



**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)
ABOUT LAKE FOREST SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENDUM**

Q. What is a Referendum?

A. In Delaware, a referendum allows residents of a school district, through a ballot process, to vote to approve or reject changes to the operating expense tax and debt service tax. These two taxes are part of the overall school tax property owners pay. Residents (see below for who qualifies as a resident) vote yes or no to increase one or both taxes. The taxes will generate funds the district will use to pay for general operating expenses.

Q. What is the purpose of this Referendum?

A. The purpose of the Lake Forest referendum is to increase the operating expense tax to support the general operating expenses of the District.

This increase is to provide funding for programs such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Continue school safety and security initiatives including adding constables in schools.
- Continue transportation services necessitated by higher State contract costs.
- Recruit and retain highly qualified school staff.
- Technology sustainment – Essential technology maintenance and replacement for students expanded to all grades (K-12).
- Increasing costs of substitute teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Continuance of ongoing programs (textbooks, instructional programs and supplies, maintenance of facilities).

Q. Why now?

A. Our District has been functioning effectively on the same local operating revenue base for the past 8 school years. Unfortunately, costs for personnel and resources have escalated and will continue to escalate. The effective result will be that we will need to raise additional operating revenue, operate beyond our means, or dramatically cut services to our students.

Q. When and where will the Referendum be held?

A: The referendum will take place on **SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2023**. **Polls are open from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM.** Polling places within the District will be held at:

- Lake Forest Central Elementary School in Felton
- North Elementary School in Felton
- Frederica Fire Hall in Frederica

- South Elementary School in Harrington

At said election, voters will be voting by machine upon which is printed the words “FOR” and “AGAINST”, each to be separate and appear on the voting machine next to the appropriate levers.

Q: How do I vote if I am not able to vote on SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2023?

A: Absentee voting is available for those eligible voters who are unable to go to the polls on SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2023. Contact the Kent County Department of Elections Office at (302) 739-4498 for information or visit the [Kent County Department of Elections website](#). The quickest and most convenient way to request an absentee ballot is to visit the voter portal, [iVote](#), and follow the instructions there to request a ballot.

Q: Who is eligible to vote on the Referendum?

A: According to the [Delaware Code, Title 14, Section 1077](#), every citizen 18 years of age or older who is a resident of the Lake Forest School District is eligible to vote on the referendum and they may vote at any of the four (4) polling places.

Other important details:

- You **do not** need to own your home
- You **do not** need to be a registered voter

What do voters need to bring to vote?

- Proof of address (Driver’s License, State ID, Passport, or Utility Bill).

If I rent can I vote?

- Yes, as long as proof of address is provided.

Q: I do not have children who attend schools in the Lake Forest School District. Why should I vote?

A: Good schools benefit everyone.

- Good schools increase property values and help keep communities safe.
- Good schools attract new businesses, which brings income to the community and help keep residential taxes low.
- Good schools graduate highly skilled students, who attract businesses to the community.
- Good schools graduate well-prepared students who make great citizens in the community and help the local economy grow.
- Good schools provide opportunities for you, your family, your neighbors, and friends to access outstanding performing arts, cultural and athletic activities.

Q. Is there Tax Assistance for Seniors?

A. Yes, there state senior citizen school property tax credit.

- This must be a full-time, primary residence.
- Residency requirement in Delaware the last three (3) years prior to July 1, 2018.

- Ten year residency requirement for new applicants after July 1, 2018.
- Have a Delaware Driver's License (60 days by law to change driver's license).
- Exemption does NOT transfer to new property. A new application must be completed for each move.
- Taxpayers must pay their property tax bill in full by the end of each tax year in order to qualify for this credit for the subsequent property tax year.
- [More information can be found by visiting the Senior School Property Tax Relief Website.](#)
- We encourage all qualified seniors to apply for tax relief. [The application is available here.](#)
- For additional help or information in regard to the senior tax assistance call the Kent County Tax Office at 302-744-2341.

Please be advised the statewide deadline to submit eligibility forms for the senior tax credit is April 30!

Q: How much does the Referendum cost?

A. Authority to Levy Additional Taxes to Fund Current Operating Expenses by 18.90 cents per \$100 of assessed value effective July 1, 2023, an additional 10.80 cents per \$100 of assessed value effective July 1, 2024, an additional 7.30 cents per \$100 of assessed value effective July 1, 2025, for a total of 37.00 cents per \$100 of assessed value over three years.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
0.189	0.108	0.073

Per \$100 of assessed property value

The operating amount raised in year 1 and each year thereafter shall be as follows:

FY	2024	2025	2026
Annual Increase	\$1,050,197	\$600,113	\$405,632

For a property in the District assessed at \$ 33,878 (Lake Forest School District average assessment), the new current expense tax increase to the homeowner is as follows:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
\$64.03	\$36.59	\$24.73

Q: Where is Lake Forest School District’s tax rate in comparison to other districts in the State of Delaware?

A: The District’s tax rate is the lowest combined total rate in the county and of the traditional schools in the entire state. This represents the tax rate for assessed value. See chart below.

Q. How can I project my property taxes?

A. As a property owner in Kent County, Delaware, property taxes are partly comprised of a rate set by Lake Forest School District to support our ongoing educational efforts, capital expenditures, and other items

required to provide the best instructional education for our student population. You can look up your current tax assessment, which is based on your [assessed property value](#), by [visiting the Kent County Property Information page](#) and entering the street address (or Owner Name, Tax Account Number, etc.) on the page provided. This information is provided directly from Kent County and the State of Delaware as part of their Open Government initiatives. Your properties assessed value can be found in the "assessment" section, under "Total" (See image below).

Sales History				Liv.Sq.Ft	
Date	Price	Assessment		Total Rooms	
		Land	17,800	Bedrooms	
		Buildings	29,100	Full Bath	
		Total	46,900	Half Bath	

Once property owners have determined their assessed value – they will be able to click on a Tax Projection Calculator and follow step-by-step directions to determine the impact of the increase. The calculator will be found on the District website under the ‘REFERENDUM’ tab at the top. *(Please note we are currently working to embed the tax calculator on our website and should be completed soon. Thank you for your patience.)*

Q: How can I get further information or ask questions about the Lake Forest Referendum?

A: Ask the Superintendent, Dr. Steven Lucas directly at 302-284-3020 x104 or Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Kurt Kelemen at 302-284-3020 x105.