PATRIOT VISION
PARTNERING FOR OUR STUDENTS

Investing in Students. Lowering Local School Property Taxes.

2026 OPERATING LEVY REFERENDUM: VOTE ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 3

This November, voters in the Pequot Lakes Public School District will decide on an operating levy that will bring new state dollars home for our students — and lower local school property taxes.

At Pequot Lakes Public Schools, we're creating a safe, supportive place for students to connect, learn and thrive. For years, our community has stepped up for our schools – including the approval of a referendum last year to improve safety and security and strengthen career, technology and trades education.

On Tuesday, November 3, district voters will consider a new opportunity to invest in students while benefiting local taxpayers.

A NEW STATE PROGRAM THAT WOULD HELP PEQUOT LAKES SCHOOLS

Compared to other Minnesota school districts, Pequot Lakes Public Schools receives less state funding on a per-student basis. The basic aid formula is the same for every district, but our students don't receive as much support from aid programs tied to poverty levels, special education needs and other factors.

On top of that, more than half the property in our district is seasonal recreational (cabins) property, which is exempt from some local education taxes, leaving homes and businesses to carry a larger tax burden. Historically, that's made it harder to pass an operating levy referendum to fund day-to-day school needs.

OUR OPPORTUNITY: BENEFITING STUDENTS AND TAXPAYERS

After decades of frustration for school districts in Lakes Country, area legislators convinced their colleagues to pass the **Seasonal Recreation Tax Base Replacement Aid** program. Here is how it works:

- Any district with more than 15% seasonal recreation property qualifies (Pequot Lakes Schools is over 50%).
- The state aid matches funds raised locally through a voter-approved operating levy, based on how much seasonal recreation property the district has (our district would receive the maximum state match of 50%).

If approved by voters, the operating levy would generate $500,000 annually in stable school funding to support the day-to-day services our students need, including:

- Reading and math help, so students don't fall behind
- Career, technology and trades education, robotics and band
- Current classroom instruction, staff and extracurricular programs

The proposed operating levy would <u>also</u> save $600,000 a year for district property taxpayers.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR TAXPAYERS

With half of this revenue coming from state aid, **the school board voted to reduce existing local levies** – so property owners in our district will see their school property taxes go down if the referendum passes.

PROPERTY TYPE	PROPERTY VALUE	ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX DECREASE
Residential homestead	$200,000	-$36
	$400,000	-$72
	$800,000	-$143
Commercial - Industrial	$200,000	-$36
	$400,000	-$72
	$800,000	-$143

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Pequot Lakes School District voters will make the final decision on or before Tuesday, November 3.

Make a plan to vote:

- Early voting begins Friday, September 18, 2026
- Election Day is Tuesday, November 3, 2026
- Find polling locations, early voting details and absentee voting instructions at patriot-vision.org/vote

LEARN MORE: PATRIOT-VISION.ORG

SCAN ME

Explore our website to learn more about the plan, ask questions and stay involved.

WAIT, ARE YOU SAYING CABIN OWNERS DON'T PAY SOME TAXES?

In 2001, the Minnesota Legislature exempted cabin owners from some taxes used to fund local schools. But that money didn't stay local – it became a new statewide property tax that cabin and business owners still pay to support state programs instead of local education. The new Seasonal Recreation Tax Base Replacement Aid program is about bringing that money back home.

If voters approve the November referendum, state aid to Pequot Lakes Public Schools will increase by more than $500,000.

HAS THE STATE EVER DONE THIS BEFORE?

Yes. There are dozens of state funding programs targeted to specific school districts based on size, wealth, enrollment trends, transportation costs and other characteristics.

For example, the Minnesota Legislature passed the Ag2School credit program in 2017, providing a 70% automatic tax credit on farmland for bonds used for school construction and repair.

Prepared and paid for by Pequot Lakes Public Schools, 30805 Olson Street, Pequot Lakes, MN 56472.
This publication is not circulated on behalf of any candidate or ballot questions.