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[CE SBAC] A note of thanks & notes on "education" of the community

1 message

Elizabeth Eames Biermann <eeames@gmail.com>
To: cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org

Thu, Mar 14, 2024 at 8:21 AM

Dear SBAC members -

I separately wanted to say thank you - the SBAC meeting schedule has been incredibly demanding and each SBAC member shows up and is informed and willing to participate. I am deeply appreciative of that and the collective commitment to work on a solution. The beneficiaries of this work will be our teachers, students, and the collective community, hopefully for many years to come.

As for educating the needs of the buildings- I don't really see how that is in the scope of the SBAC charge. It's only coming up now because the SBAC is talking about a straw pole, and folks can't vote meaningfully on an option if they don't understand the problem. But to the argument that the SBAC has educated voters, I will continue to disagree because the SBAC hasn't done anything substantially different than was done before (public meetings, website, and superintendent updates in the Courier). More people are aware of the project because it was on the ballot, but nothing new has been done to educate them.

My opinion that the public isn't better educated in a meaningful way is informed by my experience of canvassing and organizing canvassing before the last referendum. I also attend and organized multiple educational small group meetings in the community. People then were very much in the dark about any of the issues facing the schools- even folks with kids in the schools. The survey conducted by the SBAC confirms my experience- with 40% of people thinking the schools were fine after the last referendum. In my experience, the town does not reach people and educate them just but holding public meetings, hosting a website and posting information. This is not to say I think it's in the purview of the SBAC to play this role...but a straw pole of the options would, like the last referendum, be based largely on a tiny piece of information (perceived cost of the voter) without any real stakes on the line.

Some great ideas about what would constitute public education were discussed at the last communications meeting- and hopefully the school board executes on that when an option is selected.

Best wishes,

Elizabeth Biermann
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