

**TOWN HALL QUESTIONS | MAY 28**

1. **If the Referendum fails and programs need to be cut why not cut the entire athletic programming for 2020 - 2021 especially since we are not sure of the return to functioning schools due to COVID 19. All athletics both High School and Middle School will be eliminated.**
2. **Curious why it is important to hold the referendum during the pandemic rather than after. Why do this while there is a cloud of suspicion over the Board's motives in trying to get it passed? Instead of raising people's taxes, why not find ways to not waste money? Look at Transportation Costs. June 9 was selected because the referendum has to be approved in June to allow the tax rate to be set and provided to New Castle County by the second Thursday in July to be collected for the 2020-21 school year. The Department of Elections did not allow any elections between the middle of February and the end of May. Transportation: While the Christina School District conducted rich conversations regarding the potential reduction of transportation costs, the analysis of evaluating the regulation of cost share with the state, married to the tiered starting times of the schools and the priority of the students in terms of walking along roadways to arrive at potential new bus hubs was not significant enough to jeopardize the safety of all CSD students.**
3. **Where can I see details about the referendum? The site only has general information about what it will be used for. Public schools are important but we need to be given enough information in order to understand exactly what the money is used for. It might help to see budgets and where money is going. 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.**
4. **Will the cut programs and 67 positions be restored if the referendum passes? With a successful referendum, the Christina Board of Education will be provided the opportunity to restore programs. The opportunity to restore teaching positions depends on the enrollment and unit count, but the intent is to reduce class sizes.**
5. **Given the constraints our students will undoubtedly have when they are able to return to school, how with the district be able to accommodate less students in a school/classroom at once when there will be less teachers available to teach? The State has established three state wide committees to look at how school will be conducted in September. Christina will follow guidelines established by Delaware Department of Education.**
6. **If the Referendum passes, will all those cuts be reinstated? (Will we have strings, marching band, and sports again?) Will they be put back in their original positions and then those cut be put back in their positions? What steps will our district take to prevent this problem in future? Will any administrators be**

cut at district office since we are clearly overstaffed if we have to cut teachers who have 40 students in their classrooms, so now there will be more? See question 4. If positions are reinstated, the processes outlined in the Negotiated Agreements will be followed to recall employees. On administrative positions, CSD has reduced the number of administrators over the last 15 years, and there currently are positions that are not being filled. Administrative positions are needed to meet district responsibilities. Christina has the lowest administrator to student ratio of any of the 5 traditional districts in New Castle County, and the lowest in the state of traditional districts except for Delmar and Woodbridge. Also, Christina has the lowest ratio of students to teacher (12.8 to 1) of any traditional district, supporting the District's practice that our resources should be used in the classroom and not on an abundance of administrative positions.

7. **What is the plan for the 2020-2021 school year? My high schooler is really struggling with the virtual learning, my middle schooler is handling it well. Will there be a chance of splitting days between virtual and in school?** *The Christina School District is following guidelines established by the Center for Disease Control, Governor John Carney and Delaware Department of Education. Once the guidelines for reopening schools are established, the Christina School district will communicate with all families about our plans for the future of schools.*
8. **The high school students that were enrolled in Driver's Education, what is the Christina doing to assist them in getting a waiver from the DMV to be taught at home? Will there be an offer to hold classes during the summer, as they will be able to maintain social distancing?** *The Department of Education just released guidelines for Driver's Education on May 29th. We are currently sharing that information and working with our Driver's Education department to create a plan for the Christina School District. We will communicate the plan as soon as it is finalized.*
9. **How do we answer our friends and neighbors who say that if we just closed some facilities in the district we would have enough money? It's a response I get frequently and don't feel like I have an informed answer.** *This is normally directed at 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.*
10. **How will this effect students with a IEP?** *Students identified with an individualized education plan, IEP, will continue to receive the required accommodations and supports as outlined in their plan.*
11. **What happened to the millions of dollars LOST years ago and supposedly stolen by a District employee? Mismanagement? Was it found or stolen?** *If this question is in regards to the financial failure of the District under the leadership of a previous superintendent, the failure was a result of overspending, not theft or fraud. An investigation was completed by the State, and no evidence of theft or fraud was reported. The*

overspending was centered on staffing levels, both Administrative and Teachers, far in excess of units earned.

12. **For many decades, the District has had thousands of pupils leaving to attend public school in other districts and charter schools, yet the Board has failed to consolidate accordingly. In this referendum, you are asking to build new classrooms at Downes, and renovate more classrooms at Christiana High with 100% Local funds even though the State refuses to issue the certificate of necessity & fund the 60% share. The State probably knows that this is more wasteful spending. Why can't you close one of the high schools? Why does the board continue to waste taxpayer money year after year?** *Christina submitted a \$100 million-dollar request for funding to the State for much needed renovations to approximately 1/3 of our schools. The State of Delaware has a large backlog of requests (\$2 billion) and was able to approve \$11.4 million to be used to do renovations at CEEC, Marshall, and Leasure. Question 3 on the ballot is approval to fund the local share of these renovations. Question 4 is approval to fund projects 100% locally that were submitted on the original ask but that the State could not fund at this time because of budgetary constraints. The projects supported by this funding align with the District's vision for reimagining our High Schools and expansion of successful programs.*
13. **Why has the district continued to hire more employees than the state formulas call for with 100% local funding? Why can't you be more frugal like other districts who manage to have higher test scores with fewer staff members?** *We recognize that staffing is a key element of educational quality. Christina works to provide staffing based on the state formula and required equitable distribution of personnel. Christina is consistently awarded Nationally High Performing Schools and has significantly reduced spending by more than \$5 million over the past 3 years.*
14. **Will the children have to do summer school? How will all this affect them on passing? Should the parents also take a training class to help their children? Will the school district offer training for the parents?** *The Christina School district is committed to partnering with families to ensure positive experiences while learning at home. We will continue working on plans to enhance virtual learning and will communicate those plans as soon as guidelines are released for the reopening of schools. No students will be held back this school year. There will be no summer school, except for students who are eligible for special programs, credit recovery at the high school and some course recovery for our middle schools. If you have a question around whether you are eligible for one of our summer programming offerings, please contact your building principal via email.*
15. **With a possibility of a denial, who will be present to assist that principal for Downes?** *Downes currently operates under the leadership of the principal. However, Christina will evaluate to determine if an administrator position is needed for additional support.*
16. **With an approval will there be extra assistance for children that aren't considered part of the norm since the schools are supposed to be inclusive educational settings?** *All students with Individualized Education Plans should consult with their school's Educational Diagnostician to discuss any options available at this time.*

17. **My school taxes increased \$600 due to the 3rd referendum (because 2 NOs were unacceptable)! Will more yes money add to the existing increases or do they EXPIRE?** *The tax increases do not expire. The total assessed value of properties in the CSD has decreased over the last several years, so the income goes down with a steady tax rate. Costs continue to go up. To have sufficient money to pay the local costs the tax rate has to increase periodically.*
18. **When are changes effective once referendum passes?** *If the referendum passes, this will provide an opportunity to restore programs and positions. The process will begin shortly thereafter. If the referendum could have been held before May 15, the teacher reductions would have happened only if the referendum was not approved.*
19. **Can my daughter change from home school to online public school and get a report card at the end of this academic year?** *Our elementary schools are providing a Progress Report for the 4th Marking Period. Our secondary schools will issue a 4th marking period grade that is an average of the first three marking periods. In semester courses, the 4th marking period grade will be the same as the 3rd marking period grade prior to school closures on March 13th. Secondary school students have the ability to improve their 4th marking period grade by participating and completing their remote learning assignments. Report cards will be posted on Home Access Center beginning on June 19th.*
20. **Is there any other way that we can navigate these budget cuts?** *A majority of my peers, including myself, are in the music, athletic, and arts programs, and we truly value them at our school. They are helping us with our future careers, and I believe we all truly need these at our schools. If they do permanently get taken away due to budget cuts, they will further damage our educational careers. All I want is for all students to get the same opportunities regardless of what school they go to. I want to continue my education in the Christiana school District, and I truly love the opportunities we did have. Despite the great educational opportunities, extra-curricular are a big factor that determine whether or not students will stay in this district. We agree with the impact, but the other option would have been the elimination of more teaching positions and larger class sizes.*
21. **As a taxpayer who funds the district, will you publish all questions submitted to this event regardless if you intend to or do answer them in order to role model transparency and respect for all submissions to know their questions were, at minimum, received?** *Yes, all questions received for the May 11 and May 28 Town Hall will be placed on our website.*
22. **I am very concerned about the decision to end the Advanced Academics program here at Thurgood Marshall. We have an excellent teacher leading the effort and my daughter has been a part of this program since 2017-2018, after moving back from SLC, UT. As my daughter has been gifted since Kindergarten, I'm very concerned that there will be no advanced opportunities for her to progress as well as stay focused through her early school years. I would be a strong advocate to keep this program open. Please let me know how we can keep this program going so that our children remain focused and realize their potential. I am very concerned about children regressing and becoming lazy academically. I hope to hear from the district soon. Thank you for giving me this very valuable opportunity to speak up about this very important decision. To keep Advanced Academics and additional programs, we must have a successful referendum.**

23. **What is the deciding vote. Is it 50.1%? Is there a number the district is looking for? Does it just go by How many votes or does the district take into consideration the non-voters too?** *The deciding vote is carried by the majority.*
24. **Why does your online calculator, as of 5.21.2020, show the property taxes only if Question 1 is successful? What if all 4 questions are successful? Does the number change? Does it go up? If so, by how much, and why is this not being shared with the public?** *The second link is to a tax calculator to determine the increase in your operating tax for the year 2020-21. Due to limitations on the calculator, this will show the increase in the first year for the 29-cent increase and the additional increase for the 5 cents in the following two years." Additionally, we can answer that if all four parts are approved, the total increase in the third year will be \$293.80 for a property assessed at \$65,000. The break down is 29 cents = \$188.50 in taxes. Each 5 cents = \$32.50. Capital at 1.2 cents = \$7.80. $188.50 + 32.50 + 32.50 + 32.50 + 7.80 = \293.80 .*
25. **If yes is the majority vote will that stop Christina school districts layoffs? I'm told that it doesn't matter what the vote is.** *If the referendum passes, the Board of Education in cooperation with the new administration would decide the path forward for the programs and positions that were eliminated. The Board would have to implement that path by another vote.*
26. **What does this all include for our students and teachers?** *We're not sure what is being asked here. However, if the referendum is passed, students and teachers will benefit by:*
- *Continue ongoing programs*
 - *Funding for instructional supplies, materials and technology*
 - *School safety and security initiatives, and new learning environments*
 - *Retention and recruitment of teachers and support staff*
 - *Keep up with rising operating costs such as funding for students, salaries, transportation and energy*
 - *Updating and replacing major building systems and addressing critical maintenance and facilities challenges*