Public Question Proposal

Robbinsville Public Schools

Presented by:

- Brian Betze, Superintendent
- Nick Mackres, BA

January 2, 2024

Goal Tonight: To have the BoE approve a new Public Question to be submitted to the County Board of Elections by January 12, 2024 for a March 12, 2024 election.

CURRENT SITUATION

- District was short funds in 23/24
  - Reduced by 27.5 positions
    - some by attrition
  - Lost some programs
  - Lost some sports, etc.
  - Fortunate to bring some back with the **one-time** $983k infusion and the $152k from the township
- Predicting being short again for 24/25 which is why we are again seeking another public question

Revenue challenges are NOT going away in the 2024-2025 budget………..Why?

- Revenue: Maximum limit on raising taxes @ 2% = $825,500
  - $0 banked cap remains

- **Expenses: $3 million** naturally increasing costs MINIMUM

- The state could have CUT aid by **$2.75 million** in 2023-2024…and can next year

  The district will experience significant shortfalls until this problem is corrected

Why not $7mm or $4.8mm?

- $7mm covered the district for multiple years

- $4.8mm November '23 Public Question failed
  - The $4.8 mm guarded against the potential state aid cut

- We need at least $2.75mm to avoid significant cuts to the district…this assumes a risk that state aid is flat

$2.75mm
Public Question Proposal: MARCH 12, 2024:

- Why $2.75mm?
    - A minimum $2.1mm short if flat state aid + $650,000 recurring costs for staff from the additional aid last year ($2.1mm + $650k = $2.75mm)
    - Rising costs in the preliminary 24-25 district budget
    - Unsure of the extra funding from state and the township

- This is a permanent increase in the Local Tax Levy
- It does not ensure covering a potential cut in State Aid
- More likely to be approved by the voters
- Depending on variables: Helps secure the district moving forward for one year; the 24/25 school year

Property Tax Impact

Monthly Cost of $2.75mm Public Question Above Assumed 2% Budget Cap by Property Value *		
Home Value	2024	2025
$ 100,000	$ 4.27	$ 8.58
$ 200,000	$ 8.53	$ 17.15
$ 300,000	$ 12.80	$ 25.73
$ 400,000	$ 17.07	$ 34.30
$ 500,000	$ 21.34	$ 42.88
$ 600,000	$ 25.60	$ 51.45
$ 700,000	$ 29.87	$ 60.03
$ 800,000	$ 34.14	$ 68.60
$ 900,000	$ 38.41	$ 77.18
$ 1,000,000	$ 42.67	$ 85.75

- Monthly Increase on Average Assessed Home of $379,458
  - 2024 = $16.19
  - 2025 = $32.54

PUBLIC QUESTION PROPOSAL

OPTION: Public Question **March 12, 2024**

- Permanently increase the operating budget
- Public Question Timelines
  - **Submitted 60 days** before the election - *N.J.S.A. 19:60-4*
    - Deadline to Submit Public Question January 12, 2024 to the County Clerk by the School Board Secretary

Public Question (see 1/2/24 agenda for full text)

The Robbinsville Board of Education, in addition to the regular budget, will seek approval from the district's legal voters to raise an additional **$2,750,000** for the 2024/25 School Year as permitted under 18A:22-40….Approval of these taxes will result in a permanent increase in the district's tax levy.

If the question passes AND flat state aid from last year - we are still short and the problem is not going away for future year…still approx. $500,000 short for 24/25…

- Kindergarten will not change
- Some more sports and clubs may be eliminated
- Some staffing cuts may happen
- Class size may still increased
- Some loss of programs
- Change to courtesy busing (2 miles from any direction from our schools, 2.5 miles from RHS) is still on the table

We will not know our state aid until late February (before the vote BUT after we need to submit the question)

TIMELINE

- 02 Jan'24   BoE pass the Public Question
- 12 Jan'24   Deadline to submit question to County
- Late Feb*   State Aid amount released
- 12 Mar'24   Vote on question
- 19 Mar'24   BoE approves *Preliminary* 24/25 budget
- 30 Apr'24   BoE approves *Final* 24/25 Budget

*Typically two days after Governor's Budget Address

What's next?

- Continued discussions with all stakeholders
- Have the support of Mayor Fried
- Board approval of $2.75 million for the March 12, 2024 election
- Submit the "public question" to the County Office of Elections for inclusion on the November ballot
- Disseminate information about the election
- Vote on March 12, 2024 (no early voting)