

**TOWN HALL QUESTIONS | MAY 11**

- 1. How will the outcome of the referendum affect employees with temporary contracts this school year that wish to stay with the district next year?** *If the referendum is approved, the district will be able to hire staff to reduce the class size increases that occurred in the 2019-20 school year based on the projected enrollment for the 2020-2021 school year. Some positions that were approved by the Board for elimination in the 2020-21 school year can be restored if the referendum is approved and the board takes action to do so. This does not mean that the same people will be returned to their previous positions, or that the staffing will be exactly the same as it was in the 2018-19 or 2019-2020 school years as several other factors influence the staffing. Examples are enrollment in each school, the number of students in each grade level within each building and the utilization of units as determined by building administrators. Also, filling of positions is done in accordance with the union contract for those positions. Those employees on temporary contracts are employed only through June 30, 2020, and if they are reemployed for the 2020-21 school year depends not only on the referendum being approved, but the needs of the district as discussed previously.*
- 2. Exactly how many TEACHER positions are being restored when we get the referendum passed? Which of these are from prior years downsizing due to attrition?** *This depends on the enrollment for each school. The plan is to minimize the need to approve waivers for class size and the 98% division 1 building unit allocation. This means that staffing for K-3 classrooms would be based on a 1 to 22 adult to student ratio and schools would also receive a minimum of 98% of their earned division 1 units.*
- 3. Will local raises be restored even though the contract doesn't provide? That seems to have been dangled by Fred Board member, but I see no promises or specifics. Every other district pays their staff.** *If the referendum is approved, Christina will be in a position to negotiate contract language that has a financial impact with each bargaining unit based on the terms and agreements already established in the individual Negotiated Agreements.*
- 4. How many staff are we losing just because our enrollment is down? What is the expected population for each building?** *Enrollment in each of our school buildings vary from year to year. The Delaware Department of Education provides a staffing allocation each year based on the September 30th unit count. Final staffing allocations are provided to the district based on the number of students in our building at that time. You can reference Christina's enrollment for 2019 via the Delaware Department of Education Report Card at <https://reportcard.doe.k12.de.us/index.html>.*
- 5. Here's my two cents: Trust would be more likely if the district's books were audited (externally) on a regular basis. Rumors spread fast and suspicions are high as we continue to hear the same stories. Look at areas where money could be saved without injury to learning (buses running for 30+ minutes while waiting to unload, electricity use in empty buildings, administration, unused real estate) instead of promises that children will lose out. Build trust first, then ask for money.** *The monthly CBOC reports are*

available on the Christina School District Website. Here is where you can find them: Our District / Board of Education / Board Committees / CBOC / Monthly Reports to CBOC. These reports show the income and the spending for each month.

6. **Students that are more creative than athletic need an extracurricular activity in school. Why is this change being considered?** *Some essential programs such as the arts, advanced academics and athletics will be eliminated. A vote “for” the referendum can help restore these programs.*

7. **When will we be getting the money back for the prom!! It’s bad enough the former sports director embezzled all the money for the basketball team to buy them all new sneakers, uniforms, warm up suits etc., and screwed all the other sports out of money so they couldn't attend track meets, or out of town games. what is being done!!** *Please contact your school administrator regarding the refund policy and guidelines with regard to the prom.*

8. **Why does the district always ask for money? The teachers in Christiana school buy stuff for the kids and they always ask the parents for the money back. I know people that work in other school districts and they say the teachers have to submit to the school not the parents. Most school districts have to go out for referendum in order to keep up with rising costs to provide quality education. See chart below.**

	Appoquinimink	Brandywine	Christina	Colonial	Red Clay
2019	December 17 - pass		April 30 - fail		
2018					
2017				June 6 - pass February 28 - fail	
2016	December 20 - pass	May 17 - pass March 23 - fail	March 23 - pass		
2015			May 27 - fail February 24 - fail		February 24 - pass
2014					
2013	May 9 - pass February 28 - fail			June 4 - pass February 28 - fail	
2012		March 28 - pass			February 28 - pass
2011				May 10 - fail	
2010			May 25 - pass		
2009	December 8 - pass				
2008					February 28 - pass
2007		June 4 - pass April 24 - fail	November 6 - pass		May 17 - fail
2006	December 12 - pass		January 26 - fail		
2005		May 24 - pass		September 27 - pass	
2004					February 26 - pass
2003	November 12 - pass		April 10 - pass		
2002		April 23 - pass	April 18 - pass		March 6 - pass
2001		May 31 - pass	April 3 - fail		April 10 - fail
2000	May 9 - pass				

9. **With a drop-in student attending schools in the district, many are concerned about the district needing more money. How will this referendum directly impact students? How can tax payers be assured that their money is going to the right things? How will the district make sure future referendums aren't needed?** *The capital and operating referendum will help with major building renovations, new learning environments, reducing class size, day-to-day operations including funding for students, instructional materials, essential programs such as the arts, advanced academics and athletics, teaching and support staff positions and benefits. We maximize every dollar to offer an exceptional education for our students. It is our obligation to be great stewards of the community's children and tax dollars. Most school districts go out for referendum every 2-3 years, not just Christina.*
10. **I would like to understand why the school district and state has not considered a fairer tax system that would include sales tax versus taxing homeowners and real estate owners more. It seems we have too many that pay very little in taxes yet receive the bulk of the non-education services. For example, free breakfast and lunch programs along with afterschool care. There is also special needs care that seems to be getting larger. We want all children to be given the opportunity to succeed however some of the most physically challenged kids are needing significant resources just to come to a school while our honors programs have too many kids per teacher. It just seems we have gotten away from what the focus should be which is providing a high-level education. Your points are valid, please contact your local legislator regarding how Delaware residents can join the conversation about a fairer tax system.**
11. **I am hoping we see more online meeting time for classes currently. My girls are in HS in the CHS Honors Academy. I also hope academics, sports, and enrichment are not cut. To be honest I am amazed at the amount invested in special needs. I hope I made the right decision for my kids to be in the academy. Our family will be very disappointed if there are cuts in academics, enrichment and sports. Additionally, why cut those things but keep so much staff on now being paid as usual. (For instance, paras for special needs). If online not quite sure why that is needed now. There are several parts to this question**
- a) *Online class meeting time. The amount of online class time is dependent upon the class but is designed to fit into a schedule that provides for online time for teaching, self-study by the student, and interaction between the teacher and the students outside of the online class time.*
 - b) *The Board does not want to eliminate advance academics, athletics, enrichment, or other extracurricular activities, but the Board decided to take a balance approach between reductions in programs and reduction in classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, secretaries, etc.*
 - c) *The district is committed to and required to provide the services needed for all students, including special needs children. This is one of the most difficult areas to provide on line instruction, but the effort continues to provide these students the education they deserve. The staffing needs for special needs students utilizes more paraprofessionals than students without special needs.*
12. **Please make sure you communicate how to sign up for an absentee ballot. Also let us know how we can help get this referendum passed. Here are several options for securing an absentee ballot. Easiest Method: Complete your request for an Absentee Ballot online (do so immediately). Use this link: ivote.de.gov or ask for an Absentee Ballot by phone: (302) 577-3464. How you can help: Inform your network about the Referendum and ask them to vote. Make sure the community has the right information. Make sure people know we're asking BOTH PARENTS to vote. Use your voice and network by using social media to help spread the word.**

13. **Why should I vote for a referendum when I have no idea what direction this district is going in and who will be its leader? You ask us to do this so that the students don't suffer. As someone who has been working in these schools for almost 4 years - and left in part due to its instability and lack of leadership and direction, I agree and would typically not hesitate to vote yes. However, this board has removed the entire Infrastructure of the district and waited almost a year before interviewing or seeking their replacements. Is at most 2 weeks enough time to insure a smooth transition? I want to vote yes however I want to know what's the plan? Please don't tell me "don't punish the kids" tell me what you're doing to assure my funds will be used wisely. Your Special Services Director lasted 3 months? What are you doing to get talent that will stay and promote change?**
- a) *The Board of Education expects to have the new Superintendent named soon. One of the first things the new Superintendent will do is determine the structure of the organization and the people who will fill those roles.*
 - b) *On the transition, there typically has been no overlap between the outgoing and the new Superintendent. This is often due to circumstances beyond the control of the Board, and also because an overlapping transition would require to have both Superintendents under contract, one of whom would be paid fully from local tax funds.*
 - c) *The direction of the district that has been implemented the last 2 years is described in the Christina Strategic Plan. We will not try to describe everything in this document because it has many aspects which are being implemented concurrently. A lack of local funding will have a significant impact on the initiatives in the strategic plan and impede the progress the district has made on the last several years.*
14. **When school starts will there be any change in the time of arrival should be 8 o'clock in the morning for kids and middle school and high school I would think 8 to 3? At this time, there are no changes to the current schedule.**
15. **Have you considered closing one of the HS since the buildings are under-utilized? Would save on maintenance and amount of staff. Students would still be served with a decent size of staff. There has been a review of the use of the three high schools. All Christina high schools are being used close to 100% capacity. In addition, there are programs and classes in our high schools that require smaller class sizes than the average size used by the state for students. Examples are AVID, Jobs for Delaware Graduates and programs that support our special needs population. Our high schools offer diverse career and technical education programming that requires space to be utilized differently than a traditional classroom. Our schools also create space for supplemental programming such as clubs, committees, honors activities, science lab space, tutoring and electives. Ensuring that schools have adequate space for special and supplemental programs must be considered before making a decision to close a school. The District is continually reviewing all aspects of maximizing our building utilization while ensuring that all student needs are being met. The biggest impact of closing one of the high schools would be a significant increase in class sizes at the other high schools, which impacts learning.**
16. **How will these changes effect Special Education programs such as IEP's, classroom settings and size? Will the changes implemented still provide and meet Federal/ State guidelines for special education? Christina will continue to provide FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) as required by law for all students including those with special education needs.**

17. **If any changes do effect special education services, what services is Christina School District willing to provide or compensate in regards to independent services?** *Christina School District will continue to provide access to quality education as required by Delaware Department of Education including special education students.*
18. **If the changes don't satisfy the parent(s), will Christiana School District help to choice special education students into schools who can meet their service needs?** *Christina School District will continue to provide access to quality education as required by Delaware Department of Education including special education students.*
19. **Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Christiana School District closure, will students who meet ESY eligibility still have summer school?** *The Christina School District is holding ESY summer programming remotely from July 6th – July 30th. A letter describing our remote model has been sent to families and additional letters are going out this week with notification and contact information of your child's ESY teacher and next steps to participate remotely.*
20. **If there is no summer school for ESY students what other services does Christiana School District have in place?** *The Christina School District is holding ESY summer programming remotely from July 6th – July 30th.*
21. **What assurance can Christiana School District provide regarding the upcoming school year regarding Covid-19 and the CDC restrictions?** *The Christina School District will work within the guidelines provided by the Center for Disease Control and the Delaware Department of Education as they create workgroups to prepare the critical structures, processes and protocols needed to reopen schools. A comprehensive communication plan will accompany that work and be announced to the entire Christina community in a timely manner.*
22. **As a CSD alumni, I believe that the reason why I am able to attend an Ivy League college is due to the programs that are on the chopping block if the referendum does not pass. How will you make sure students are competitive for selective schools without art, music and other programs? Academics are not the only element of a college application.** *We believe our students deserve the full school experience. A successful referendum would restore essential programs such as the arts, advanced academics and athletics.*
23. **How would cutting the Chinese Immersion program save money? Wouldn't those children still need teachers and doesn't the district receive money from the State through "Opportunity Funding" initiative? Wouldn't the district lose this money, if they cut immersion? Additionally, how do you feel about losing students? Why not cut sports and then you'll actually have people come out to vote? Elimination of the Chinese immersion reduces the cost of the teachers who teach classes in Chinese, who are in addition to the compliment of teachers. One of the cuts if the referendum is not successful is the elimination of all sports and all extracurricular activities, such as marching band, orchestra, drama, year book, student council, and clubs.**
24. **Why are Christina's per pupil expenditures so much higher than for any other district in the state?** *The largest difference is caused by the differences in how the State provides funding for Public Schools. The State does not provide equal funding to all districts. This is called "Equalization Funding". The formula for this funding has been out of alignment and frozen, with the last major revision done in 1984. As an example of*

the differences, Appoquinimink School District receives \$15,602 for each Division I unit (Teaching Unit), while Christina is provided \$6,465.

25. **Why is CSD not considering across-the-board salary reductions for high level administration before firing teachers, like many institutions of higher education are doing in response to COVID-19?** *Over the last 3 years Christina has significantly reduced spending by more than \$5M and reduced staffing by more than 120 employees. The Board will continue to carefully evaluate which administrative positions will be filled.*
26. **What is the actual excess capacity in CSD high schools, and why can't the buildings be used more efficiently?** *See response to question #15.*
27. **We have many schools operating under capacity in the district. My understanding is that we have not consolidated because there was hope that magnet programs would result in expansion of the student population. If so, then why would we eliminate the Chinese Immersion program which is currently the most sought-after program in CSD?** *Christina does not have many schools operating under capacity. See response to question #15. Chinese Immersion along with other key academic programs will have the opportunity to be restored if the referendum passes and the board of education takes the action to do so.*
28. **Why is it if the Referendum passes that the Maintenance department is not going to get their jobs back? That is unfair all the way around and I will go to the paper and tell them that may people are going to still lose their jobs that is just not right in a time like that, that they lose everything. Please let me know what you going to do about it I was voting yes now I'm not sure.** *The Christina School District Board of Education voted in favor of a reduction in force for the Maintenance Department as part of cuts necessary to deal with a \$10 million structural deficit for FY21. If the referendum passes, then the Board of Education in cooperation with the new administration would have to decide the path forward for the Christina Facilities department similar to the determination of the other programs and positions that were eliminated. The Board would have to implement that path by another vote.*
29. **Why should you be given a raise when everyone has lost money throughout the Corona Virus lockdown.** *We understand the impact of the corona virus on many people who have lost employment and lost business. The Christina School District still has to educate children. To educate children the district has to employ teachers and pay their salaries, and also pay for the services needed to operate and maintain the schools. These costs continue to increase and have reached a point for the second year in a row that expenses exceed income. Since the cost of employees is about 85% of the expenses, a reduction in spending means reduction in the number of teachers and other discretionary expenses (e.g. sports teams, special academic programs). The biggest impact of not approving the referendum is the impact on the education of the children.*
30. **Have your ratings and scores gone up since the last referendum 2 years ago. Should we reward poor performance. You always say it will get better with more money and it never does.** *We take great pride in our ability to concentrate our funding where it will do the most good, while also being efficient with taxpayer dollars. Where will funding do the most good? The classroom – ensuring our students and teachers have everything they need to be successful. Christina consistently awarded Nationally High Performing Schools. Some of our recent awards include:*
- Newark High School named 2020 Best High School by U.S. News & World Report
 - Students Competing Nationally for Scholastic Art Awards

- National High Performing Blue-Ribbon School (1 of 3 in the state)
- Three National PTA Schools of Excellence
- Top-Performing Middle School Honors Academy Continues to Grow
- Cutting-Edge High Schools with Focused Pathways and Enhanced Programs
- Five DDOE Recognition Schools of Excellence (more than any other school district)
- First-ever DIAA/Special Olympics Unified Basketball State Champions
- Two National ESEA Distinguished Schools
- National Digital Principal of the Year
- Three Delaware PBS Recognition Schools
- 50% of Christina’s Teachers have Master’s Degrees

31. You continue to raise our property values which makes the Christiana School district a less desirable area to live in. *We believe Christina School District is a great place to live and work. Most school districts go out for referendum every 2-3 years, not just Christina.*

32. The Referendum Ballot can be confusing, and voters could benefit from further clarity. Specifically, Section 1, "Restoring budget reductions and reducing class sizes" and "Employee expenses" could use additional details to give voters a true sense of the wide range of programs effected under this category. Wording such as "tax to retain sports coaches and music programs (elementary instrumental and secondary strings)" is concrete, specific and clear. *The Christina website at www.christinak12.org/vote has more detailed information of the use of the additional revenue from Section 1 of the ballot. Because of the size of the ballot, we could not list all the different uses of these funds.*

33. Cuts to EPER effect many services offered to students, not limited to: after school clubs, marching band, sports, student council, year book, AVID/National Honors Society, drama and the spring musicals. Will the public be made aware on the ballot that these are some of the programs that they are voting to support under "Employee expenses?" *The Christina website at www.christinak12.org/vote has more detailed information of the use of the additional revenue from Section 1 of the ballot. The list is long. These are only some of the positions that would be eliminated.*

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|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| – Athletic Teams | – Indoor Band | – Audio Visual Director | – Student Council Advisor |
| – Athletic Director | – Director | – Drama Director | – Yearbook Advisor |
| – Band Director, Band | – Choir Director | – Newspaper Advisor | – Technology Coordinator |
| – Front Coordinator, | – Orchestra | – School Store | – Clubs |
| – Line Coach | – Drama Director | – Manager | |

34. How do you pass a referendum? *Christina articulates the specific needs of the district, ensuring that these needs reflect the priorities of our students and community. The referendum is passed by the majority “yes” vote of individuals who live in the school district.*