

PRESS RELEASE

Voters Decide School Ballot Questions

Updated Nov. 29 to reflect the certification of the New Brunswick voting results

TRENTON, November 7, 2012—On Tuesday, voters in 16 of the 468 school districts conducting school board member elections also decided special ballot questions related to local education spending and school district operations.

School boards may place special questions on the November General Election ballot. The 16 questions on Tuesday's ballot included questions to approve funding outside of the state's 2-percent tax levy cap; bond referendums asking voters to approve borrowing for school construction; proposals to change the number of members on the local school board; changing from an appointed to elected board; and changing from April to November elections.

Below is a summary of the 16 public questions on the Nov. 6 ballot that affected local school districts.

3 Budget Questions School boards may place a budget question on the ballot to seek voter approval to spend beyond the state's 2-percent tax levy cap. The question must state whether the additional funding would result in a permanent increase in the district's tax levy. The three districts with budget questions included:

- **Delran** (Burlington County) – **Approved** \$400,000 for full-day kindergarten (resulting in a permanent increase in tax levy)
- **Farmingdale** (Monmouth) – **Approved** \$60,000 for new computers and technology equipment (a one-time increase in the tax levy)
- **Verona** (Essex) – **Rejected** \$140,000 for full-day kindergarten

3 Construction Proposals The annual school election also serves as one of five dates during the year when school boards may ask voters to approve school construction proposals. Voters in three school districts decided school construction referendums on Nov. 6:

- **Elmwood Park (Bergen County) – All Three Proposals Rejected**

Proposal 1: \$13,120,500 to renovate four schools, including windows, roofs, HVAC, gym and classrooms

Proposal 2 (contingent upon approval of Proposal 1): \$6,600,000 to further improve middle/high school, including gym and athletic facilities.

Proposal 3 (contingent upon approval of Proposals 1 and 2): \$3,500,000 million to construct a special education building at the middle/high school.

- **Monmouth Regional – Proposal 1 Approved, Proposal 2 Rejected**

Proposal 1: \$6,149,000 for asbestos removal and renovations to science classrooms and locker rooms.

Proposal 2: \$4,307,000 for a new auxiliary gym, paving parking lots, other electrical renovations.

- **Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional (Salem) – Approved**

\$9,958,658 for an addition and renovations to the high-middle school and construction of an early childhood center.

The next date that a school construction referendum may be held is Dec. 11.

7 Board Composition Questions Voters in six school districts decided questions on Nov. 6 to change the size of their local school board or method of selecting their board members. Proposals included:

- **Beverly (Burlington County) – Approved** a change from nine to seven board members
- **Elmer (Salem) – Approved** a change from nine to seven board members
- **Lower Alloways Creek (Salem) – Approved** a change from nine to seven board members
- **Upper Deerfield (Cumberland) – Approved** a change from nine to seven board members
- **Lake Como (Monmouth) – Approved** a change from nine to five members

- **Sea Isle City** (Cape May) – **Approved** a change from nine to five members
- **New Brunswick** (Middlesex) – **Approved** a proposal, submitted through citizens' petition, to change the board of education from a mayor-appointed body to an elected one.

3 Other Questions Voters in three other districts decided other issues on Tuesday, including:

- **Delaware Valley Regional** (Hunterdon County) – **Rejected** a proposal to change the method of apportionment (how each municipality's share of the district's costs are allocated) from a system based entirely on each community's property valuation to one based entirely on per-pupil enrollment from each community.
- **Jersey City** (Hudson County) – **Approved** a non-binding question, submitted by the city council, to change the annual school election from April to November.
- **New Milford** (Bergen) – **Rejected** a non-binding resolution submitted by the municipal governing body to gauge voter support for construction of a multi-use turf field at the borough's middle school.

A law enacted earlier this year allowed communities to move their annual school elections from the third Tuesday in April to the November election. While 73 districts retained April elections this year, 468 held their annual election this week. Adopting the change places school board candidates on the November ballot, as voters on Tuesday selected among 1,813 candidates on the ballot to fill 1,448 school board seats. However, moving school elections to November eliminated the requirement that a school board submit the district's proposed budget to the voters as long as it remains at or below the state's 2-percent levy cap.