

JUNE 2ND, 2021 REFERENDUM:

Get Informed and Vote!

Make sure your voice is heard on
Wednesday, June 2nd. Go to
LWVNewCanaan.org or
NewCanaan.info
for more information!



WHAT'S A REFERENDUM?

A referendum is when the electorate votes directly on a particular proposal.



WHAT ARE WE VOTING ON?

The Referendum question is: *“Shall the action of the Town Council, at its March 31, 2021 meeting, which did not reduce the Board of Education budget by \$463,337, be overruled and returned to the Board of Finance for reconsideration?”*

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Since 2006, the issue of school start times has been under discussion and evaluation by our Board of Education (BOE). Local groups and individuals encouraged the BOE to make changes to the NCPS schedule, based on scientific research into adolescent sleep, its effect on brain development, and correlations with school start times. Following discussions with school staff and parents, the BOE recommended and surveyed options, held public meetings, and decided on a plan forward. Not all constituents were in agreement with the BOE decision.

At the Town Council (TC) meeting on March 31st, 2021, TC members voted on the BOE budget appropriated by the Board of Finance (BOF). A council member motioned to reduce the BOE operating and health insurance budget by \$463,337 -- the projected cost of changing New Canaan Public School start times during the 2021-2022 school year. The motion was seconded by one more TC member, but did not pass.

In early April, a group in disagreement with the BOE decision over New Canaan Public School start times served a notice of intent to petition, which is the first step towards calling for a referendum. The final question on the ballot will be: **“Shall the action of the Town Council, at its March 31, 2021 meeting, which did not reduce the Board of Education budget by \$463,337 be overruled and returned to the Board of Finance for reconsideration?”**

The petition is worded this way because the referendum only affects funding, not outcomes. In other words, the town can allocate funding to the BOE, but can't tell them how to spend it. This is why the question here concerns funding, and not school start times per se.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF YES/NO VOTES?

This referendum is asking voters whether or not \$463,337 of the school budget should be reconsidered by the BOF.

- A “YES” vote overrules the Town Council action and returns the \$463,337 to the Board of Finance for reconsideration.
- A “NO” vote affirms the Town Council vote and keeps the Board of Education budget as approved by the Town Council without any changes.



THE FINE PRINT

A “Yes” vote, depending on the action of the Board of Finance, could result in a reduction of the overall Board of Education budget by up to \$463,337, but would not legally prevent the BOE from implementing the new school start times. Under Connecticut law, the BOE independently controls how it spends its total approved budget and what policies it will enact, such as school start times. **Therefore, the BOE may, in its sole discretion, choose to revisit the question of school start times, but is not obligated to do so as a result of this referendum.**



WHEN AND WHERE DO WE VOTE

- Wednesday, June 2, 12:00 noon until 8:00 pm
- New Canaan High School, 11 Farm Road
- Face masks must be worn at the polling location.
- Paper Ballots and Tabulators will be used.

ONLY REGISTERED VOTERS AND QUALIFYING TAXPAYERS MAY VOTE IN THE REFERENDUM.

A qualifying taxpayer is an adult U.S. citizen, jointly or severally liable to the town for taxes assessed against him/her on an assessment of not less than \$1,000 on the last completed Grand List and is not currently a registered voter in New Canaan.

ABSENTEE VOTING IS AVAILABLE

As there is no time for applications and ballots to be mailed, voters must request a ballot in person at the Town Clerk's office at Town Hall. *Absentee Voters may apply for an absentee ballot and vote at the same time.* Voters who are not able to come in person to the Town Clerk's office may also designate a family member or someone caring for the voter because of their illness, to carry the absentee to them and then back to the Town Clerk.

For more info contact the Town Clerk directly: 203-594-3070
Claudia.Weber@NewCanaanCT.gov
77 Main Street
Monday - Friday 8:30am - 4:00pm.

You can find referendum information by visiting:

www.NewCanaan.info or
www.LWNNewCanaan.org