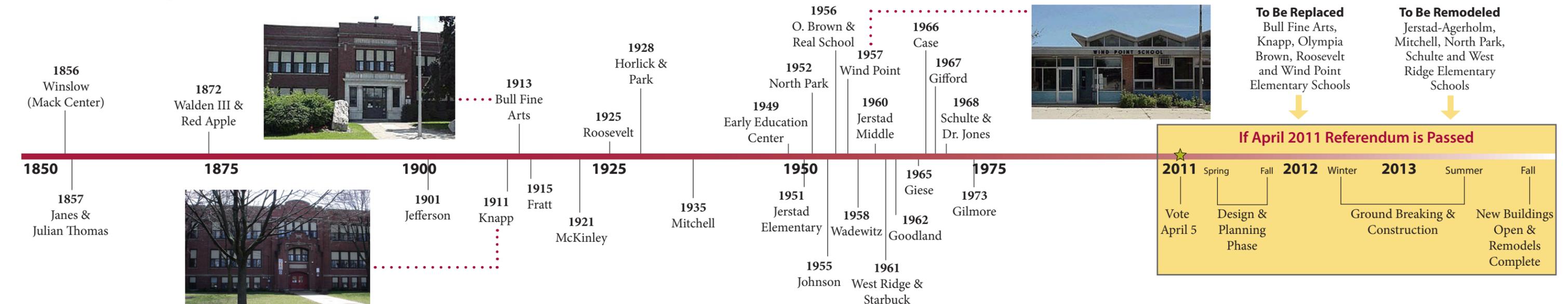


Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction school finance data warehouse

*"This year I think we have some very, very, very good indicators of progress. The fruits of your efforts are really beginning to pay off."*

- Robert Henken, Public Policy Forum Inc. President, October 2010

# RUSD Building History





**RACINE UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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www.racine.k12.wi.us • 262-635-5600

**Educate Every Student to Succeed**

Non-Profit Org.  
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## RAMAC Excellence in Education Award Winners

**Teacher of the Year** Walden III High School teacher **Tom Rutkowski** is the founder of Walden's Green School Initiative, a program and student group dedicated to learning about and spreading green living. Through this effort, he helped establish a rain garden and solar panel system at the school, which helps students develop skills in sustainability, project monitoring and presenting.

**Program of the Year**  
**Fathers Being Involved (FBI)**, a program that places male adult role models in Johnson Elementary School, improves the school environment and cuts down on disciplinary problems. FBI encourages dads and other men clad in their FBI T-shirts to volunteer each week to walk halls, chat with students and get involved in school activities.



A Fathers Being Involved (FBI) volunteer poses for a picture with a student at S.C. Johnson Elementary School.

**Administrator of the Year**  
**Gilmore Middle School**

**Principal Kevin Brown** was named administrator of the year for his work leading the school in increased technology use and higher test scores. Brown has been a key part of obtaining more technology resources for Gilmore and also helped start a Saturday program to help students perform better on state tests.

### Mark Your Calendar!

**Referendum Vote** April 5

**Spring Recess** April 22-29

**Two-Hour Early Releases** March 18 & May 13

**Prom** May 21

**Memorial Day (No School)** May 30

**Janes Year Round Three-Hour Early Release** June 3

**Graduation** June 3 (REAL, Walden) & June 5 (Case, Horlick, Park)

**Last Day of School** June 10\*

**Summer School** June 20 - July 28\*

\*Subject to change

### We Want Your Feedback!

Racine Unified is conducting a survey for all parents and community members. Your feedback will help us improve communication and school operations. Surveys will be sent out via e-mail. To receive a survey, sign up on the website: [www.racine.k12.wi.us](http://www.racine.k12.wi.us).

## Beacons of Pride

### 2009-2010 & 2010-2011

- RUSD had **44** 2010 AP Scholars
- RUSD had **3** 2011 National Merit Finalists
- **20** out of **21** elementary schools made Adequate Yearly Progress
- 6th graders grew **8** percentage points in math
- 3rd graders increased **5** percentage points in reading proficiency
- **14** schools were at or above the state writing average
- **2** high schoolers received Wisconsin regional Scholastic Art Awards
- McKinley Middle School students had their **artwork on display** at the Milwaukee Art Museum
- Starbuck Middle School students **swept** the National Fluid Power Association Competition

## Get More District News

- **Website** [www.racine.k12.wi.us](http://www.racine.k12.wi.us)
- **Cable Access Channel 20**
- **e-Inside Unified** Weekly e-newsletter; sign up on our website.
- **Facebook** Friend Racine Unified Schools
- **Twitter** Follow Racine Unified
- **School Newsletters**
- **Unified News Today** News program available on Channel 20 and District website
- **Emergency Notifications** Register your e-mail address on our website.
- **Share Your School's Good News** Click the link on our website.