

# PORTAGE DAILY REGISTER

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## PORTAGE SCHOOLS PLAN TO CUT STAFF



JOHN GITTINGS, DAILY REGISTER

Wayne E. Bartels math teachers and Principal Kasey Podoll, second from right, discuss math curriculum on Friday afternoon shortly after the end of the school day. The Portage School District is scheduled to cut 11 staff next year, although Superintendent Josh Sween hasn't said which positions will be cut.

### 11 positions on chopping block, even if referendum passes, superintendent says

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The Portage School District will cut 11 staff positions next year as part of its three-pronged effort to maintain a balanced budget, Superintendent Josh Sween said.

The second prong is the three-year, \$11.1 million operating measure on April 7, which continues its \$3.7 million annual additional taxpayer funding from a five-year, \$18.5 million referendum that expires at the end of this school year.

The final prong is the use of rainy-day funds to cover budget gaps and avoid short-term borrowing.

The 11 positions scheduled to be cut

will span across the district's six schools, according to Sween, who did not reveal which positions are being cut but said that staff in those positions have been informed.

He added that, when cutting staff, the district tries to do so through attrition, or not filling positions vacated by retirements or departures.

At least two administrative positions will likely go after next year, when two-year contracts expire, Sween said. He added that, while residents clamor for administration cuts, doing so after this year would be counterproductive because the district would have to pay out the rest of those deals.

Portage has received referendum-based support, along with property taxes and state and federal aid, since 2003.

Capital referendums address larger infrastructure projects and additions, while operating referendums address maintenance, salaries and other ongoing district expenses.

Portage voters OK'd a capital referendum in November 2024 that is funding renovations to Wayne E. Bartels Middle School and a new auxiliary gym and pool at Portage High School. All projects are underway.

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## Tiffany: Time to chart different path for state

US rep from northern Wis. wants to return governor's office to Republican hands

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MADISON — U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany doesn't like the path he sees Wisconsin going down.

Half of Wisconsin's first-graders don't read at grade level. Energy prices have increased. The state ranks near the bottom for

starting a business by some financiers and small-business publications.

Fixing those problems is going to take changes in leadership, said the Hazelhurst Republican, the sole surviving serious contender for the Republican nomination for governor this year.

"When you look at the states across the country, they're diverging at this point," Tiffany said in an interview with the Wisconsin State Journal. "They're either choosing this



Tiffany

path of stagnation, or they're the dynamic states of America."

Tiffany's first foray into politics was in 2009, when he became a supervisor for the town of Little Rice, population 300, west of Rhinelander and north of Tomahawk in Oneida County. He was also appointed to the county's economic development corporation. He joined the state Legislature in 2011, running for the seat after the incumbent retired during the Tea Party wave that handed control of the Legislature back to Republicans. After one term in the Assembly, Tiffany ran for the 12th Senate District, winning on

his third attempt after failed runs in 2004 and 2008.

As a state lawmaker, Tiffany was a part of the Republican majority that helped implement much of then-Gov. Scott Walker's agenda, including Act 10, which eliminated most collective bargaining rights for most public employees, changes to the Universities of Wisconsin such as a tuition freeze and removing tenure protections from state statute, and expanded private school vouchers.

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