

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: SEPTEMBER 8, 2017

MLSD REFERENDUM

Q: WILL THIS REFERENDUM INCREASE MLHS' RANKING?

A: It is illegal for a school employee or member of the Board of Education to state that a Referendum project will increase property values or school rankings. Further, there is no way to guarantee a connection between construction and ranking. There are three types of projects in our Referendum proposal:

- 1) **Critical Infrastructure Improvements** such as: school security improvements at all three schools, renovated bathrooms at Wildwood, renovations and improvements to the Briarcliff and MLHS Auditoriums, additions and renovations of the Briarcliff locker rooms. **Total = \$4.1 million**
- 2) **Expanding Programs & Increasing Instructional Time** through: improved and expanded cafeterias and kitchens at all three schools, expanded facilities for the arts at all three schools, renovation and expansion of the Briarcliff 6th grade science lab, creation of Maker Labs at Wildwood and Briarcliff, addition of more classrooms and replacement of temporary classroom units at MLHS. **Total \$17.1 million**
- 3) **New Facilities for our Student Athletes & Community**: Locker rooms and a Cardio-Fitness Center at MLHS. **Total = \$3.1 million**

Q: WHAT DO BETTER RANKED HIGH SCHOOLS HAVE THAT MLHS DOES NOT?

A: In the 2016 NJ Monthly Ranking of the top high schools in the state, schools that were ranked in the top ten compared to MLHS in the following ways:

- ✱ 10/10 have Business programs
- ✱ 9/10 offer more Arts courses
- ✱ 9/10 offer more STEM classes
- ✱ 8/10 provide a block schedule with more instructional minutes per course

Q: WHY DID THE NJDOE FAIL TO FUND 40% OF THE REFERENDUM?

A: The MLBOE never anticipated 40% funding for the entire Referendum:

- ✱ The MLBOE hoped for approximately \$5.8 million (24% of the total project) in NJDOE funding and received a promise of \$3.95 million. (16% of the total project)
- ✱ The NJDOE has suspended funding for athletic projects

School District of the Chathams
Referendum Projects - September 2016
 Amounts in Millions

Potential Projects	ESTIMATED Project Costs	ESTIMATED Debt Service	ESTIMATED Net District Costs
CHS Auditorium	\$3.5	\$1.4	\$2.1
CMS Auditorium	\$3.8	\$1.5	\$2.3
Cougar Field Improvements	\$1.4	\$0.0	\$1.4
CMS STEM Addition of 3/4 Rooms	\$3.2	\$0.0	\$3.2
MAS 4 classroom Addition	\$2.4	\$0.7	\$1.7

In Chatham's Referendum last year, neither athletic improvements
 nor classroom additions received state aid debt service



Mountain Lakes School District 2017 Referendum

August 11, 2017



School:

	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Total Cost Before State Aid	Costs Eligible for 40% State Aid	State Aid	Total Cost to Taxpayers
WILDWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DONATIONS RAISED	\$ 2,835,000	\$ 2,550,000				\$ 5,385,000	\$ 3,161,250	\$ (1,264,500)	\$ 4,120,500
BRIARCLIFF MIDDLE SCHOOL DONATIONS RAISED	\$ 2,963,500		\$ 290,000			\$ 3,253,500	\$ 3,000,208	\$ (1,200,083)	\$ 2,053,417
MOUNTAIN LAKES HIGH SCHOOL DONATIONS RAISED	\$ 11,417,715				\$ 1,220,000	\$ 12,637,715	\$ 3,716,490	\$ (1,486,596)	\$ 11,151,119
HEALTH & WELLNESS CENTER			\$ 1,968,700	\$ 1,152,550		\$ 3,121,250		\$ -	\$ 3,121,250
REFERENDUM COST BEFORE STATE AID	\$ 17,216,215	\$ 2,550,000	\$ 2,258,700	\$ 1,152,550	\$ 1,220,000	\$ 24,397,465			
COSTS ELIGIBLE FOR 40% STATE AID	\$ 8,252,948	\$ 1,095,000	\$ 290,000	\$ -	\$ 240,000		\$ 9,877,948		
STATE AID	\$ (3,301,179)	\$ (438,000)	\$ (116,000)	\$ -	\$ (96,000)			\$ (3,951,179)	
REFERENDUM COST TO TAXPAYERS	\$ 13,915,036	\$ 2,112,000	\$ 2,142,700	\$ 1,152,550	\$ 1,124,000				\$ 20,446,286

Q: WHY SHOULD MOUNTAIN LAKES TAX PAYERS
SUBSIDIZE THE EDUCATION OF BOONTON TOWNSHIP
STUDENTS THROUGH THIS REFERENDUM?

A: It is illegal for sending districts to pay for capital improvements on properties owned by other municipalities.

- ✱ Boonton Township pays tuition per pupil to the MLBOE
- ✱ Should the quality of programming and opportunities expand, the MLBOE could attempt to renegotiate a greater tuition rate with Boonton Township
- ✱ Without Boonton Township, MLHS would be approximately 450 students. A high school of this size would not be able to support the array of courses, co curricular and athletic programs that are currently in place at MLHS

Q: THE COST TO EDUCATE A STUDENT IN MOUNTAIN LAKES IS TOO HIGH, WHY SHOULD WE SPEND MORE MONEY?

A: Some Media reports include Lake Drive students in our per pupil cost which makes our per pupil cost artificially high. Mountain Lakes does not pay to educate Lake Drive students, in fact, the program significantly offsets the cost of education to our residents making our per pupil cost among the most competitive for programs of our caliber. **Here are the actual district, state certified per pupil costs: (These numbers are the weighted average K-12 per pupil cost as these costs vary by school.)**

✱ 2013-2014 ~ \$14,243

✱ 2014-2015 ~ \$14,918

✱ 2015-2016 ~ \$15,268

✱ 2016 -2017 ~ \$14,575 (Estimate)

✱ **For greater detail, review our full school budget presentation at: <https://www.mlschools.org/domain/703>**

Q: WHAT IS THE MLBOE DOING TO MANAGE THE INCREASED COST OF OWNERSHIP THAT RESULTS FROM THIS REFERENDUM?

A: The Board continues to expand revenue generating opportunities to offset the increased operational costs such as:

- ✱ The MLBOE now manages the for profit before and after care programming at Wildwood and a 3 and 4 year old PreSchool Program at Lake Drive
- ✱ The Lake Drive Program is expanding its Itinerant Programming to offset more in district expenses
- ✱ The MLBOE continues to investigate progressive, grant-funded sources of revenue that add to our instructional programming such as the Academy for Biotechnology

Q: WHAT ARE THE SPECIFICS OF THE VOTE AND WHAT HAPPENS IF IT DOESN'T PASS?

A: The Special Election will be held on Tuesday, September 26th, polls in the Auxiliary Gym at MLHS will be open from 7:00 am - 8:00 pm.

Question 1 must pass for any other question to be considered. Question 3 must pass for Question 4 to be considered. Should all 5 questions fail, the MLBOE would redesign the proposal, and present a new question to the voters. This would likely happen in December 2017.