



**Council of Civic Organizations of Brandywine Hundred**  
*The conscience of the community since 1928*

**Welcome to CCOBH's in-person Public Meeting!**

**“The Brandywine School District Referendum –  
Q&A Session with Brandywine Hundred Residents”**

**CCOBH.org**

*Brandywine Hundred's Non-partisan Community Watchdog*

# CCOBH'S MISSION



CCOBH.org

*To protect and enhance the quality of life and wellbeing  
of the people and communities of Brandywine Hundred*

# BRANDYWINE HUNDRED:

- **Population: Approximately 84,000 – Delaware's most populous district**
- **Over 120 Civic and Homeowners' Associations**
- **County Council Members:**
  - **Dee Durham - County Council District 2**
  - **John Cartier - County Council District 8**
- **State Representatives:**
  - **Krista Griffith - District 12; Debra Heffernan - District 6; Larry Lambert - District 7; Sean Matthews - District 10**
- **State Senators:**
  - **Sarah McBride - District 1; Laura Sturgeon - District 4; Kyle Evans Gay - District 5**



# Current Major Concerns:

- Traffic Congestion, Safety, and Development on major roads such as Concord Pike
- Land Use & Development Projects such as:
  - Open Space, Mixed Retail/Office/Residential Use (inc., Incyte/Alapocas, AMT – Concord Plaza)
  - Brandywine Country Club
  - Port of Edgemoor
  - Incyte/Alapocas & Forwood Reserve
  - Concord Mall
  - Avenue North
  - Strip Malls
  - and more
- Air & Water Issues/Toxic Emissions near residents
- Historic & Heritage Preservation
- Informational & Educational Outreach to Brandywine Hundred Residents through Public Forums -- *Stay tuned: More meetings will be scheduled in 2024*



# House Keeping Rules

- **Thank you** all for coming this evening.
- **Restroom Locations** – There are 3 locations close to where we are: To the left of the Stage; in the room to the right of the Parish Hall behind the Sanctuary; outside the double doors on right at rear of the Sanctuary, then down the stairs.
- **Q&A Session** – We collected questions via a survey before the meeting and will open up the floor for additional questions after they are presented. To address as many questions as possible from all other residents, we kindly request that you ask only one question. If your question is similar to a previously addressed one, please do not ask the same question again.
- **Departure time** – To allow the custodians to do their jobs before their shift ends, we must empty the premises before 8:30 pm. We thank the First Unitarian Church staff for letting us use this space for this meeting.

# **AGENDA for tonight's meeting:**

- **Welcome & Introduction of CCOBH**  
-- CCOBH President Robert J. Valihura, Jr., Esquire
- **Introduction of Invited Elected Officials and NCC Finance & Assessment Manager**
- **Introduction of Brandywine School District (BSD) Leadership**
- **BSD Referendum Presentation by BSD Leadership**
- **OPEN PUBLIC DISCUSSION – Question and Answer session with presenters**



# BSD

**STRONG SCHOOLS. STRONG COMMUNITY.**

**VOTE FEBRUARY 13**

# 2024 REFERENDUM



# Types of Referendums

## Two Types

### Operational Referendum

Costs associated with day-to-day operations of the District



### Capital Referendum

Costs of major construction projects





# Types of Referendums

February 13th

## Operational Referendum **ONLY**

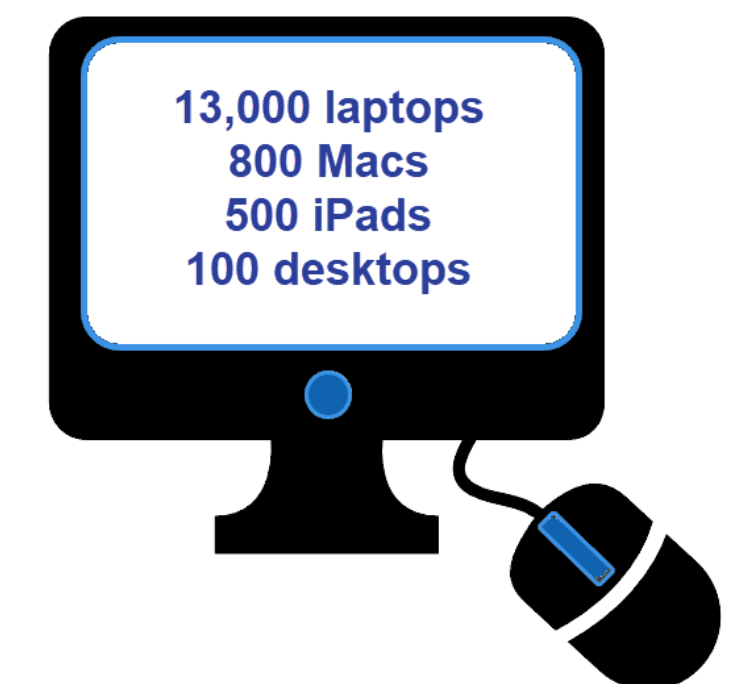
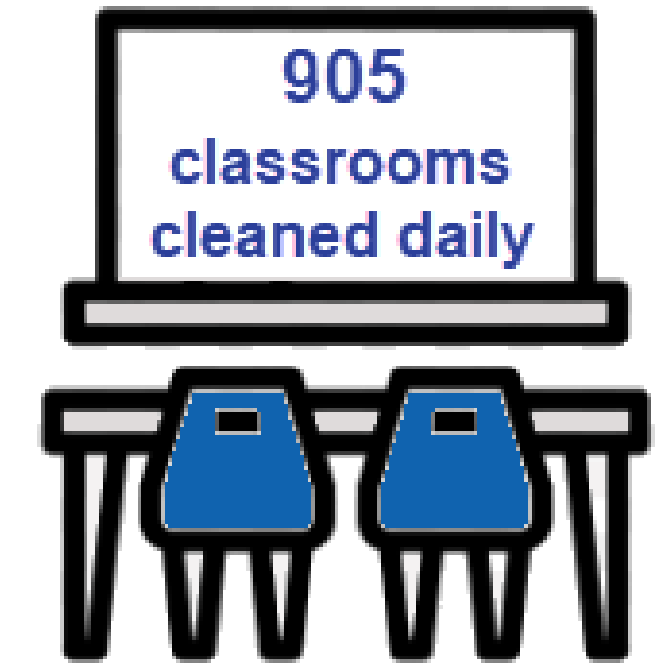
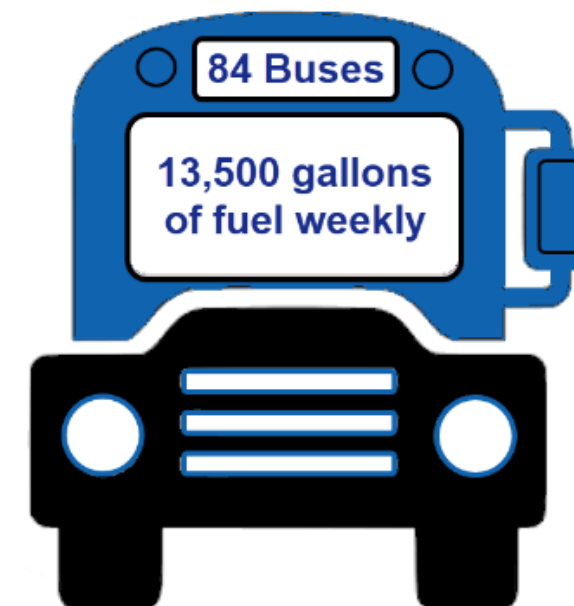
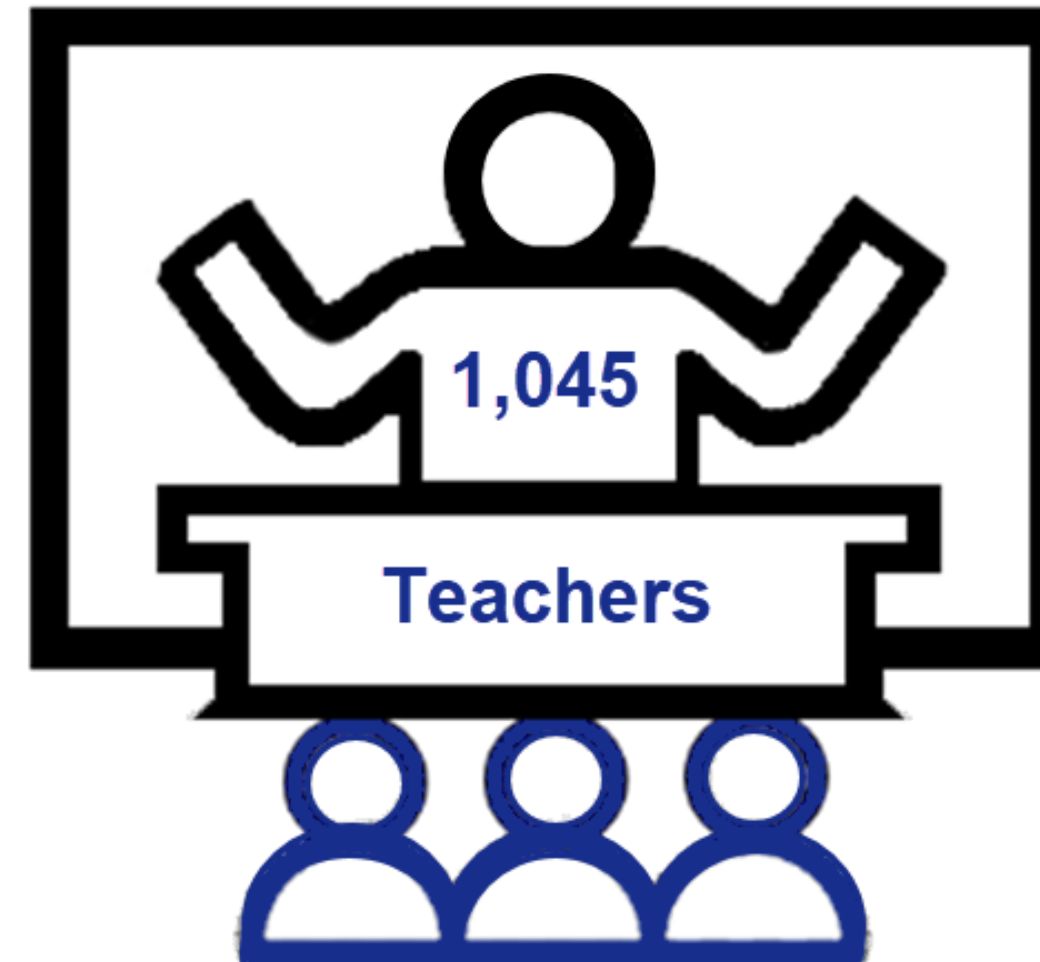
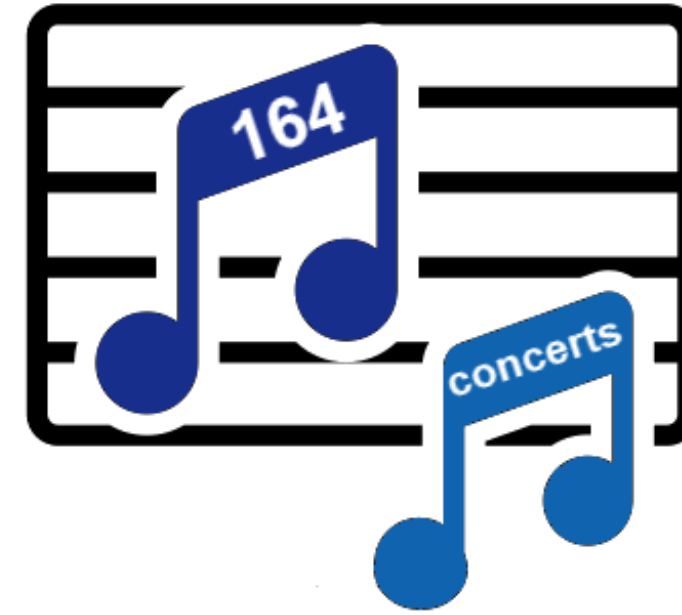
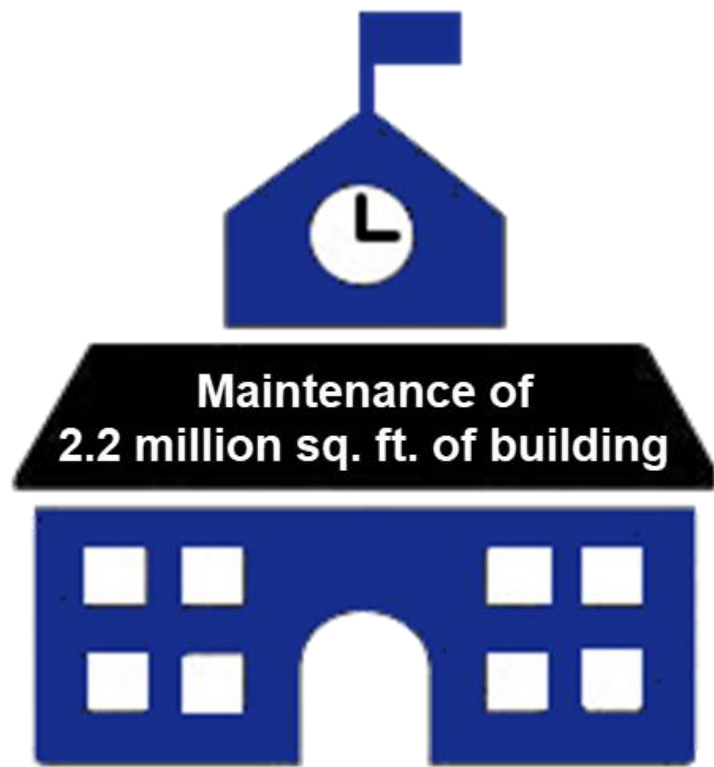
Costs associated with day-to-day  
operations of the District





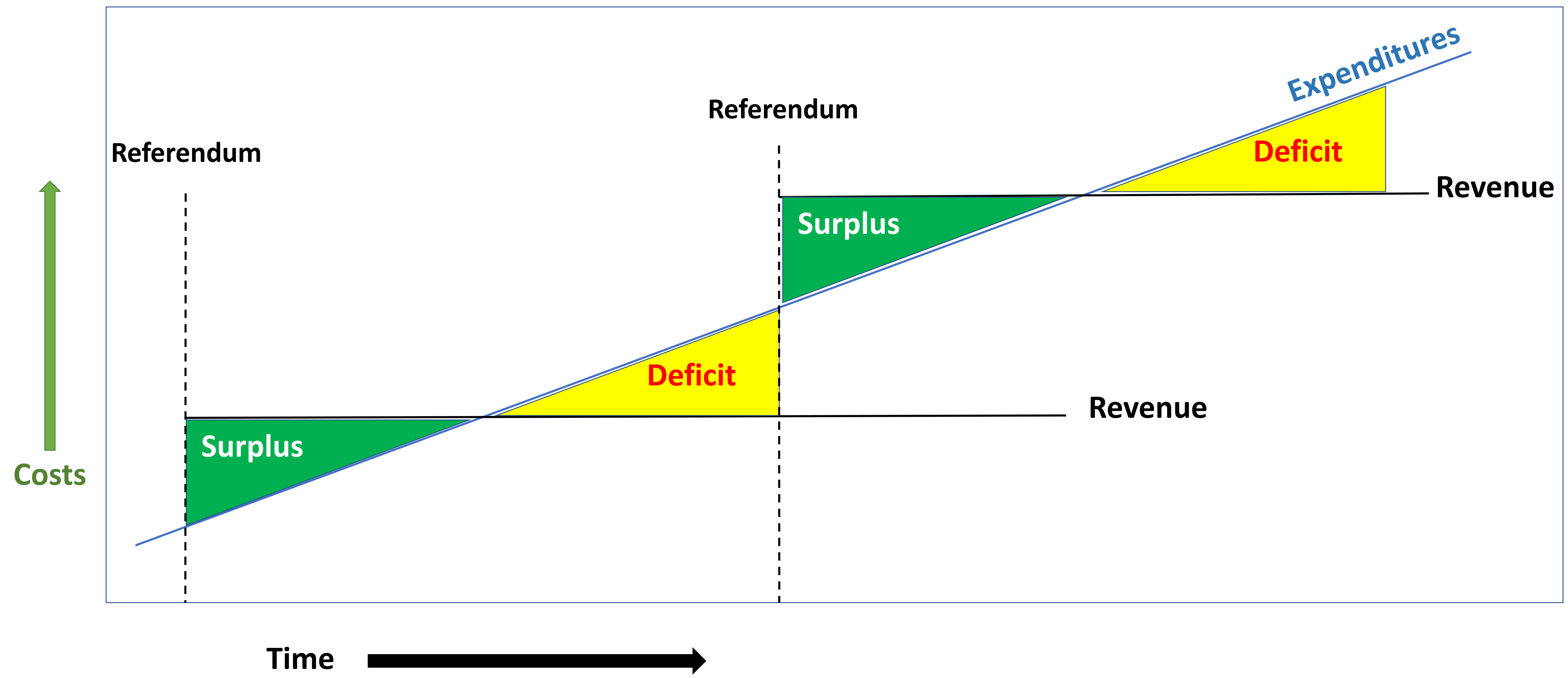
# Operational Funds

## The Day-To-Day Costs of Providing Services to Students



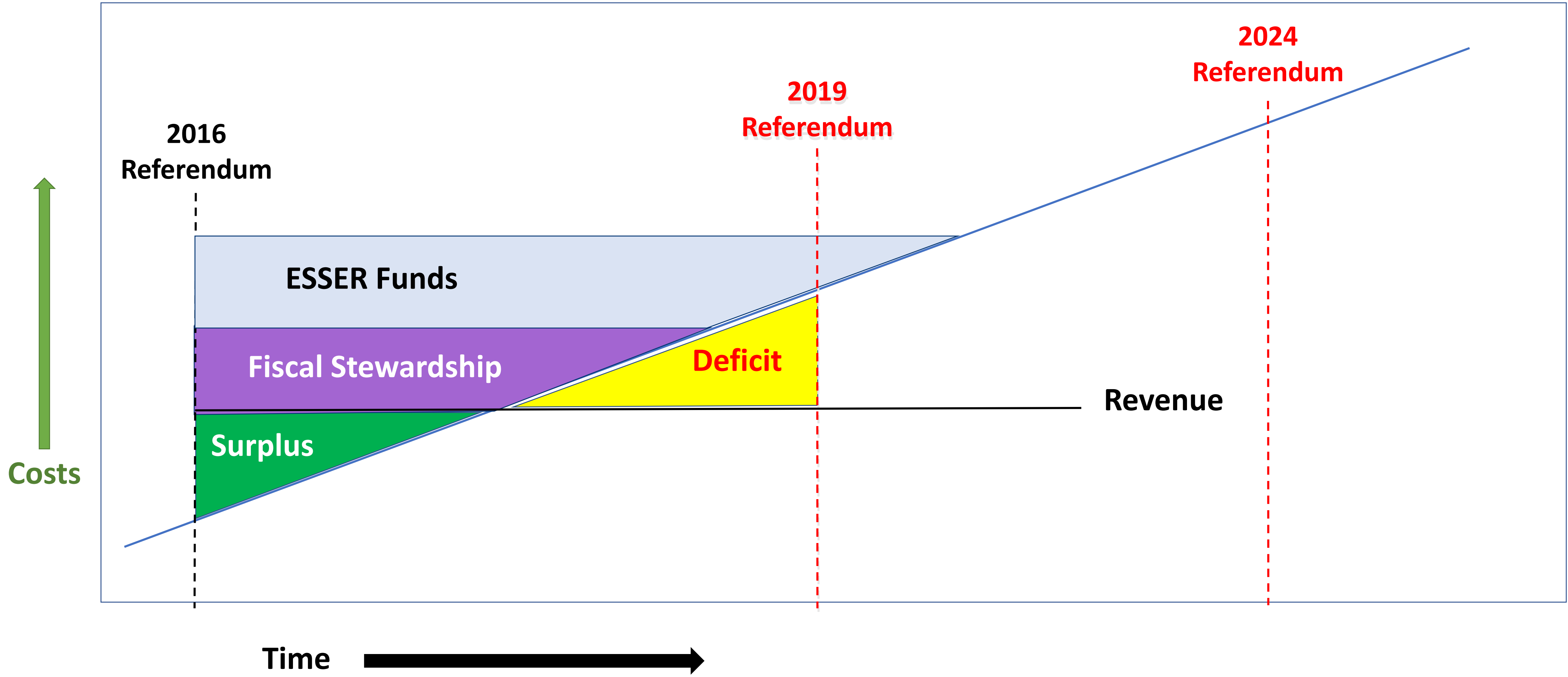


# The Referendum Cycle for Operational Funds





# BSD Current Operational Referendum Cycle





# We Delivered



# Accomplished since 2016 Operating Referendum

- After School Programming
- Athletics
- AVID
- Extracurricular Activities
- One-to-One Technology
- SRO / Constables Program
- Safety & Security Initiatives
- Lower Class Sizes
- Expanded High School Pathway Opportunities
- Renovation Projects
- Teacher Attraction and Retention
- Curriculum Adoption
- Expanding Alternative Education Options
- Dual Enrollment
- Spanish Immersion
- STEM Programming
- Expanded Visual and Performing Arts
- Gifted, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate



# We Delivered



# Accomplished since 2016 Operating Referendum

## Academic Performance

### US News & World Report's Top Ranked High Schools in Delaware 2023

Brandywine, Concord & Mount Pleasant made the top of the list!



### College Board AP Honor Roll Recognition 2023

Brandywine High

### National Merit Scholars & US Physics Olympiad Team 2022 & 2023

Brandywine, Concord & Mount Pleasant students named



### Excelling into College

Over \$45 million in college scholarships reported, 2023





# We Delivered



# Accomplished since 2016 Operating Referendum

## High School Pathway Offerings

### Communications

Digital Design, Journalism, Radio Broadcasting

### Awards in Journalism

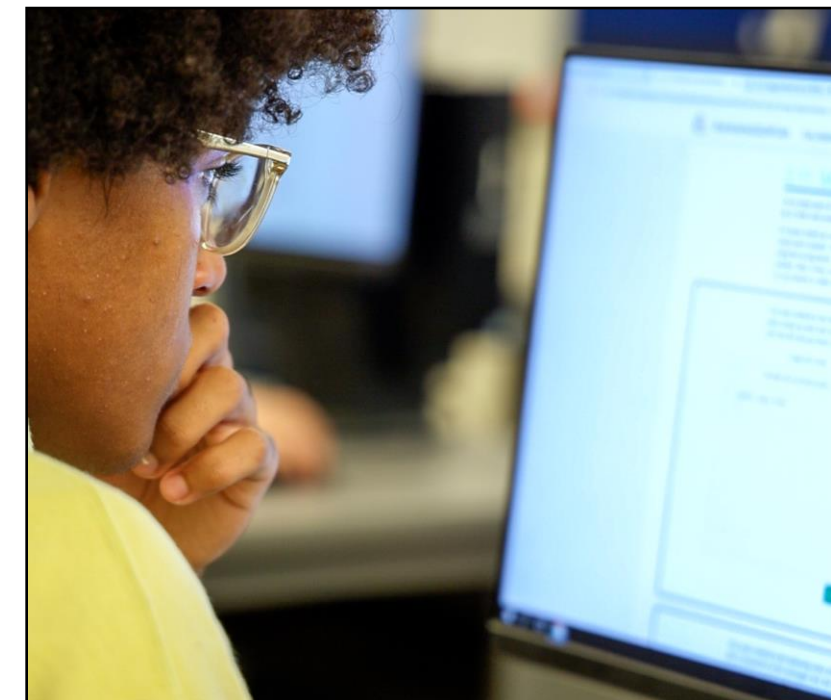
- WMPH 91.7 Radio Station at MPHS run by students
- **National 1st place, 3rd place, and Honorable Mention** from the National Federation of Press Women contest

### Recently added high-wage salary Pathways:

- BioMedical & Computer Science

### Industry-recognized Certifications earned:

- Culinary - ServSafe
- Patient Care Technician - Certified Nursing Assistant & Phlebotomy



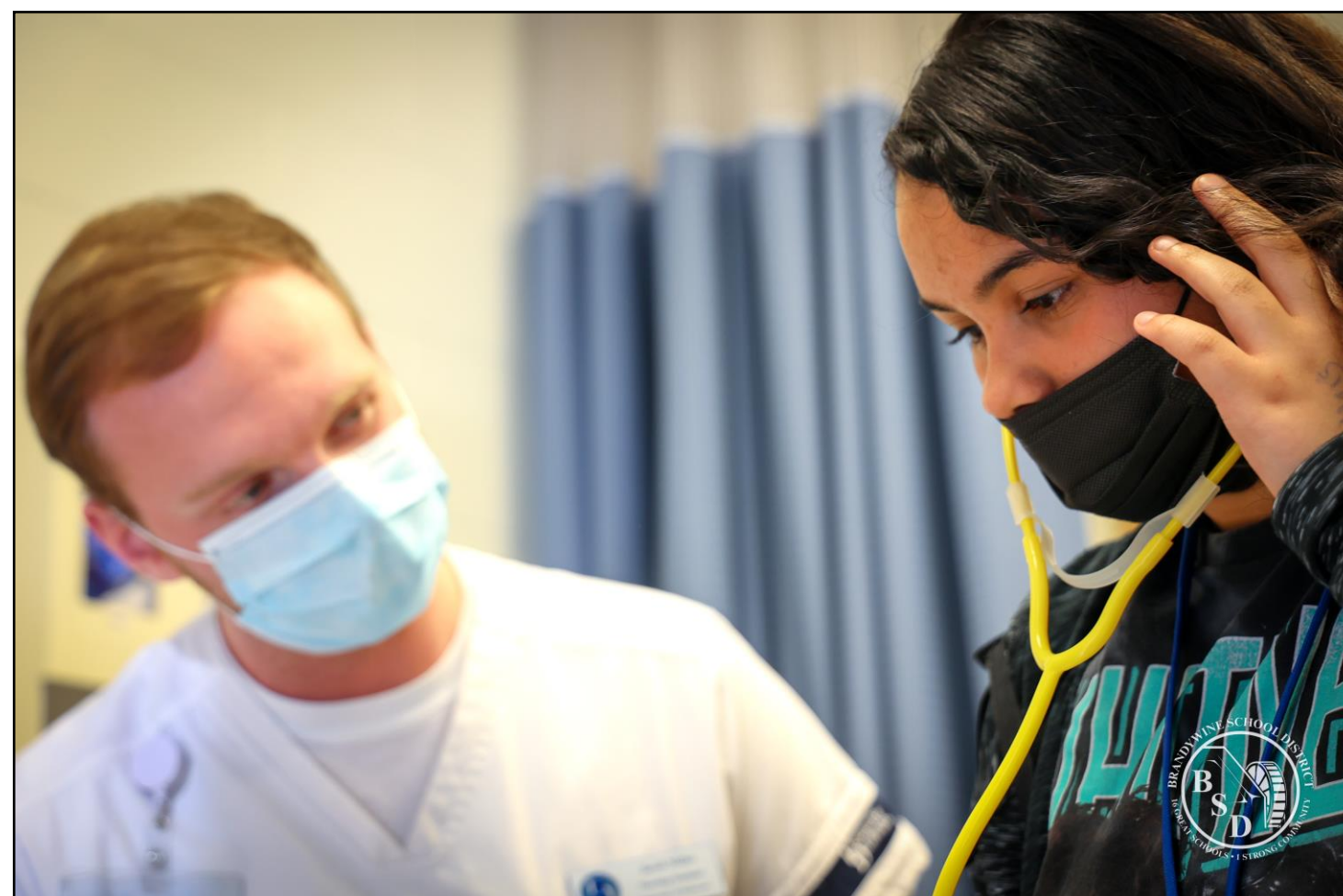


We Delivered



Accomplished since 2016 Operating Referendum

## Dual Enrollment Programs



Patient Care Technician





We Delivered



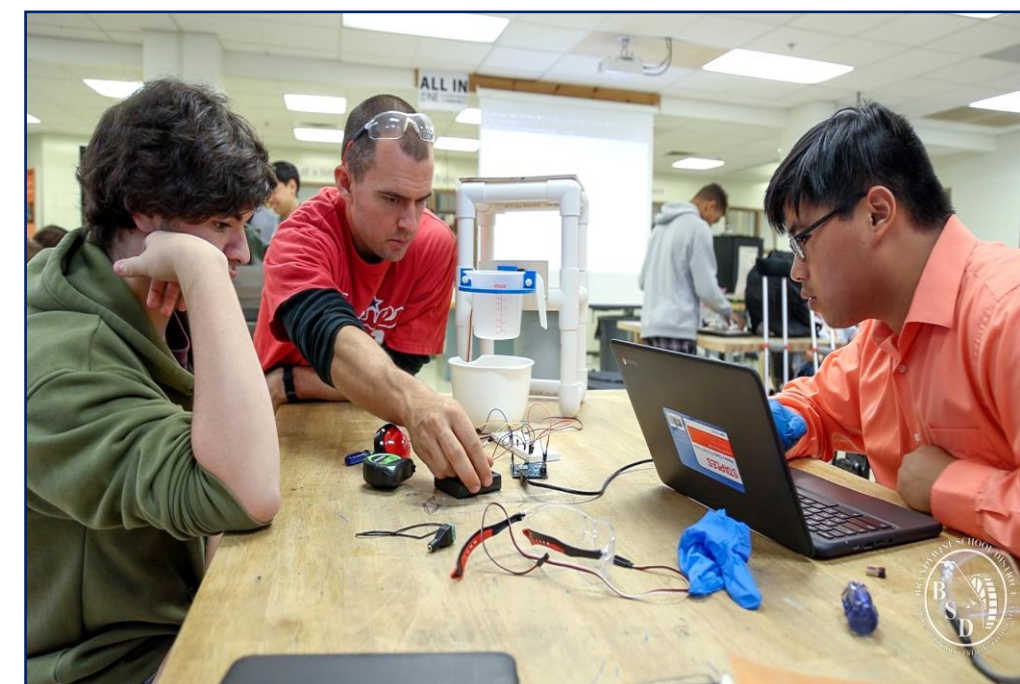
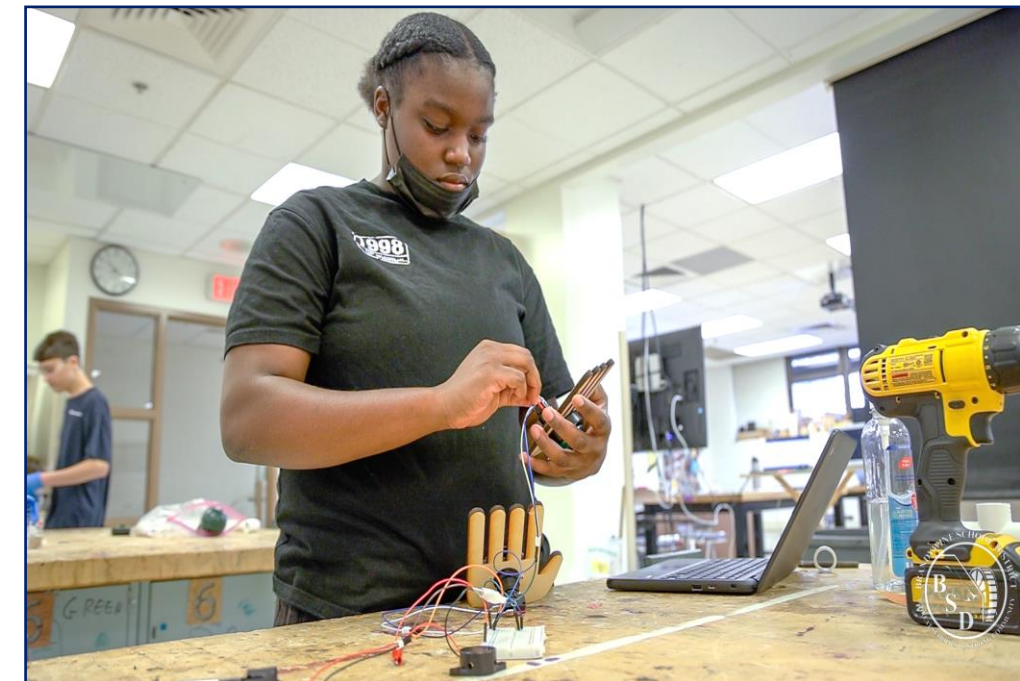
Accomplished since 2016 Operating Referendum

## S.T.E.M. Programming



**1st Place**

**2023 National Samsung "Solve for Tomorrow"  
Competition  
Employees Choice Award**





# We Delivered



# Accomplished since 2016 Operating Referendum

## Athletics

### Fall 2023

- Blue Hen Conference Champions
  - BHS Girls Cross Country
  - BHS Boys Soccer
- Flight B Champions
  - CHS Boys Cross Country
  - CHS Field Hockey
  - CHS Volleyball
- **396** Academic All-Conference Recognitions

### 2022-2023 Highlights

- 4 Schools DIAA Sportsmanship Award
- 27 All-State Athletes





# We Delivered



# Accomplished since 2016 Operating Referendum

## Safety & Security

2016



2023





**We Delivered**



**Accomplished since 2016 Operating Referendum**

**Renovation Projects**

## **Carrcroft Elementary**





**We Delivered**



**Accomplished since 2016 Operating Referendum**

**Renovation Projects**

## **Claymont Elementary**





**We Delivered**



**Accomplished since 2016 Operating Referendum**

Renovation Projects

## Brandywine High





We Delivered



Accomplished since 2016 Operating Referendum

## After School Programming





We Delivered



Accomplished since 2016 Operating Referendum

## Visual & Performing Arts



5 Consecutive Years!

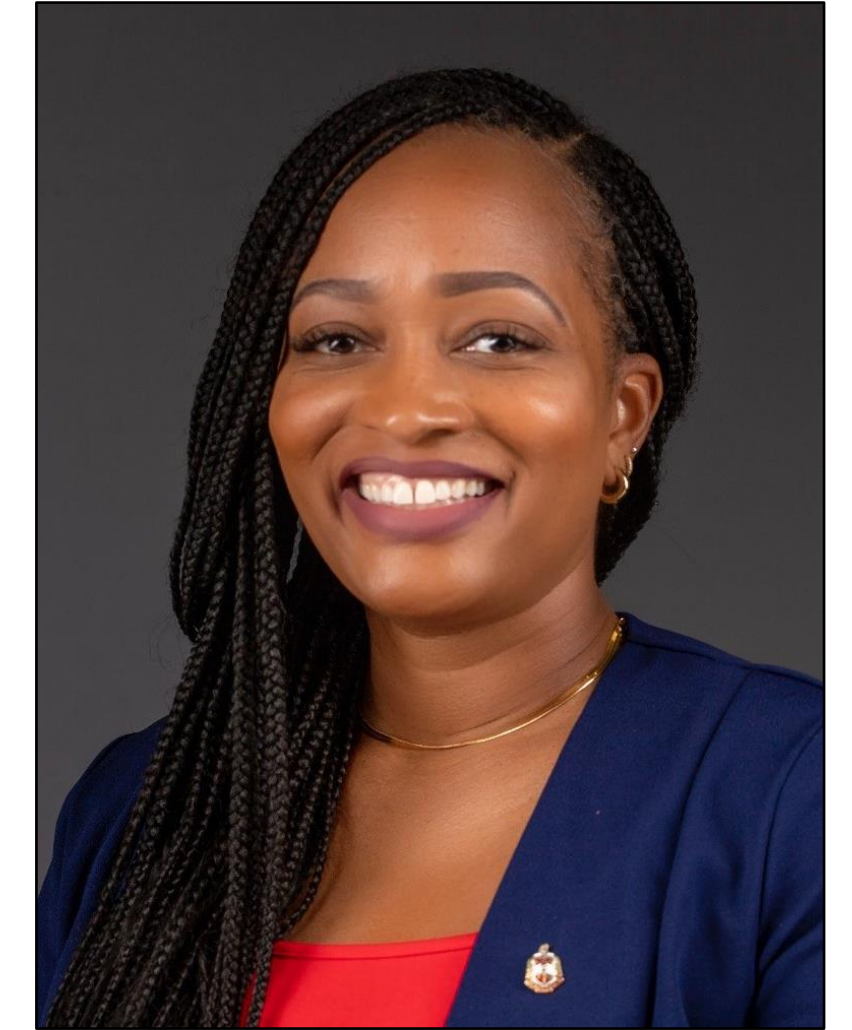




# We Delivered Accomplished since 2016 Operating Referendum

## Outstanding Educator Recognition

- **Two** Delaware State Teachers of the Year
- **Fourteen** State Content Teachers of the Year
- **One** Library of Congress Master Teacher
- **Three** National Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching
- Almost **75%** of BSD Educators have a **Masters degree or higher** (highest district percentage in New Castle County)





# What will this Referendum Support?

Continuation and Maintenance of:

- Safety and Security (School Resource Officers & Constables)
- Alternative Education & Non-Traditional Programming
- Attracting & Retaining High Quality Educators
- Curriculum & Instruction Improvements & Programming
  - Gifted, International Baccalaureate (IB), AVID, Immersion, Visual & Performing Arts
- High School, Middle School, Elementary Athletics and Clubs
- Technology (student & classroom devices)
- Sustaining the BSD Standard of Facilities Maintenance



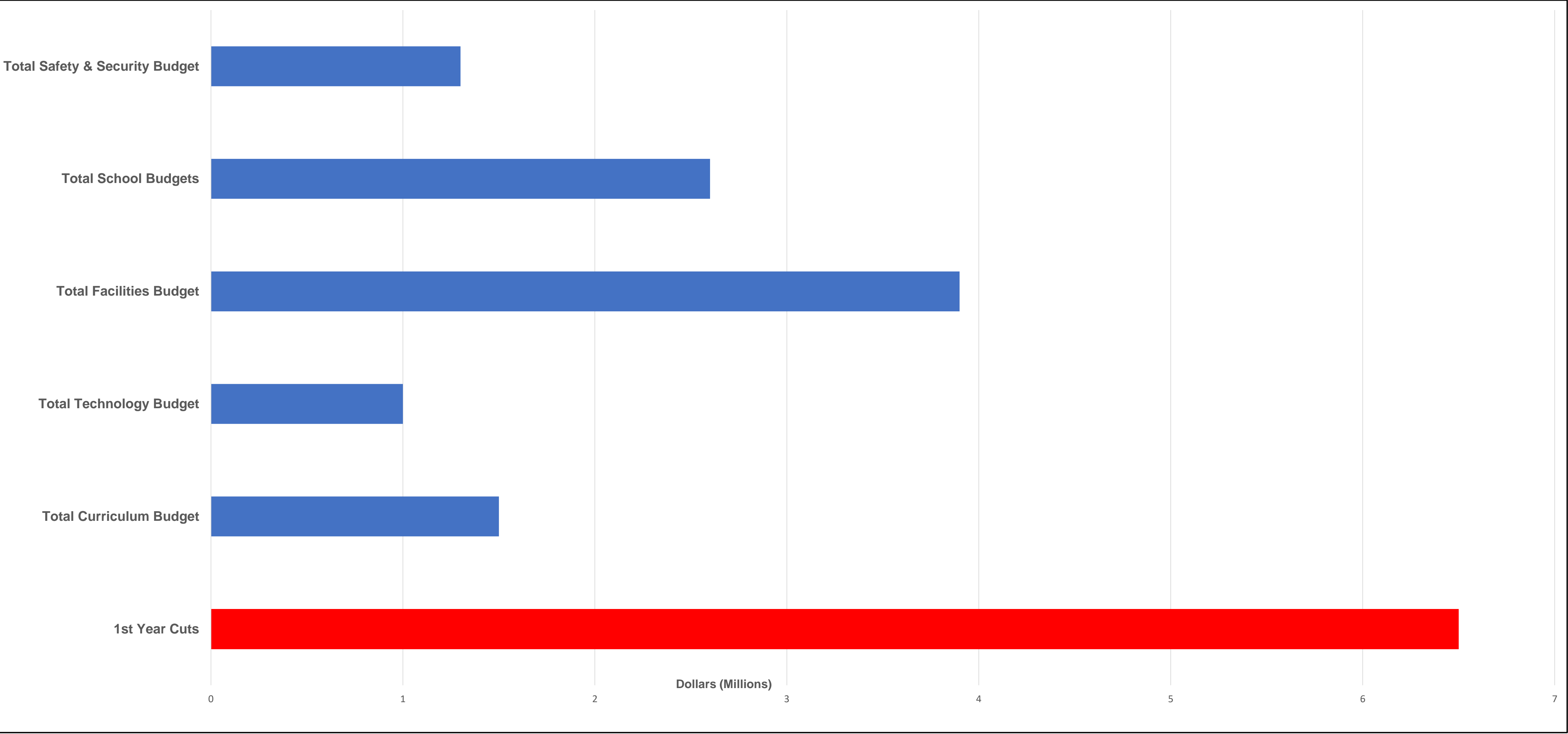


# 3-Year Forecast: \$6.5M Total Cuts Needed First Year

Fiscal Year	Cuts	Projected 6/30 Balance	Revenues over Expenses
FY 24		\$5.9M	-\$3.4M
FY 25	-\$6.5M	\$7.3M	\$1.3M
FY 26	-\$7.5M	\$7.4M	\$0.1M
FY 27	-\$8.5M	\$7.2M	-\$0.2M



# Scale of First Year Cut of \$6.5M





# Phasing Scenarios and Recommendation



Fiscal Year	\$0.45		\$0.25/0.20		\$0.25/0.15/0.05	
	06/30	Rev/Exp	06/30	Rev/Exp	06/30	Rev/Exp
FY 24	\$5.9	-\$3.4	<b>\$5.9</b>	<b>-\$3.4</b>	\$5.9	-\$3.4
FY 25	\$13.9	\$8.0	<b>\$6.9</b>	<b>\$1.0</b>	\$6.9	\$1.0
FY 26	\$16.7	\$8.0	<b>\$9.7</b>	<b>\$2.8</b>	\$8.0	\$0.0
FY 27	\$16.7	\$2.8	<b>\$9.7</b>	<b>\$0.0</b>	\$8.0	\$0.0
FY 28	\$15.0	-\$1.7	<b>\$8.0</b>	<b>-\$1.8</b>	\$6.2	-\$1.8



# Referendum Impact on Tax Bills

Fiscal Year	Current Tax	\$0.25/.0.20 Scenario	Increase	Per Month
Year 1	\$1,831	\$2,013	\$182	\$15.15
Year 2	\$2,013	\$2,158	\$145	\$12.12
Year 3	\$2,158	\$2,158	\$0.0	


*Based on **average** Brandywine assessed value of \$72,701  
Property assessments currently based on 1983 Values*



# Average Brandywine Parcel Example

← Feed Overview Home details Redfin Estimate Schools

**SOLD JUL 31, 2023**



Street View

**SOLD ON JUL 31, 2023**


**Haines Ave, Wilmington, DE 19809**

**\$355,000**  
Sold Price

**4** Beds

**2** Baths

**1,675** Sq Ft



## Tax/Assessment Info

### Assessment

Land: 10200

Structure: 49900

Homesite: 0

Total: 60100

County Taxable: 60100

**School Taxable: 60100**

Year 1: \$12.52 per month (\$0.25/\$100)

Year 2: \$10.02 per month (\$0.20/\$100)



# How does County Reassessment Impact the Referendum?

- It doesn't
- Currently underway in all 3 Delaware Counties
  - Kent will start FY25
  - NCC will start FY26
  - Will update from 1983 assessed value to market value
  - Corrects inequities in tax collections
- By law, Reassessment must be **REVENUE NEUTRAL** for BSD
  - Tax rates will be adjusted to collect total district amount prior to reassessment.
  - State law allows districts 10% provision related to delinquencies, appeals, and growth. BSD has never used this provision to increase revenue.



# State Law Requires **Revenue Neutral** Reassessment

**Current**  
(*Pre*-Reassessment)



**1983** Assessed Property Value

@

**Tax Rate**

=



District Local Revenue

**FY 26**  
(*Post*-Reassessment)



**2026** Assessed Property Value

@

**Tax Rate**

=








**Our Reality**

# **Referendum Animation Explainer**



# Voting Day – February 13, 2024

FEBRUARY 2024						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	  VOTING DAY13	 14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	 28	 29		



# Our Reality

## What's At Stake video



# Voting Information

## WHEN TO VOTE



**7am – 8pm**



# Voting Information

## WHO CAN VOTE

- ✓ Must live in the Brandywine School District.
- ✓ Are at least 18 years old (this includes everyone in your home).
- ✓ You do not need to be a registered voter.
- ✓ You do not need to own property.
- ✓ Must be a U.S. and Delaware Citizen.
- ✓ Must show proof of identity with address (driver's license, State ID, U.S. postal material with street address, utility bill, rent receipt).
- ✓ If you are unable to go to the polls to vote, you can request an absentee ballot.



# Voting Information

## WHERE TO VOTE

You can vote at any of the following locations:

Brandywine High School

Carrcroft Elementary School

Claymont Elementary School

Claymont Public Library

Concord High School

Forwood Elementary School

Hanby Elementary School

Lancashire Elementary School

Lombardy Elementary School

Maple Lane Elementary

Mt. Pleasant Elementary

Mt. Pleasant High School

P.S. duPont Middle School

Springer Middle School

Talley Middle School





[BRANDYWINESCHOOLS.ORG](https://BRANDYWINESCHOOLS.ORG)

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# House Keeping Rules for Q&A Discussion Session

1. We have limited time to ask as many different questions as we can and to get the presenters' answers. If you want to ask a question, please come to the microphone and state your name, neighborhood, and question.
2. If your question has already been asked and answered, please do not ask the same question again.
3. This is an information gathering session, so please do not engage in long discussions if you don't like an answer.
4. If you think your question still needs to be answered, please provide it and your contact information in writing to one of the CCOBH Board Members at the end of the meeting.

*Let's get started .....*

# Why did CCOBH collect questions in advance?

- To make sure key questions are asked to our presenters, we developed an online questionnaire and sent it to all the communities in Brandywine Hundred, requesting residents to submit their questions.
- By requesting questions in advance our goal was to make sure the presenters would address them during tonight's meeting.
- We have grouped the questions according to the presenter to whom it pertains. We welcome comments from other presenters who can shed additional light on a question.
- We will address the collected questions first and then ask residents with further questions to come to the microphones. In the interest of time, if your question has already been dealt with, please do not ask the same question again.
- Our goal is to ask as many unique questions as possible and to get answers that will help inform all of our communities in the best way.

**Please click on the link to hear the recording of the Questions for the BSD Leaders and their answers**

**[Voice Recording of the Q&A](#)**

# Questions for the BSD Leadership

(1 of 5)

There are 15 questions for the BSD Leadership:

1. During COVID, schools were closed. What happened to the millions of State Tax dollars, Federal COVID school money, and the local Referendum tax money?
2. When was the BSD last audited?
3. Why does the BSD own a valuable piece of property on 202, when they could move this operation to Claymont?
4. I'm going to be away on Feb 13<sup>th</sup> (referendum day); how can I vote?
5. The BSD school tax's current multiplier is the assessed value / 100 X Tax Rate. The current assessment multiplier is 2.51850 times the assessed value. What will the rate be if the referendum is passed?

# Questions for the BSD Leadership

(2 of 5)

6. When will any change to the school tax portion of the NCC property tax take effect? When will the first bill come due if the referendum is approved?
7. If the referendum passes, how will the BSD school tax change, and what is the timeline?
8. If the referendum passes, what is the projected additional revenue the BSD will receive, and how will this additional revenue be used?
9. Regardless of this referendum, if the reassessed value of a taxpayer's property goes up, down, or stays the same, how will that affect his/her bill for the School Tax — which is 80% of the overall tax bill each year?
10. Since this referendum is to cover the operational expenses and one of the operational expenses is “teachers’ salaries,” I would like to know the following:
  - a. What is the average number of years a teacher has taught in the Brandywine School District?
  - b. What is the average number of years of teaching experience for BSD teachers?
  - c. What is the salary paid to a starting teacher with no experience?
  - d. To a teacher with the average number of years of experience?
  - e. To the most experienced teachers?

## Questions for the BSD Leadership

(3 of 5)

11. The Brandywine School District is facing a critical challenge in maintaining its current high level of programming and services with a revenue rate established nearly a decade ago. The February 13, BSD Referendum is imperative for sustaining the high-quality education and services for which our District is known. Much is at stake, and together, we can ensure the continuation of programs, services, and education that our children need and make our community strong. I don't look forward to paying more in school taxes. However, the children in our community need a good education. The current teachers live in our district. We don't want to lose these teachers from our neighborhoods. Good schools and education also increase the value of our properties.

How can BSD make sure that we don't lose our teachers and lower the quality of education in Brandywine Hundred?

12. How does the BSD plan on using the increased revenue to avoid bigger class sizes, keep good teachers, and recruit new ones? How do good schools keep property values high?

**13. This question is both for the BSD and the NCC Financial Officer:** The requested increase of 45 cents per \$100 of a property's CURRENT assessed value — phased in over two years with no increase in the 3rd year — will remain in effect after the new property assessments go into effect. The newly reassessed property tax values will go into effect in 2025. What will our tax bill be after the new assessment, and how will this all work out so that the total income from taxpayers to both the County and the School District is “revenue neutral”? Explain this in percent increases or actual dollars based on a \$100,000 valued house.

- a. When does the new assessed value go into effect for tax bills? Is it Tax year 2025?
- b. If the reassessed property tax increases take place in 2025, and since the BSD Referendum increase would take place in 2024 if approved, would the School Tax increase stay based on the current/2024 assessed value or the newly assessed value? Explain.
- c. Will the school district get more funds because of an increase in the school tax portion of the reassessment? A video from the school district states it will not. Another site says any increase will be capped at 10 percent. Which is correct?
- d. What happens to the “senior discount”? Will the senior discount percentage increase proportionally based on the increase in the reassessed value of the property?

## Questions for the BSD Leadership

(5 of 5)

14. Governor Carney recently released his 2025 Fiscal Budget. One of the key investments is identified as “investing in public schools.” Gov. Carney’s budget proposal states there will be a \$2.1 billion investment as the total investment for K-12 public school education. He listed some of the goals as:

- a. \$60,000 starting salary for new teachers over next four years. (Year 1 of the Public Education Compensation Committee recommendation.)
- b. Promoting early childhood education and child care investments
- c. Increasing Opportunity Funding investments for low-income students and English language learners in our schools

Does his budget proposal count on using funds obtained from the BSD Referendum, or is the funding for his 2025 budget coming from resources outside the Referendum?

15. If this referendum is not passed on February 13, how soon will the BSD be able to bring a new one to the voters?

**The following questions were submitted to the attention of the NCC Officials and all the elected officials (Councilpersons, State Representatives and State Senators).**

**Due to a lack of time, these questions were not answered during the public presentation.**

## Question(s) for the NCC Officials and Councilpersons regarding the **Property Reassessment Process**

1. A property reassessment person came to my home during the day my wife is not to let anybody into our home when she is by herself. Assuming that our reassessed home has increased in value, I'm wondering what, if any, effect the denial has on the reassessed value.
2. My home is taxed based on an NCC assessment of \$150,000. When my home is reassessed in 2025, I will be taxed based on "Current Market Values" of around \$450,000. I can't afford more taxes; YOU are FORCING people to leave Delaware and move to Florida or Tennessee. YOU were elected to protect residents. Why didn't you fight this tax increase?

## Question(s) for the **the State Representatives regarding the school and/or property taxes**

1. I have an elderly lady who is still living in her home in Fairfax. She's living on her husband's social security; she can't afford cable TV, she no longer has a telephone, and she lives alone. Why are you letting taxes increase? People over 60 can't afford to live in Delaware. OR IS THAT THE PLAN?
2. **This questions is for State Representatives and State Senators:** Since tax decisions are statewide legislative issues, why can't Delaware, like all the other states (except for 4 other states), include School Tax increases in its total tax decisions vs. opening it up to a referendum? If good, high-quality education means national and state security, increased high-paying job opportunities, higher quality services for everyone in the state, including roads, healthcare, etc., and attracting sustainable, better jobs, why then leave to a referendum such a critical component of taxes that is needed for providing quality of life to everyone?
3. Is any thought given by the state legislature to eliminating tax referendums in Delaware in favor of full funding through the state budget? What are the pros and cons? It is ironic that, as a state, we provide so many tax incentives to attract businesses to come to Delaware. Still, we neglect to make the critical attraction point "better schools & better education" to be decided by a "vote"/"referendum" every three years. Unfortunately, there is a minimal number of residents who attend these elections. Only 17% of the eligible voters participated in the election during the last referendum. Questionnaire.

## Question(s) for the **the State Senators regarding the school and/or property taxes**

1. School taxes are about to increase. County taxes are about to increase. MY pension and social security will NOT COVER THE INCREASES. What do you want me to do? Move?

## Question(s) for the **the CCOBH Board of Directors**

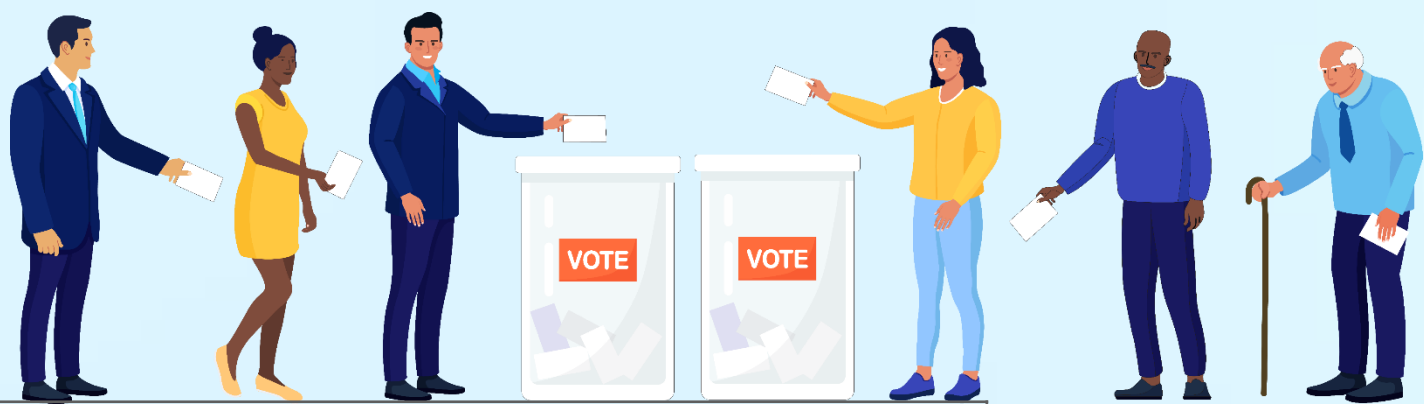
1. Will you publish all the questions and the responses from this meeting?
2. There are a lot of unanswered questions about the Property Tax Reassessment. Will you have another meeting for the public to ask questions after we receive our newly reassessed property information in May or June of 2024?

**Before the public meeting was adjourned, the last two slides were shared with the audience.**

# CCOBH encourages you to **Vote on February 13, 2024** for the **BSD Referendum** – Participation in elections is all of our Civic Duty



## WHO CAN VOTE



• Live in the Brandywine School District	• You do not need to own property.
• Are at least 18 years old (this includes everyone in your home).	• Show proof of identity and address. Bring your Driver's License, State I.D. card, or passport.
• You do not need to be a registered voter.	• If you are unable to go to the polls to vote, you can request an absentee ballot
• Are a U.S. and Delaware Citizen	

## WHERE TO VOTE

YOU CAN VOTE AT ANY OF THESE LOCATIONS

## WHEN TO VOTE

Tuesday, February 13, 2024



Brandywine High School	Carrcroft Elementary School	Claymont Elementary School
Claymont Library	Concord High School	Forwood Elementary School
Hanby Elementary School	Lancashire Elementary School	Lombardy Elementary School
Maple Lane Elementary School	Mt. Pleasant Elementary School	Mt. Pleasant High School
P.S. duPont Middle School	Springer Middle School	Talley Middle School

# THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR PRESENTERS AND TO ALL OF YOU WHO CAME TONIGHT!

