

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CHATHAMS

2016 Referendum Newsletter

Dear Community Member,

Just this month, *New Jersey Monthly Magazine* announced that Chatham High School ranked as the Number One high school in the state for the second consecutive time. While we take all school rankings with a huge grain of salt, we are nonetheless proud of this honor and recognize that a primary reason for the accolade is the generous investment and support our community has devoted to the academic and extracurricular programming available to our students. We are now asking you to consider additional investments related to the infrastructure and facilities of our schools—investments that we believe will help enable our schools to continue to provide the very best learning experiences for our students.

Over the past year and half, our Board of Education and district administration have been working to present to the community an improved referendum proposal that will address the most critical infrastructure needs in the school district while costing approximately \$10 million less than the initial 2015 referendum proposal. We are grateful for your extensive, invaluable input that helped our district arrive at this important point.

During the fall, we surveyed all residents to gauge support for potential projects, held four public community feedback sessions to gather your input directly, published the results from roughly 1,200 residents who completed a survey or attended a meeting, and held discussions at the public Board of Education meetings regarding the content and format of a referendum. As a result of this process and our detailed understanding of the district's infrastructure, we determined that six projects were particularly vital, time-sensitive, and well-supported by the public. Over the past four months, we have held six open information sessions about the projects and provided tours of our facilities so that residents could see firsthand the needs of our schools. We appreciate the time that many of you took to speak with us and share your thoughts about the proposals.

We are excited to present this proposal to our community in the form of a referendum vote on September 27. This date was the earliest possible date a vote could be held in accordance with state law and with the time-intensive process we believed necessary to gather community input and feedback. Holding a vote on one of the two later dates in 2016 allowed by state law would cause a delay to the start of any approved project and also could adversely impact curricular and extracurricular programs that are date-dependent, such as a theatrical production or athletic season.

The following pages contain details about the proposals. We invite you to visit our website at www.chatham-nj.org for additional information as well. We thank you for your consideration and your ongoing support of our great school system.

Sincerely,

Board Members

Jill Critchley Weber (*President*), Matt Gilfillan (*Vice President*), Sal Arnuk, Ann Ciccarelli, Michelle Clark, Kim Cronin, Rich Connors, Phil Franz, Lata Kenney

School District Officials

Mike LaSusa (*Superintendent*), Peter Daquila (*Business Administrator*)

REFERENDUM OVERVIEW

Summary

After surveying members of the community and holding public feedback sessions last fall, the Board of Education determined that there were six projects that were both critical in need and that received support from the majority of the survey respondents. The projects are listed to the right, along with their estimated net costs.

The projects will appear in the same order on the ballot and will be voted upon as distinct measures. That is, a voter may cast a “yes” or “no” vote for each measure, and only those projects gaining a majority “yes” vote will move forward.

The date of September 27 is one of five allowed by the state for the purpose of holding a referendum vote. The two earlier dates in 2016—January 26 and March 8—did not provide us enough time to gather sufficient community input or fully develop our projects. The two later dates—November 8 and December 13—would delay the start of any project gaining approval from our voters and impact the completion dates of these important projects. Thus the earliest possible date we could have selected to hold this vote is September 27.

If you will be out of town on September 27, mail-in ballot applications are available at the school district offices, as well as the offices of both municipal clerks.

The tax impact estimates are based on a 20-year bond at a 3.25% interest rate, and assume that all projects gain approval.

Projects	ESTIMATED Project Costs	ESTIMATED Debt Service (State Funded)	ESTIMATED Net District Costs
	(in millions)		
1. CHS Auditorium Renovation	\$3,500,000	\$1,400,000	\$2,100,000
2. CMS Auditorium Renovation	\$3,800,000	\$1,520,000	\$2,280,000
3. CMS STEAM Addition	\$3,200,000	\$0	\$3,200,000
4. Cougar Field Improvements	\$1,429,000	\$0	\$1,429,000
5. MAS 4 Classroom Addition	\$2,400,000	\$281,538	\$2,118,462
6. Roof Replacements	\$1,535,300	\$614,120	\$921,180
TOTAL	\$15,864,300	\$3,815,658	\$12,048,642

ANNUAL Tax Impact

Municipality	per \$100,000	for a Home	for a Home Assessed	
	of Assessed Value	Assessed at \$700,000	at the Municipal Average	
Chatham Borough	\$17.45	\$122.15	\$667,372	\$116.44
Chatham Township	\$16.77	\$117.39	\$781,892	\$131.14

MONTHLY Tax Impact

Municipality	per \$100,000	for a Home	for a Home Assessed	
	of Assessed Value	Assessed at \$700,000	at the Municipal Average	
Chatham Borough	\$1.45	\$10.18	\$667,372	\$9.70
Chatham Township	\$1.40	\$9.78	\$781,892	\$10.93

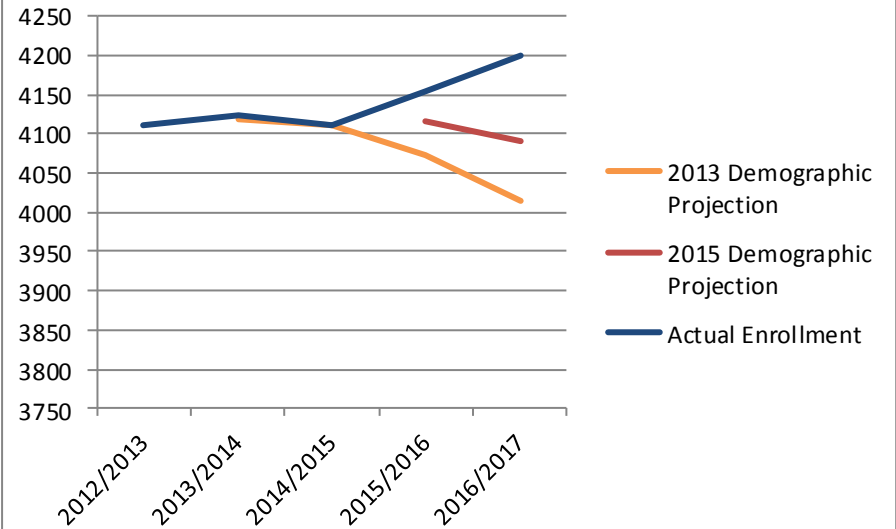
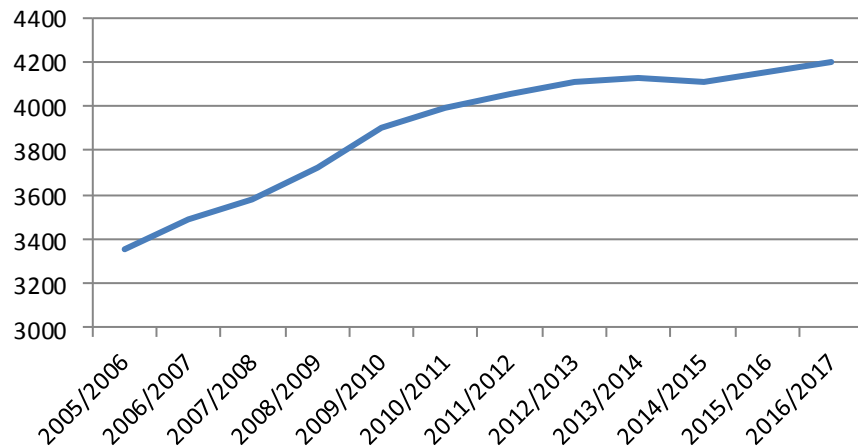
ENROLLMENT OVERVIEW

Since the April 2005 referendum, the district enrollment has steadily climbed. The Board of Education has commissioned demographic reports from professional forecasters during this period, the most recent of which were conducted during the 2012/2013 and 2014/2015 school years. As you can see, actual enrollment has outpaced the forecasts from the professional demographers. The increase in students has stretched our facilities and limited the district’s flexibility to optimally run certain programs. In addition, it has forced the district to divert investment away from critical infrastructure and into additional classroom space that has been added in incremental steps to handle the increased number of students. At the current time, there is an immediate need for more classroom space at the elementary level and improvements in critical infrastructure. This referendum seeks to address these needs.

ENROLLMENT SNAPSHOT

Year	Actual	2013 Demographic	2015 Demographic
	Enrollment	Projection*	Projection*
2005/2006	3358	NA	NA
2006/2007	3489	NA	NA
2007/2008	3582	NA	NA
2008/2009	3720	NA	NA
2009/2010	3900	NA	NA
2010/2011	3988	NA	NA
2011/2012	4056	NA	NA
2012/2013	4110	NA	NA
2013/2014	4124	4119	NA
2014/2015	4110	4111	NA
2015/2016	4154	4073	4117
2016/2017	4200	4014	4092

Enrollment



*2013 and 2015 Demographic Reports prepared by Whitehall Associates, Inc.

Referendum—CHATHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Two of the projects would impact Chatham High School and Lafayette Avenue School. The first is the renovation of the auditorium, built in the early 1970s and outdated in terms of its furnishings, ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards, and other features. The second project would be a partial roof replacement at the schools. Like all portions of roofs in the proposal, those at CHS and LAF have surpassed their life expectancies. 40% of the cost of all roofing projects would be offset by the state.

Critical Needs Met

- ⇒ Replace original seating and furnishings
- ⇒ Bring facility into ADA compliance
- ⇒ Replace original carpeting
- ⇒ Replace portion of roof
- ⇒ Replace HVAC system

1 Auditorium Renovations

Existing



Proposed



2 Chatham High School (HS) Partial Roof Replacement

Existing



Proposed

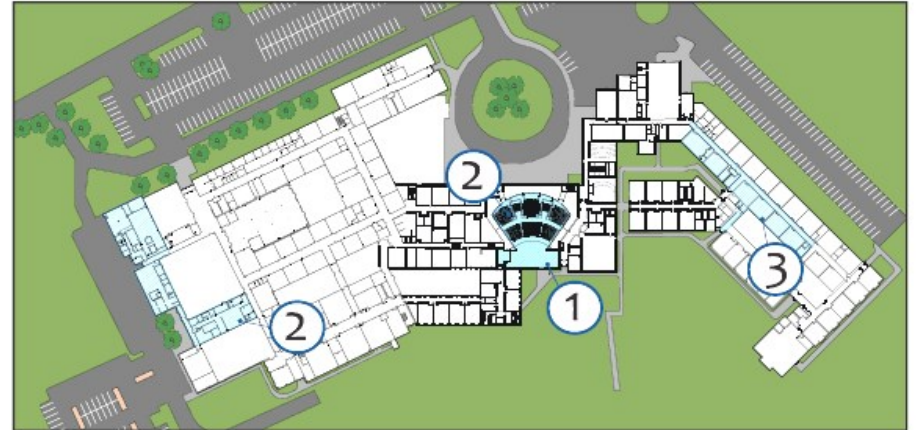


3 Lafayette School (LS) Partial Roof Replacements

Existing



Proposed



Project List:

1. Auditorium Renovation
2. HS Partial Roof Replacement (As indicated by Hatch)
3. LS Partial Roof Replacement (As indicated by Hatch)

CHATHAM HIGH SCHOOL & LAFAYETTE SCHOOL

Images are similar projects throughout the state and are intended to represent design intent. Actual results may vary.

Proposed images are similar projects performed by the district architect and are provided for reference only; actual projects will vary.



Referendum—CHATHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL

There are two projects proposed at Chatham Middle School: the renovation of the existing auditorium and the construction of three new lab spaces that will house our Design and Technology program. The projects include the removal of all asbestos-tile flooring in this wing of the school and the conversion of the wing into a modern S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) facility. A portion of the middle school roof will also be replaced if voters approve the final referendum question.

Critical Needs Met

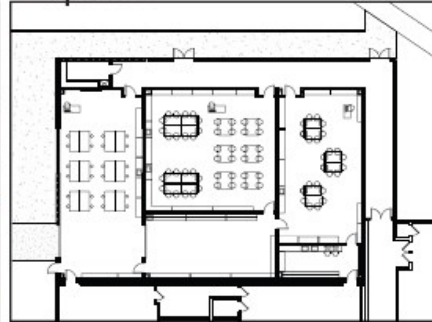
- ⇒ Remove asbestos flooring
- ⇒ Replace seating, furnishings, and roofing system
- ⇒ Install HVAC system, modern lighting and sound systems
- ⇒ Create modern lab spaces to meet curricular needs
- ⇒ Update art classrooms

① STEAM Education

Existing



Proposed



② Auditorium Renovation

Existing



Proposed



③ Partial Roof Replacement

Existing



Proposed



CHATHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL

Project List:

1. STEAM Education
2. Auditorium Renovation
3. Partial Roof Replacement (As indicated by hatch)



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Referendum—COUGAR FIELD COMPLEX

The Cougar Field Complex was built in the 1970s and most of its components are original to that time. The field is currently used for boys soccer, football, and lacrosse teams, as well as for boys and girls spring track.

Critical Needs Met

- ⇒ Install new, ADA-compliant bleachers
- ⇒ Replace sound system, fencing, and macadam in spectator area
- ⇒ Install parking bumpers
- ⇒ Replace concession stand and press box
- ⇒ Create walking path

① New Walking Path

Existing



Proposed



② New Parking Bumpers

Existing



Proposed



③ New Bleachers

Existing



Proposed



④ New Long Jump Pits

Existing



Proposed



⑤ New Concession Stand

Existing



Proposed



Project List:

1. New Walking Path
2. New Parking Bumpers
3. New Bleachers
4. New Long Jump Pits
5. New Concession Stand
6. New Macadam Pavement

COUGAR FIELD

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Referendum—MILTON AVENUE SCHOOL

There is currently insufficient space in our three elementary schools. In each building, certain programs are forced to share classrooms or take place in non-classroom areas. For multiple years now, our enrollment has exceeded demographic projections. This year, our enrollment is at its highest point in the history of the district. Building four classrooms at MAS will provide more flexibility to move stand-alone programs from other buildings to MAS, thus opening space in all elementary schools.

Critical Needs Met

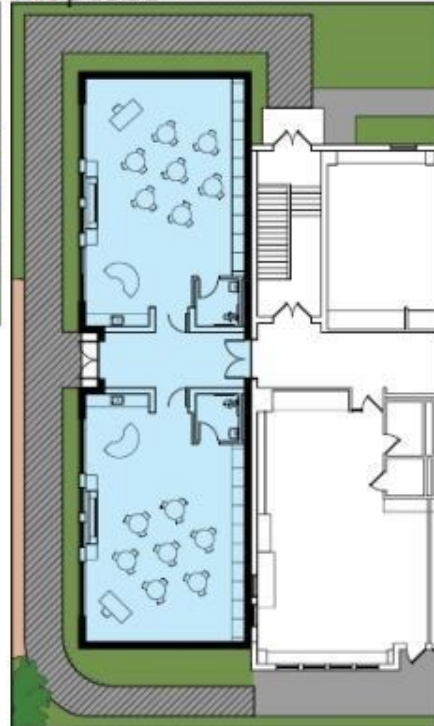
- ⇒ Add four classrooms, each with a bathroom
- ⇒ Move stand-alone, special education programs from SBS or WAS to MAS
- ⇒ Provide more flexibility in the future for a full-day kindergarten pilot

1 New Addition

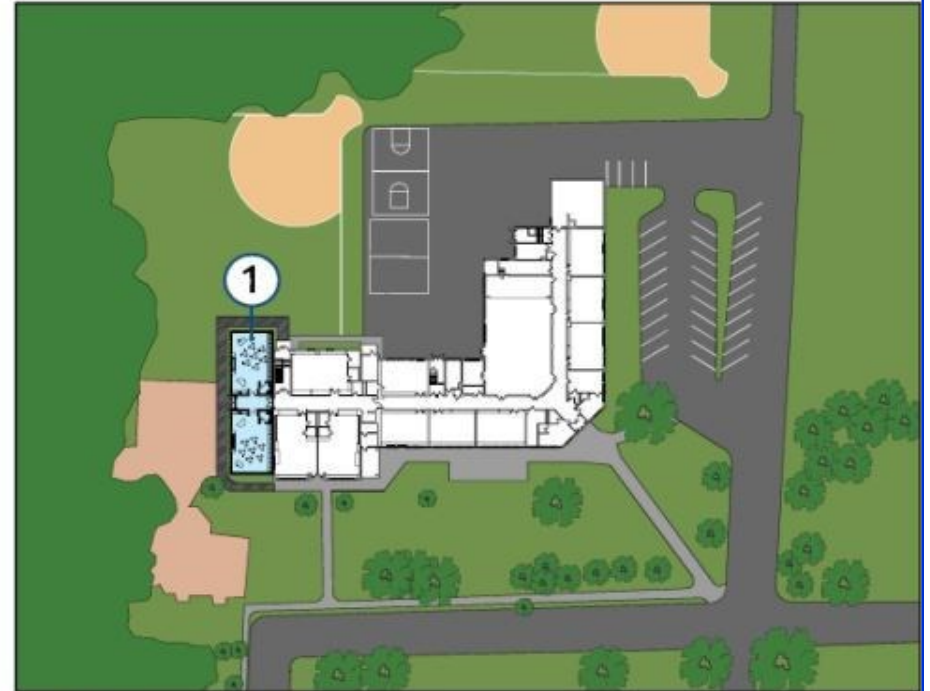
Existing



Proposed



Proposed First Floor Addition Shown
Similar Second Floor not Pictured



Project List:

1. New Two Story Addition

MILTON AVENUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



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Referendum—ROOF REPLACEMENTS

Our school buildings all have sections of roof of varying ages due to the addition of classrooms in stages over time. Four portions of roof are due for replacement. By incorporating these projects into a referendum, the district will qualify for state debt service, which will reduce the net cost to the taxpayer by 40%. If these projects are funded through the operating budget, the district is not eligible for state debt service.

Building	Square Footage	Age (years)	Life Expectancy (years)
CHS	12,750	17	15
CMS (two sections)	21,500	17	15
	11,100	7	5
LAF	11,800	15	15

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter and for your consideration of these proposals.

Please vote on September 27

7:00 am—9:00 pm

POLLING LOCATIONS

Chatham Middle School (Borough Residents)

Chatham High School (Township Residents)