

August 18, 2017

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)
Medford Lakes School District
Bond Referendum
Tuesday, September 26, 2017

Introduction

The Medford Lakes School District (MLSD) will ask the Medford Lakes community to vote on a one-question bond referendum on Tuesday, September 26, 2017.

- Question - \$2.9 million to fund necessary renovations to the Nokomis and Neeta Schools to accommodate the district's 550 students in PreK - Grade 8. An approved referendum will fund top priority, critical projects such as:
 - New roof at Nokomis School
 - Security renovations and upgrades at both schools
 - Renovated and upgraded lavatories at both schools
 - Boiler replacements at both schools

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Background

Q1 Why is the Medford Lakes School District holding a bond referendum election?

A1 The Medford Lakes Schools - Nokomis, constructed in 1956 and Neeta, constructed in 1961 - are approximately 60 years old and in need of critical renovations. Although Medford Lakes Schools have been well-maintained and have undergone some renovations over the years, some of the facilities and equipment are original to the buildings and in need of no-frills improvements and upgrades. The projects included in the proposed referendum will improve energy efficiency, security, ADA accessibility and the overall school climate.

Q2 What is the outcome if the referendum is not passed?

A2 If the referendum is not passed, the roof at Nokomis School still must be replaced and necessary repairs completed, within the annual budget. The district is on borrowed time with the aging boilers and will need to be reactive, rather than proactive, if a boiler fails at either school.

Additionally, state aid is not available for any of the projects if they are completed within the annual budget.

Financial Information & Tax Impact

Q3 What is the total cost of renovations and upgrades?

A3 The total cost of the renovations and upgrades will be \$2.9 million.

Q4 What will the tax impact be on Medford Lakes homeowners, if the bond referendum is approved?

A4 If the referendum is approved on Tuesday, September 26, 2017:

- The average homeowner in Medford Lakes (\$285,900) would see an increase to their debt service payment of \$92.75 per year.
- After 4 years, the average homeowner would see a reduction in debt service payment of roughly \$250 per year. This reduction is due to the fact that the gym/library project will be paid in full.

Q5 How will the proposed referendum affect taxes for senior citizens?

A5 Seniors and people with disabilities may be protected from future property tax increases by applying for the Property Tax Reimbursement Program (Senior Freeze). Seniors and people with disabilities must meet eligibility requirements, which can be found on the NJ Division of Taxation website: <http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/ptr/index.shtml>. For more information, go to the website or call the NJ Division of Taxation at 1-800-882- 6597.

Referendum Projects

Q6 What projects will be funded if the referendum is approved?

A6

Nokomis School – constructed 1956

- New Roof for Entire Building
- Renovate/Upgrade Security Entrance
- Upgrade and add security cameras, indoors & out
- Improve ADA accessibility
- Boys/Girls lavatories upgrades and age appropriate for preK - 2
- Faculty lavatory upgrades
- Intruder prevention locksets for all classroom doors
- Replace boilers (2) with new, energy-efficient models
- Occupancy sensors
- Sidewalk/landing repairs

Neeta School – constructed 1961

- Renovated/upgraded Security Entrance
- Upgrade and add security cameras, indoors & out
- Improve ADA accessibility
- Technology upgrades - The school district is utilizing technology to improve communication between the school and community.
- Boys/Girls lavatories upgrades and age appropriate for grades 3 - 8
- Faculty lavatory upgrades
- Intruder prevention locksets for all classroom doors
- Replace boiler with new, energy-efficient model
- Occupancy sensors
- Sidewalk/landing repairs

Q7 What are the major projects included in the referendum?

A7

- At \$658,000, the Nokomis School roof replacement is the most expensive, yet critical projects funded by the referendum. It was installed 25 years ago, in 1992, and has outlasted its estimated timespan of 15 years.
- Equally important is funding new boilers at Nokomis and Neeta Schools, which also have outlasted their estimated timespan and need to be replaced with more energy-efficient, reliable systems.
- The Nokomis and Neeta schools are in need of crucial security upgrades. The referendum will fund added safety and security for all students. Security cameras will be installed on the inside and outside of each building. Security entrances will also be constructed in order to keep school visitors separated for the children inside the school building.
- The original lavatories for boys and girls will be upgraded in both schools. At Nokomis the bathrooms will be renovated to be age-appropriate for students in preK through Grade 2.

Q8 What happens if the total cost of the project is less than the amount passed in the September 26th referendum?

A8 State law requires the district to return all unused bond proceeds to the taxpayer in the form of tax relief. The district is not permitted to utilize the bond proceeds for projects other than those approved by voters in the referendum.

Q9 What if the actual costs of the project exceed the amount approved in the September 26th referendum?

A9 State law prohibits the district from spending more than that stipulated in the bond referendum approved by the voters. The district believes the overall project plan includes prudent estimates. However, in the unlikely event that actual costs of the project exceed the gross bond proceeds, the district will search for more efficient means of achieving the referendum's overall objective and/or reduce the scope of work. The Board of Education stresses cost-efficiency with its professionals.

Q10 If approved, when will the renovations begin and when will they be completed?

A10 If approved, certain projects will be able to begin in the spring of 2018. Roof replacements, bathroom renovations, security vestibule construction and boiler replacement will occur over the summer of 2018.

Q11 Will any other renovations/improvements be necessary in the near future?

A11 The district and its professional consultants have worked diligently to identify the renovations and improvements needed to support the Nokomis and Neeta Schools through the life of the loan. **The district DOES NOT anticipate any additional major renovations and improvements in the foreseeable future.** Of course, as is the case with community members' own homes, routine maintenance will be required for typical wear and tear on the facility.

Referendum State Aid

Q12 Is the MLSD eligible for state aid for the referendum projects?

A12 The district will be eligible to receive 40% in state aid, which would further reduce the local tax share. State aid is available only if the referendum passes; it is not available for projects completed within the annual budget.

Q13 Will the referendum affect the amount of annual state aid given to the Medford Lakes School District?

A13 No, the referendum will not affect the annual state aid given to the Medford Lakes School District. The annual aid given is a combination of School Choice aid, transportation aid, and pupil aid, and is completely unrelated to referendums.

Voter Information

Q14 When will the community vote on this referendum?

A14 The referendum vote will take place on Tuesday, September 26, 2017.

Q15 When do voters have to be registered in order to vote on the referendum?

A15 **Voters must be registered by Tuesday, September 5, 2017.** Voter registration forms will be available at the Nokomis and Neeta School offices as well as online at <http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1178>. **If you are already a registered voter, you will be able to vote on the September 26th referendum.**

Q16 Are Vote by Mail ballots available?

A16 Yes. Vote by mail ballots are available. They can be found at the Nokomis and Neeta School offices or online at <http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1181>.