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## [CE SBAC] Surveys

1 message

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**Scott Mazuzan** <mazuzan@outlook.com>

Thu, Mar 14, 2024 at 5:36 PM

To: "cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org" <cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org>

To the SBAC,

During this morning's SBAC communication subcommittee meeting, I was struck by Mr. Lockwood's persistence surrounding a "straw poll" during discussions for the planned upcoming survey, despite the apparent majority of the committee voicing objection to such an approach.

The merits of the straw poll have been discussed at length. Asking voters which project they support at this juncture would be like voting for Best Picture based on watching trailers for as yet uncompleted films. The designs are being reworked and the committee has important communications work to perform to ensure that the voters understand the cost of all options - both short and long term. If you ask voters what they want to pay for without giving a full picture of costs, benefits, and future investment needs, you do a disservice to voters and your own work - especially if you end up needing to advance a more expensive option "not supported" by straw poll outcomes.

Further, we know that even well-designed scientific surveys can produce flawed outcomes owing to a variety of factors: wording/questions, sample bias, and research(er) bias to name a few. A notable example: The SBAC survey from September 2023 indicated that only 14% of voters supported a tax increase of 20%. On the other hand, nearly 40% of voters turned out in **favor** of the 2022 bond which we were warned would result in at *least* such an increase. How do you reconcile this disparity?

In addition to being a paid consultant to SBAC, it should also be noted that Mr. Lockwood is a resident of Cape Elizabeth. The recent revaluation has seen his own home's value nearly triple. He will most certainly be personally and financially impacted by the outcome of the SBAC's work - making his work susceptible to research(er) bias, even on a totally unconscious level. While I have no reason to question Mr. Lockwood's professionalism, I believe his personal financial interest creates the appearance of a conflict which could be used to undermine the work of the SBAC. A more pessimistic perspective could easily be reached, particularly when he appears to be advancing survey strategies that a majority of committee members do not support. Mr. Lockwood's potential conflict should be disclosed, front and center, before his work continues any further - especially considering the extent to which the SBAC hopes to incorporate survey outcomes into subsequent stages of this process.

Thank you for your continued hard work.

Scott  
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