



LUMBERJACK LEDGER

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LADYSMITH

Newsletter

Congratulations Class of 2026



Presenting the School District of Ladysmith Class of 2026

Front row (l to r): Elisa Kramer, Emmalyn Golden, Christina Wohld, Keturah Frederick, Mya Gago, Hayden Burmeister, Hailey Wilmot, Kaena Farris, Veronica Prasnick, Lyra Moffitt, Gage Johnson; 2nd row: Michael Patrick, Jordan Sandlin, Bonita Tuttle, Gracie Nelson, Deana Nichols, Isaac Mull, Kiriah Schuelke, Abigail Pavlik, Audrey Martin, Kylie Keach, Samantha Nagel; 3rd row: Abigail Fye, Ember Miller, Katie Vollendorf, Megan DeWitt, Brooklyn Smith, Sydney Schneider, Marika Gago, Willow Peterson, Kiara Howard, Leigh-Anna Schultz; 4th row: Maggie Vandoorn, Erika White, Kaelynn Balciar, Willow Zehner, Lily Donohue, Tatum Shilts, Keira Hoyt, Ezekiel Rapp, Simon Cole, Gavin Boehmer; 5th row: Wyatt Bosteder, Gavin Sweet, Coy Engel, Cole Strop, Axle Smith, Drayke Howard, Gabe Gerber, Cutler Roscoe, Brody Burmeister; Back row: Austin Jensen, Emil Baleski, Holden Heath, Jasper Kempen, Aiden Mataczynski, Luke Baker, Carter Soltis, Owen Stibak, and Ashton Clark

"Once a Lumberjack, Always a Lumberjack!"

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Strong Schools, Strong Community: Where Ladysmith Stands

As we look ahead, I want to take a few minutes to share where our district stands today, what we are proud of, and the important decisions on the horizon.

Community Survey Results

This past spring, we invited you to share your thoughts through a community survey surrounding a possible operational referendum. Many of you took the time to respond, and I want to thank you for that.

That input is not sitting on a shelf. It is directly shaping the conversations your school board are having right now about the future of our schools and how we pay for them. A summary of the survey is included in this newsletter. I encourage you to read through the information.

An Operational Referendum In the Near Future

The school district will be pursuing an operational referendum this fall. I know that word can raise questions, so let me explain plainly what it means and why we are considering it.

In Wisconsin, the state sets strict limits on how much money a school district can raise to run its day-to-day operations, things like staffing, programs, heat, transportation, and classroom supplies. These limits do not always keep pace with rising costs. To bridge that gap, districts ask their communities for permission, through a referendum, to exceed those state limits for a set period of time.

Our community approved both a capital and operational referendum back in 2022. The capital referendum was for much needed facility projects and maintenance. The operational referendum is set to expire. Without action, our district faces a projected budget shortfall that would force difficult decisions about the programs and services our students rely on. We have made significant budget cuts over the past two years, but the operational dollars are still needed. We know that this is a big ask, but necessary to continue with the progress we are making.

Real Progress in the Classroom

Even as we navigate these financial realities, I am proud to report that our students and staff are doing excellent work. We are seeing real, measurable progress in our classrooms. Our teachers are focused on the fundamentals, using strong instructional practices and meaningful data to make sure every child is growing.

This progress does not happen by accident. It is the result of dedicated educators, engaged families, and students who show up ready to learn. It is exactly the kind of momentum a strong school district is built



on, and it is worth protecting.

Preparing Students to Be Future Ready

The world our students are growing into is changing faster than ever. Many of them will work in careers that do not yet exist, using tools and technologies still being invented. Our job is to make sure they are ready, not just for the next grade or the next test, but for a future none of us can fully predict. That means building adaptable, curious learners who can think critically, solve problems, and keep learning long after they leave us.

To do that, we are sharpening our focus on academic and career planning that starts early and grows with each student. Beginning in our youngest grades and continuing through high school, students will increasingly explore their interests, discover their strengths, and connect what they learn in the classroom to real possibilities for their lives.

The goal is for every Lumberjack to graduate with a plan, the skills to pursue it, and the confidence to adapt when the path changes.

Where it makes sense, we want to do this in partnership with neighboring districts and regional employers, so that a rural district like ours can offer experiences that rival

anything our students would find anywhere else.

When our community invests in our students, our students are far better prepared to invest right back into our community.

Our Mission and the Partnership

Our mission is simple, but powerful: to ensure ALL students have the opportunity to reach their dreams while making a positive impact on the world. That work does not happen in isolation. It happens because of strong partnerships between our schools, our families, and our broader community. If we are going to sustain all that is good and great in our programming at Ladysmith, we must continue to team up and support one another. This newsletter highlights many of those partnerships and how we can work together.

Thank you for your continued partnership, your honest feedback, and your investment in our students. I look forward to the conversations ahead and to the work we will continue to do together.

Partners in the Future,

Jason LeMay
Jason LeMay, PhD

LUMBERJACK HIGHLIGHTS

High School students and staff make Day of Service a success across the community

Our high school students rolled up their sleeves and spread out across town for this year's annual Community Service Day, proving once again that giving back is at the heart of who we are.

A few highlights: At the Farmer's Market Gardens, students worked hard to prepare the beds for the busy summer season ahead. Another group headed to Southside Park, where they installed eight brand new benches that visitors will enjoy for years to come. A group took to the roadways, picking up trash along the Hunter Stop Memorial Highway between the high school and Leonard Lane to keep our community looking clean and bright. Another helped worked at the Visitor's Center.



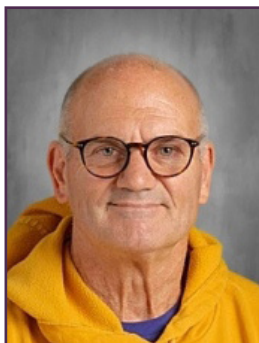
From garden beds to park benches to roadside cleanup, our students showed real heart and hustle all over Ladysmith. Community Service Day is one of the many ways our district loves to give back to the community that supports us so generously throughout the year. A huge thank you to our students, staff, and the entire Ladysmith community for making this day such a success.



Congratulations to our Retirees!



TAMMY CASE
Vision Teacher
10 years



JEFF CLOSS
SPED Bus Driver
5.5 years



SHELLY HAYDEN
Food Service Director
26 years



A MASSIVE thank you to Rusk County Deputy Mark Ohmstead for this absolutely incredible hand-carved Lumberjack Flag! This masterpiece is now proudly displayed at the entrance to our high school gym, greeting every Lumberjack who walks through those doors.

*Our Class of 2026 retirees comprise **41.5 years** of loyal service and commitment to the School District of Ladysmith students, staff, and community. Thank you!*

LUMBERJACK HIGHLIGHTS

Middle School earns state recognition for academic achievement, student growth

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has named Ladysmith Middle School a 2024–25 Wisconsin School of Recognition, a statewide honor that highlights the school's dedication to student growth and achievement.

Ladysmith Middle School earned the award in the **High Impact School** category, one of three categories in the program. High Impact Schools serve a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students and post above-average achievement when compared to similarly situated schools. The distinction is based on a rigorous set of criteria, including academic performance, measurable progress in student growth, and success in narrowing achievement gaps, particularly among students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. To be eligible, schools must also stay above the bottom 20% statewide for both chronic ab-

senteeism and achievement and meet or exceed 95% test participation across all students.

This year, the honor was a select one. Statewide, 95 schools earned Schools of Recognition honors for 2024–25, with 71 named in the High Impact category. Ladysmith Middle School stands among them, a reflection of what our students and staff accomplish together every day.

"We are incredibly proud of our students and staff for their commitment to excellence and growth for all students," said Kirk Yudes, principal at Ladysmith Middle School. "This recognition reflects the hard work and support of our entire school community, including educators, families, and students."

The Schools of Recognition program, first launched in 2003, honors Title I schools for making significant strides in student growth and achievement. Title I schools receive federal funding to support large numbers or high percent-

ages of economically disadvantaged students. The recognition celebrates the dedication of students, families, educators, and staff in ensuring that every student is prepared for college, career, and lifelong success. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

For Ladysmith, the award is more than a plaque on the wall. It is evidence that a small, rural district can deliver results that rival schools of any size, and that the investments our community makes in its students pay off in measurable ways. It is exactly the kind of outcome our families, taxpayers, and staff work hard to make possible.

To learn more about the Schools of Recognition program and view the full list of honorees, visit the DPI website:

<https://dpi.wi.gov/schools-of-recognition>

Grants provide educational opportunities for students

The Ladysmith Educational Enrichment Fund (LEEF) is a perpetual fund created to promote, support, and enrich quality educational opportunities for students across the School District of Ladysmith, spanning the fine arts, language arts, social studies, math, science, and more. Overseen by a volunteer board of directors and managed through the Eau Claire Community Foundation, LEEF turns the generosity of alumni, families, and community members into hands-on learning experiences for our students.

We're proud to share the six projects funded in the 2026 Spring LEEF grant cycle, totaling nearly \$10,000 in enrichment for Lumberjack students from the elementary grades through high school.



One LEEF project was a butterfly garden that was recently completed at LES.

Ladysmith Education Enrichment Foundation (LEEF)

SUMMARY OF FUNDED 2026 SPRING GRANTS

#1 LES BUTTERFLY GARDEN Jody Schott \$2,463.36 Fund established a new butterfly garden. In Plant 33 x 11 foot section on elementary milkweed and perennial garden. Then thereto priorit schedu + students now observe the full lifecycle.	#2 LES "UNDER THE SEA" FAMILY NIGHT Arrin Richter \$750.00 Successfully hosted an interactive standards-based event in Arrin Richters lead teachers lead-lewin Math, Science, content area stations, and fiance. Social Studies, event at LES.
#3 LES 5th GRADE SCIENCE MUSEUM TRIP Taylor Hartzell \$2,230.00 Purchase tickets and provide busing for 5th graders. Trip to the Science Museum of Minnesota.	#4 LMHS "A FLOURISHING FISH TANK" Kayla Dolezel \$1,155.42 Purchase items to establish functioning WI freshwater fish tank. Use aquarium to study how fish survive and interact with their environment.
#5 LMHS "SKILLS COMPETITION" Kyle Jeffress \$2,000.00 Opportunity for grades 9-12 to attend. 2026 Wisconsin SkillsUSA State Conference.	#6 LMHS "TWINS BASEBALL GAME / CAREER DAY" Tim Callow \$1,416.00 Take students to Minnesota Twins Game/Career Day. Make a connection to Statistics class.

TOTAL FUNDS UTILIZED FOR SPRING 2026 GRANTS: \$10,014.78
Grant execution and results approved by the LEEF Board of Directors.

LUMBERJACK HIGHLIGHTS



STEM fun in Kindergarten! - Mrs. Swanson's kindergarten class was fortunate enough to have a visit from Ms. Brown from CESA 10, who organized a hands-on STEM activity for our students! Their assignment? Build a LEGO maze that a marble could navigate through! Students were challenged to design walls that would control the marble's momentum, all while working on their fine motor skills, planning, and visualization.



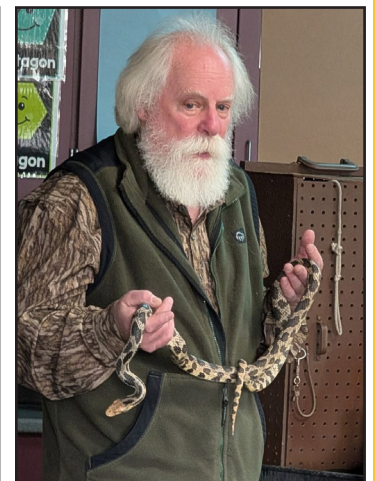
EGG-cellent time! - Our 1st grade was chirping with excitement when 11 baby chicks hatched! Over the course of numerous weeks, students eagerly tracked their progress, learning all about the chick life cycle.



PBIS Chalkfest Celebration was a hit! - In April, LES had their PBIS Chalkfest Celebration, and it was AMAZING! With beautiful weather, fun music, and good times all around, students had a blast showing their creativity on the pavement! PBIS celebrations are all about recognizing students for making positive choices, and Chalkfest was the perfect way to celebrate! Great job, Lumberjacks!



LES Made a Real "Splash" at Family Engagement Night! - With an Under the Sea theme, families enjoyed a night filled with art projects, math games, literacy activities, a book fair, and an exciting Glow Show! From hands-on learning to glowing fun, the evening was a huge success!



Critter Fun! - Third graders learned about plant and animal adaptations with Chris Cold and his amazing animal helpers! Thank you, Chris, for bringing learning to life and giving our students a great experience!

LUMBERJACK HIGHLIGHTS



Boys Golf Competes at State Competition

The Ladysmith boys golf team capped off an outstanding season by qualifying for the WIAA Division 3 State Championship, held June 8–9 at University Ridge Golf Course in Madison. It marked the sixth time in program history that the Lumberjacks have reached the state tournament as a team.

Competing were Simon Cole, Gavyn Boehmer, Tanner Davis, Easton DeWitt and Jack Boehmer.

Reaching state is no small feat for a program our size, and this season's success is a credit to the hard work of every golfer, the leadership of the coaching staff, and the families who supported them along the way.



Students Shine at State Middle School Track Meet

Keira Stanger and Brady Posewitz represented Ladysmith at the Wisconsin State Middle School Track Meet in Waupun on May 23.

The meet brings together the state's top middle school athletes, with events divided by grade level and gender only, meaning our Lumberjacks competed against schools of every size.

Keira finished 12th in the 100m hurdles with a time of 18.99 seconds, while Brady placed 6th in shot put with a personal record throw of 43'9.5", earning himself a medal.



Six Ladysmith Senior athletes sign letters of intent to compete at the college level

Congratulations to our student athletes on signing their National Letters of Intent to continue their athletic careers next year at the collegiate level. Pictured l to r: Hailey Wilmot (University of Wisconsin–Stout, Track & Field), Mya Gago (University of Wisconsin–Stout, Track & Field), Marika Gago (University of Wisconsin–La Crosse, Track & Field), Ashton Clark (University of Wisconsin–Madison, Track & Field), Lily Donohue (University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, Dance), and Kaelyn Balciar (Milwaukee School of Engineering, Wrestling and Track & Field).

Lumberjills Win 2026 Division 3 State Track and Field Championship

History was made in La Crosse! The Ladysmith Lumberjills are the 2026 Division 3 State Champions in Track and Field.

It was a historic day at UW-La Crosse, filled with podium finishes, state medals, and a flurry of new school records. From start to finish, our athletes competed against the best in the state and rose to the top. Here are the highlights from our state championship squad.

Ashton Clark earned the title of Double State Champion once again. Ashton repeated as the state champion in both the Long Jump, shattering the school record with a massive leap of 22- 11.50, and the High Jump, clearing an incredible 6-06.00.

Hailey Wilmot captured the State Title in the Pole Vault, clearing 11-09.00 to set a brand new school record.

Her sister Kayla Wilmot placed 8th in the state by clearing 10-00.00, and Mya Gago placed 15th after clearing 9.00.00.

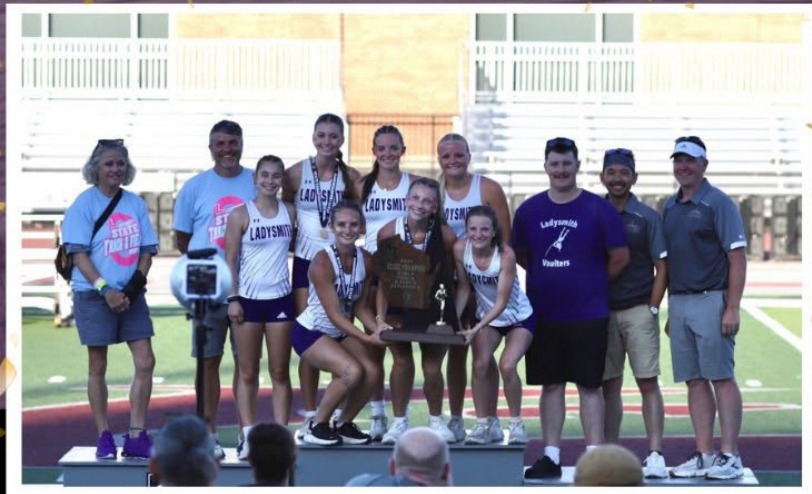
Lyla Gago is your State Champion in the Long Jump. The freshman crushed it, flying 18-11.75 to claim the top spot on the podium. Her sister Marika Gago made it a family affair, taking a phenomenal 3rd place in the Long Jump with a massive leap of 18-5.75.

Marika Gago also put on a clinic on the track. She took 3rd in the 400 meter with a blazing, school record time of 56.16, and added a 7th place finish in the 200 meter, clocking another school record at 24.24.

The 4x100 meter Relay Team of Marika Gago, Mya Gago, Hailey Wilmot, and Kayla Wilmot fought hard against the best in the state to place 9th with a time of 51.04.

The 4x200 meter Relay Team of Lyla Gago, Kayla Wilmot, Kara Prohaska, and Bralin Neary Ludzack put together a phenomenal race, placing 10th in the state with a time of 1.47.20.

Every single point mattered, and these Lumberjacks and Lumberjills left it all out on the track and in the field. Please join us in congratulating our athletes and coaches on bringing home the state titles!



2026 GIRLS TRACK & FIELD DIVISION 3

STATE CHAMPIONS

#GOLADYSMITH



Standing Proud - Ashton Clark earned the title of Double State Champion once again. Ashton repeated as the state champion in both the Long Jump, shattering the school record with a massive leap of 22-11.50, and the High Jump, clearing an incredible 6-06.00.

LUMBERJACK HIGHLIGHTS

Summer Learning Keeps Our Lumberjacks Growing

Our Summer school program offers students the chance to keep learning, growing, and connecting during the summer break.

Whether it's reinforcing core skills in reading and math, exploring hands-on enrichment activities, or getting a head start on the year ahead, our summer programming is designed to keep our Lumberjacks and Lumberjills engaged in a fun, supportive environment.

Staff work to make these three weeks both meaningful and memorable, blending academic support with opportunities for creativity, friendship, and discovery.

It's all part of our commitment to making sure



Ms. Hartzell's Mind & Body Boost summer school students enjoyed painting rocks, creating yogurt parfaits and trail mix snacks, and learning different ways to manage stress and emotions. Through hands-on activities and poster projects, students explored how healthy choices can positively impact their physical and mental well-being.

every student has the resources and encouragement they need to thrive year-round.

Our summer programming also includes swimming lessons, strength and conditioning, and sports camps. It's something for everyone.



In Ms. Opachan's Celebrate Every Day class, there's always a reason to celebrate! On National Eat Your Vegetables Day, what better way to mark the occasion than by planting some seeds of our own?



Ms. Moore's Summer School Reading & Math Games sessions have been full of fun, discovery, and adventure! Students are proving that summer learning can be a blast and it keeps that curiosity soaring all summer long!

LHS Music Department Travels to New Orleans During Spring Break

This spring, students in the LHS Music Department embarked on an unforgettable trip to New Orleans, Louisiana, from March 28 to April 2.

After a memorable 50 hour coach bus journey, students immersed themselves in the rich musical and cultural heritage of the Crescent City.

Highlights included band and choir clinics at Loyola University, performances and experiences at Preservation Hall and Doreen's Jazz

New Orleans, a French Quarter walking tour, a Natchez steamboat cruise, dinner and dance lessons at Mulate's, and a hands on class at the New Orleans School of Cooking. Students also explored the National WWII Museum, Mardi Gras World, Houmas House and Gardens, and even got up close with wildlife on a Cajun Pride Swamp Tour.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our dedicated chaperones and School Board for making this once in a lifetime experience possible for our students.



Listening to Our Community: Survey Results and Next Steps for Ladysmith Schools

This spring, the School District of Ladysmith invited every household in our community to share its views about the future of our schools.

We wanted to hear directly from residents, parents, staff, and taxpayers before any decisions are made about the road ahead. The survey, administered by School Perceptions, an independent Wisconsin-based research firm, provided valuable feedback that will help guide an important decision: whether to pursue a replacement operational referendum to maintain the programs and services our students rely on.

Thank you to everyone who participated. Your input is essential in shaping the future of our schools and our community. On June 10, the results of the district-wide survey were shared at the Board meeting, and the full report is available on the School District website.

In this newsletter, we want to share what we heard, explain the options being studied, provide important financial context, and answer common questions. Our goal is simple: to give the community the full picture.

465	15.1%	±4.65%	89%
RESIDENTS RESPONDED	RESPONSE RATE	MARGIN OF ERROR	DISTRICT RESIDENTS
<i>The survey closed May 11, 2026. It was conducted by School Perceptions, an independent research firm. A comparable 2021 survey conducted by the school district drew 477 respondents.</i>			

Who We Heard From

Survey respondents reflected a broad cross-section of our community. About 57% of respondents live in the City of Ladysmith, with others living in the towns of Flambeau, Grant, Thornapple, Hubbard, Grow, and Willard.

Nearly half of respondents were age 65 or older. About 23% currently have children attending a District school, and 15% are District employees. This mix of perspectives matters. A school district belongs to the entire community, not just those who currently have students in school.

Why a Survey Now?

In 2022, Ladysmith voters approved a five-year, non-recurring operational referendum that provides \$600,000 per year. That funding ends after the 2026–2027 school year. Before deciding whether to ask voters to renew that authority, and at what amount, the School Board wanted to better understand the community's priorities, concerns, and level of support. The survey results will help inform the Board's conversations in the months ahead.

The Financial Picture

Wisconsin limits how much money a school district can raise through a combination of state aid and local property taxes. This cap is called the revenue limit. For many years, the revenue limit increased with inflation. That changed in 2009. Since then, school costs have continued to rise, but school revenue has not kept pace. If the revenue limit had continued to grow with inflation, Ladysmith would have significantly more funding available today. At the same time, state and federal funding have not kept pace with rising costs for transportation, utilities, insurance, technology, building maintenance, and services for students with disabilities.

Federal pandemic relief funds, known as ESSER, provided temporary support for several years. Those dollars helped the District balance budgets and address needs during and after the pandemic. Those funds have now expired.

Enrollment also affects school funding. Because Wisconsin funds school districts largely based on resident student enrollment, declining enrollment reduces revenue. Like many districts across the state, Ladysmith has fewer students than it did in the past. However, costs do not decline at the same rate as enrollment. We still need to heat buildings, run bus routes, maintain facilities, provide student services, and staff classrooms across multiple grade levels.

The current \$600,000 operational referendum has helped the District maintain student programs, support staffing, keep up with technology, and address ongoing needs. Because that authority is temporary, the District must now plan for what happens after it expires.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

What Has the District Already Done?

The District has taken steps to control costs and stretch taxpayer dollars. These efforts include:

- Reduced middle/high school administration from two positions to one
- Left a district office position unfilled and absorbed the duties
- Reduced classroom staffing positions by four full-time positions
- Adjusted insurance plans to manage cost increases
- Partnered with neighboring districts to share services
- Delayed non-essential building maintenance
- Extended the replacement cycle for technology devices

These steps have helped, but they do not eliminate the long-term financial challenge. Without replacement operating revenue, the District would face difficult decisions about programs, staffing, services, and maintenance needs.

Two Kinds of Referendum

There are two main types of school referendum questions.

A **capital referendum** allows a district to borrow money for major facility projects. These dollars are used for buildings, renovations, equipment, and other long-term capital needs. They cannot be used for day-to-day operating costs.

An **operational referendum** allows a district to exceed state revenue limits for day-to-day needs such as educational programs, student services, staffing, transportation, technology, and building maintenance.

Ladysmith voters approved both types of referendums in 2022. At this time, the District is not considering a new capital referendum. The current conversation is about an operational referendum to replace the authority that expires after the 2026–2027 school year.

The Three Options Surveyed

The District asked for community feedback on three possible **non-recurring** operational referendum options. Non-recurring means the referendum would have an end date. Tax impacts below are estimates and are shown per \$100,000 of property value per year.

Option 1 \$950,000 per year

Estimated tax impact: about \$10 per \$100,000 of property value per year

This option would maintain some current programs and services, leave some positions unfilled when people leave or retire, and address building and safety needs as they arise. This option would replace the current \$600,000 authority with \$950,000 in annual authority, an increase of \$350,000 over the current amount.

Option 2 \$1.2 million per year

Estimated tax impact: about \$61 per \$100,000 of property value per year

This option would maintain most current programs and services and allow the District to more proactively address electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and safety needs. This option would replace the current \$600,000 authority with \$1,200,000 in annual authority, an increase of \$600,000 over the current amount.

Option 3 \$1.5 million per year

Estimated tax impact: about \$121 per \$100,000 of property value per year

This option would maintain most current programs and services, proactively address building and safety needs, and increase staff compensation to help recruit and retain quality staff. This option would replace the current \$600,000 authority with \$1,500,000 in annual authority, an increase of \$900,000 over the current amount.

What We Heard

When asked whether the District should pursue a replacement operational referendum, responses showed both meaningful support and real differences of opinion.

Support was strongest among staff, with 85% saying yes. Parents were more divided, with 47% saying yes, 26% saying no, and 27% unsure. Community members were the most split, with 33% in favor, 40% opposed, and 27% unsure. One important takeaway is that many people are still making up their minds.

More than one-quarter of both parents and community members selected “not sure.” That tells us there are real

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

questions in the community and that clear information will matter. When asked which funding level they would support, staff showed the strongest support for the higher options. Parents showed support across the three options, with a combined majority supporting one of the funding levels. Community members were more cautious, but many were still open to a referendum, especially at the more modest funding levels. Taken together, the results show two things.

First, there is a willingness among many respondents to invest in the future of Ladysmith schools.

Second, the community wants any request to be measured, responsible, and clearly connected to student needs and taxpayer value.

What This Means

No final decision has been made. The School Board will continue reviewing the survey results, the District's financial outlook, and the needs of students, staff, facilities, and taxpayers. The Board's goal is to identify a responsible path forward that reflects the needs of the District and earns the broadest possible community support. We are committed to keeping the community informed every step of the way.

Understanding the Numbers: Frequently Asked Questions

What is an operational referendum?

An operational referendum asks voters for permission to exceed state-imposed revenue limits to fund the day-to-day costs of running schools. This includes things like staffing, classroom programs, transportation, technology, student services, and building operations. **It is different from a capital referendum, which pays for buildings and major facility projects.**

Didn't the District just complete a building project?

Yes. That work was funded through a capital referendum. By law, those dollars cannot be used for day-to-day operating expenses such as salaries, utilities, classroom supplies, or student programming. The current discussion is about operating revenue, which is separate from the building project.

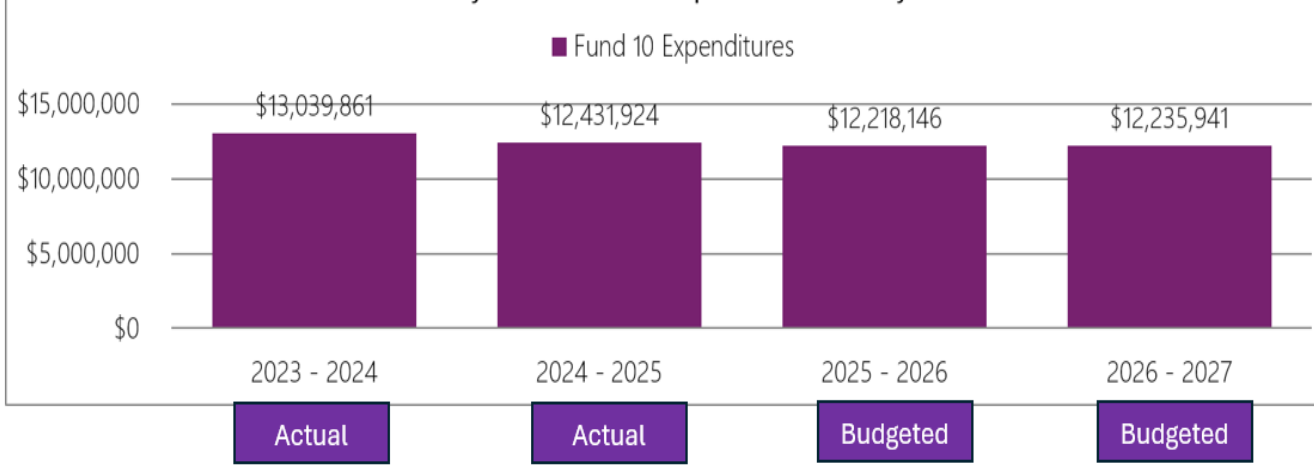
Why not just cut expenses?

The District has already taken steps to reduce costs and manage expenses. However, many school costs are fixed or required. Buildings still need to be heated and maintained. Bus routes still need to run. Students still need teachers, support staff, technology, and services. The District will continue looking for efficiencies, but reductions alone would not fully address the financial gap without affecting programs and services.

A referendum asks for voter approval to increase the taxing authority of the School District for the purposes of Operations or Debt



Ladysmith Fund 10 Expenditure History



Continued

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Why does the District need to ask voters at all?

In Wisconsin, the state limits how much revenue a school district can raise through state aid and local property taxes combined. When those limits do not keep pace with rising costs, the only way to maintain programs and services is to ask local voters for permission through an operational referendum.

What happens if a referendum does not pass?

Without additional operating revenue, the District would need to consider reductions to programs, services, staffing, and maintenance to stay within state revenue limits.

The survey results help the Board understand which path the community is most prepared to support.

Why does declining enrollment create a financial challenge?

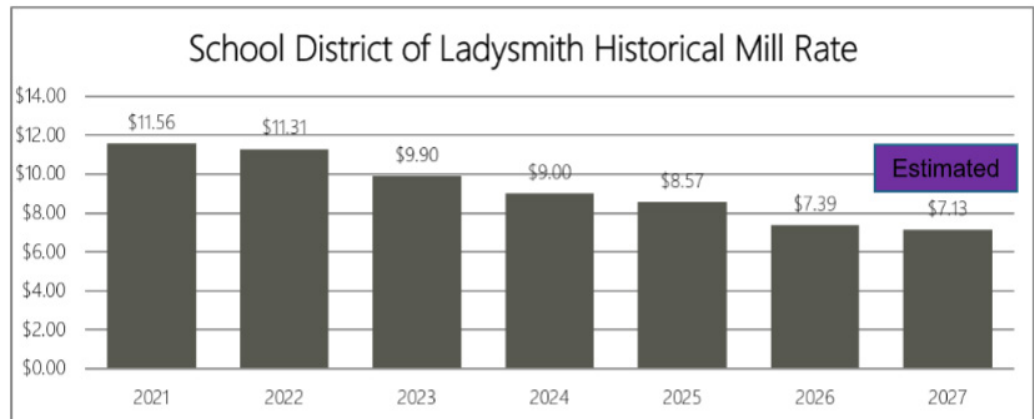
Declining enrollment reduces revenue because Wisconsin's funding formula is tied to student membership. However, costs do not fall at the same rate. A small enrollment decline spread across many grade levels does not necessarily allow the District to reduce a full classroom, bus route, building, or program. That creates a gap between revenue and expenses.

What is the mill rate?

The mill rate is the amount of property tax paid per \$1,000 of property value. For example, a mill rate of \$7.39 means \$7.39 in school taxes for every \$1,000 of property value.

The District's current mill rate is \$7.39 per \$1,000 of property value and is projected to decrease for the 2026–2027 school year.

The final numbers can change based on enrollment, state aid, property values, and final levy information.



Why not consider consolidation?

Consolidation is sometimes raised as a possible solution, but it is not a quick or simple fix. It would require major community discussion, agreement with another district, state-level processes, and joint board authority.

It also would not automatically eliminate the financial pressures schools face. Many of the same costs, such as transportation, staffing, special education, utilities, and maintenance, would still exist. In some cases, transportation costs could increase because students would need to travel farther.

The District is always willing to evaluate options that serve students and taxpayers responsibly. At this time, the immediate issue is the expiration of existing operating authority and how to maintain programs and services after 2026–2027.

Why can taxes change even if the District controls costs?

Several factors affect property taxes, including equalized property values, state aid, enrollment, debt payments, and voter-approved referendum authority. Some of these factors are outside the District's control. The District will continue working to manage costs responsibly and communicate clearly about how school funding and property taxes work. **Notably, the 25-27 biennial budget did not provide additional funding for property tax relief in the form of state equalization aid.**

What Happens Next

The Board will continue reviewing survey results and financial information this summer. If the Board chooses to move forward with a referendum, it would need to approve ballot language and meet required election deadlines. The District will continue sharing information with the community so residents can make an informed decision.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate in the survey and share your perspective. The future of Ladysmith schools is a community decision, and your voice matters.



LHS Technology Ed Dept Receives New Tool Donation

Tech Ed. teacher Jason Jaenke was awarded a Bosch Revolve Laser at the Building Futures Celebration in Eau Claire. Ladysmith was one of 15 school districts to be awarded tools.

This tool will enhance our technology education program and give students real-world experience with professional equipment.

A BIG thank you to the event sponsors and the Chippewa Valley Home Builders Association for supporting our students and our skilled trades programs.

Building, Coding, and Capturing Cubes: Our 8th Graders Bring the Future to Life

Our middle schoolers just wrapped up their VEX Robotics unit, and what a way to finish.

After mastering the fundamentals, students built their very own Simple Clawbots from the ground up. Once construction was complete, they synced their robots to controllers and put their engineering skills to the test, advancing to the Capture the Cube challenge.

From the first bolt to the final cube, these students showed off real teamwork, problem-solving, and hands-on STEM learning at its best. Lessons like these give our Lumberjacks an early taste of the engineering, coding, and design skills that power so many careers, and they're having a blast while they learn.



Great News! Ladysmith Athletic Hall of Fame Announces Class of 2026 Inductees

The School District of Ladysmith is thrilled to announce the Hall of Fame Class of 2026!

These outstanding individuals have built a lasting legacy of excellence, leadership, and school pride both on and off the field.

Join us in congratulating our newest inductees:

Bill Morgan – 1960

Bob Anderson – 1961

Daryl Jordan – 1962

John Brodie – 1963–1968

Fred Hennekens – 1965

Edward P. Krenzelok – 1965

Patricia Swanke – 1976

Julie Morgan Krings – 1986

Amanda Leonhard-Perry – 1998

Induction Ceremony & Celebration

Saturday, September 19, 2026

Location: Ladysmith High School

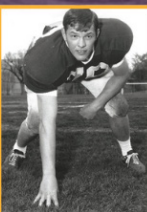
Further details coming soon!



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LADYSMITH ATHLETICS

HALL of FAME

2026 Inductees

				
BILL MORGAN 1960	BOB ANDERSON 1961	DARYL JORDAN 1962	JOHN BRODIE 1963-1968	FRED HENNEKENS 1965
				
EDWARD P. KRENZELOK 1965	PATRICIA SWANKE 1976	JULIE MORGAN KRINGS 1986	AMANDA LEONHARD-PERRY 1998	

SAVE THE DATE!

INDUCTION CEREMONY

SEPTEMBER 19, 2026

LADYSMITH HIGH SCHOOL

LUMBERJACK HIGHLIGHTS

Building Skills That Last a Lifetime: Our Lumberjacks Are Graduating Career-Ready

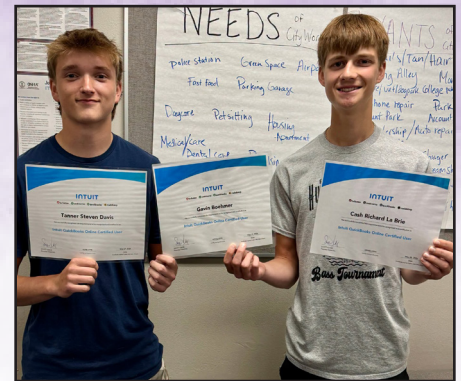
At the School District of Ladysmith, we believe a high school diploma should open doors, and for a growing number of our students, it's doing exactly that. We're proud to share that 37% of Ladysmith High School's Class of 2026 earned at least one Industry-Recognized Credential before graduation. These credentials give our students a real head start, whether they're heading to college, entering the workforce, or pursuing an apprenticeship.

Each of these credentials represents real, marketable skills, the kind that employers and postsecondary programs recognize immediately. They're proof that learning at Ladysmith goes beyond the classroom and prepares students for the path they choose next.

Congratulations to all of our students who have invested in building skills that will serve them well in college, careers, apprenticeships, and beyond. Your hard work and dedication are paying off, and we couldn't be prouder to call you Lumberjacks.

At LMHS, students have the opportunity to earn certifications including:

- Adobe Illustrator Certified User
- AutoCAD Certified User
- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)
- Intuit QuickBooks Certified User
- Microsoft Office Specialist Certifications
- United Brotherhood of Carpenters Certification
- Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship Certificate



Lumberjacks Explore Careers Close to Home at BW Papersystems

Recently, a group of our high school students had the opportunity to tour BW Papersystems in Phillips, WI, and get an inside look at the incredible career opportunities available right here in our region.

They saw the full manufacturing process, from raw steel arriving at one end of the plant to finished machines leaving the other, and explored career fields ranging from welding and engineering to marketing and finance.

A highlight was learning about BW's apprenticeship programs, where students can earn while they learn and gain hands-on experience while building a career.

Experiences like this are an important part of academic and career planning, showing students the opportunities available right here in our region.

A huge thank you to BW Papersystems for hosting, and a special shout-out to school board member Dustin Mataczynski for arranging the tour and sharing his own career journey.



It's that time of year again!

WE ARE LOOKING FOR

★ ANY OF YOUR USED ★

LUMBERJACKS LOGO WEAR

FOR OUR

★ 2ND ANNUAL ★

LUMBERJACKS GARAGE SALE!

If you have clothing or other merchandise that no longer fits or you don't use, please get in touch with a Booster Club member.

♥ We would love to add it into our used logo wear sale during

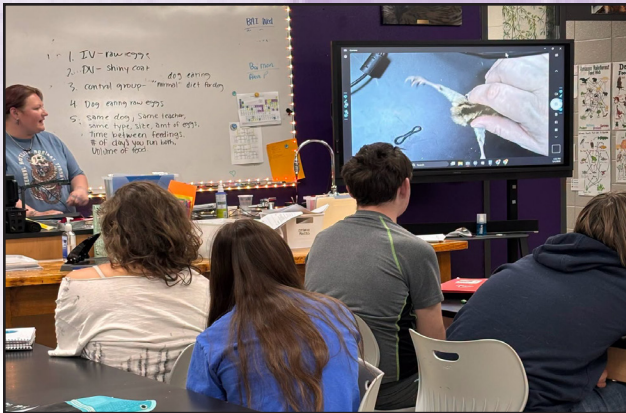
MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL ORIENTATION!

★ Thank you for supporting our students and school! ★

Shelly OLSON Tara FARKAS Becci TUCKER Sophia BECKER Kari HETTLER

Items can also be dropped off at Ladysmith High School. Thank you for supporting our Lumberjacks!

Students Hatch and Raise 242 Pheasants in Hands On Science Project



This past spring trimester, students in LHS science had the unique opportunity to help hatch and raise 242 Ring Necked Pheasants in partnership with the Rusk County Wildlife Restoration Association.

Throughout the project, students dove into hands on life science experiences, including incubation and candling eggs, checking for fertilization, count-

ing chicks to calculate hatch rates, and studying birth defects and genetic differences in pheasant coloration.

Students also learned about animal care, including the importance of humane handling and humane euthanasia practices in wildlife and agricultural settings, gaining a well rounded understanding of responsible stewardship.

Pheasants raised through this project will help support pheasant population restoration efforts throughout the Rusk County area.

A huge thank you goes out to Scarlet Nagel for serving as a guest speaker and assisting in the classroom throughout the trimester, and to Tom Hutnik and the Rusk County Wildlife Restoration Association for providing the eggs, materials, and support that made this incredible learning experience possible.



New FFA Chapter Hosts First Banquet and Elects Officers

Our FFA chapter reached an exciting milestone with its very first FFA banquet, and what a night it was.

Every member received their Discovery Degree, and six members earned their Greenhand Degrees.

The chapter also recognized six members who competed at the Agriculture Technology Contest: Erica Pedersen, Bradley Pedersen, Sidney Heath, and Brooklynn Adisek in Livestock Evaluation, and Jackson Vanepps and Ellie Heath in Horse Evaluation.

A special congratulations went to Erica Pedersen, who took home the Outstanding Member Award.

The evening also welcomed the chapter's newly elected officers, who will lead the way forward: President Erica Pedersen, Vice President Sidney Heath, Secretary

Madalynn Ohmstead, Treasurer Bradley Pedersen, Reporter Madisyn Roberts, and Sentinel Cheyanne Massey.

We are so proud of our growing FFA chapter and can't wait to see all they accomplish in the years ahead.



LUMBERJACK HIGHLIGHTS

Class of 2026 Celebrate Accomplishments and Scholarships

During senior awards night the Class of 2026 accepted over \$115,000 in scholarship awards!

We want to give a special thanks to the organizations and families who have invested in the future of our students.

We are so proud of all of our seniors for their hard work to earn these awards. As a school district and community we are excited to see where are newest alumni are headed!



Baker and Wilmot earn top spots for the Class of 2026

Congratulations to Class of 2026 Valedictorian, Luke Baker, and Salutatorian, Hailey Wilmot, on their outstanding achievement! We are so proud of your hard work and dedication and wish them good luck in the future!



LHS Students Shine at HOSA State Leadership Conference

Eleven LHS students recently returned from the HOSA State Leadership Conference in Wisconsin Dells, and what an experience it was!

HOSA, an organization for students pursuing careers in health and medicine, gave our Lumberjacks the chance to learn, compete, and explore the many opportunities available in the medical field. Students participated in anatomy tournaments, explored medical virtual reality simulations, attended hands on workshops, and much more. Each activity gave them a deeper look into the world of healthcare and the wide range of careers it offers.

One of the biggest highlights of the trip was when a medical helicopter landed right on site! Students had the chance to meet the flight crew, learn about emergency air medicine, and explore the aircraft up close.

For our students, it was an unforgettable experience that brought emergency medicine to life in a powerful way and prepared them for a future in the medical field.



LUMBERJACK HIGHLIGHTS



Almost to the finish line! - Our 7th graders made the most of their last day of school with smiles, laughs, and plenty of fun to close out the school year with a variety of fun outdoor games and activities. After a year full of hard work and growth, these Lumberjacks earned every bit of the celebration.



Trivia Winners! - America's 250th birthday is coming up! Students at Ladysmith celebrated this milestone before school ended by wearing red, white and blue, as well as participating in a trivia contest. At the middle/high school, Mr. Tindol's class won the America 250 Trivia Challenge and were rewarded with festive popsicles. Congrats!

Careers on Wheels Rolls Into Town and Stops at Elementary



Students from Ladysmith, Flambeau, and Lake Holcombe elementary schools had the opportunity to connect with local professionals, ask questions, and gain hands on experience as they explored a variety of careers and industries that require vehicles.

From emergency vehicles to trucks and utility equipment, students got an up close look at the many ways our community keeps things running every day.

Events like this help spark curiosity and give our youngest learners a chance to imagine the many career paths available to them right here in our region.

A huge thank you to the participating businesses for sharing their time and expertise to make this event possible: Jump River Electric Cooperative, Inc., Rusk County Sheriff, Rusk County Ambulance, City of Ladysmith Public Works, GO Riteway Transportation Group, Rands Trucking, Zielies Tree Service, and the Ladysmith Post Office. Also to CESA 10 for organizing the event.



SOFTWARE MIGRATION JULY 22 - JULY 29, 2026

Our student information system is transitioning to a new and improved platform this summer, Skyward Qmlativ. To complete this migration, our current system will be offline from July 22 through July 29, 2026 and families will be unable to access it. Look for further information to be sent to families once the system is up and running!

Mark Your Calendars!

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LADYSMITH



Join us for our annual districtwide open house!

Wednesday, August 26, 2026

www.sdlwi.org

#GoLadysmith

SAVE THE DATE

HOMECOMING
2026



FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 18
2026

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



#GoLadysmith



@SDLadysmith



@SD_Ladysmith



Mission and Vision

Our mission is to empower ALL students to achieve their best.

Our vision is to ensure all students have the knowledge and skills for living, learning, and working successfully.



MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

President
JEFF WALLIN

Deputy Clerk
JENNIFER PEARSON

Vice President
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Director
MIKE RUSSELL

Treasurer
NANCY BURMEISTER

Director
GERARD SCHUELLER

Clerk
DUSTIN MATA CZYNSKI

District Administrator
JASON LeMAY, PhD

2026-2027 District Calendar

2026-2027 School Calendar

September 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 2026						
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2026						
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December 2026						
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January 2027						
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 2027						
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

Start of Semesters/End of Quarters	
Sept. 1	Start of First Semester
Oct. 30	End of First Quarter
Jan. 15	End of Second Quarter
Jan. 19	Start of Second Semester
Mar. 19	End of Third Quarter
June 3	End of Fourth Quarter

School District of Ladysmith
BOARD APPROVED 2/18/2026
 1700 Edgewood Ave E
 Ladysmith, WI 54848
 715-532-5277

2026 - 2027 Dates of Note

Aug 26	Districtwide Open House
Sep 1	First Day of School
Sep 7	Labor Day
Sep 14 - 18	Homecoming Week
Oct 16	NO SCHOOL - Educator PD Day
Oct 30	End of 1st Quarter
Nov 2	NO SCHOOL - Educator PD Day
Nov 23-27	Fall Break
Dec 23-Jan 1	Winter Break
Jan 15	End of 2nd Quarter/End of 1st Semester
Jan 18	NO SCHOOL - Educator PD Day
Jan 19	Start of 3rd Quarter/Start of 2nd Semester
Feb 19	NO SCHOOL - Educator PD Day
Mar 4	4K Registration Day - NO 4K
Mar 18	End of 3rd Quarter
Mar 19	NO SCHOOL - Educator PD Day
Mar 22-26	Spring Break
Apr 23	NO SCHOOL - Educator PD Day
May 29	High School Graduation
May 31	Memorial Day
June 3	Last Day of School/ Early Release Day
June 7 - 25	Summer School

2026 - 2027 Parent/Teacher Conferences

Oct 6 & 8	3:45 PM - 7:45 PM EL/MS/HS PT Conferences
Feb 18	3:45 PM - 7:45 PM EL/MS/HS PT Conferences
Week of Apr 5 - 9	

2026 - 2027 Dismissal Times

LES Student Day
8:00 am - 3:10 pm
Early Release: 8:00 am - 12:15 pm
Phone: 715-532-5464
LMHS Student Day
8:00 am - 3:25 pm
Early Release: 8:00 am - 12:30 pm
Phone: 715-532-5531

Stay Connected with Us!

Website
www.sdlwi.org
Social Media
FACEBOOK SDLadysmith
INSTAGRAM @sd_Lladysmith

March 2027						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2027						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2027						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

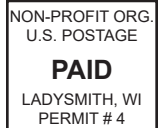
June 2027						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

KEY	
	No School
	No School - Educator PD Day
	Parent/Teacher Conferences
	First & Last Day of School
	End of Quarter
	Graduation Day
	Summer School



School District of Ladysmith

1700 Edgewater Avenue E • Ladysmith, WI 54848



ECRWSS
POSTAL CUSTOMER

2026-2027 School Year

STUDENT REGISTRATION WILL OPEN IN AUGUST
LOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION SOON!



This newsletter includes only a small sample of all the good things happening at the School District of Ladysmith.

Be sure and visit our Facebook page to see more.