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[CE SBAC] Feedback

1 message

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To: Cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org

Fri, Mar 22, 2024 at 10:19 AM

Dear SBAC Committee,

Thank you for the hours and thought you've put into all of this planning and into ensuring that Cape is both able to be fiscally responsible while also taking care of one of its greatest assets: our schools. I use the word "asset" because I believe we will see returns for these investments in our ability 1) to educate tomorrow's adults as children, 2) to be a great employer and 3) to continue increasing the value of our land.

We've done an incredible job with our programs and with hiring, the facilities however have challenges and the old approach of patchwork designs has led us to this ongoing challenge of lack of choices to renovate while still being fiscally responsible. We throw money at things that would be best replaced. We have an opportunity to make smart investments.

I firmly believe that the majority of our community that is not on the POD or on Cape Elizabeth Facebook pages is lacking the opportunity for insights into the whole picture.

I often bring this topic up with folks who are not on Facebook and I am struck at how they go straight for "renovate" and they make this choice because it aligns with their values. For example, I chatted with a roof sales guy who went straight for: replacing the roof may not be needed. As soon as I mention things like the sprawl of the building and its impact on roof square footage or that many of the walls are load bearing and cannot be moved around - they begin to change their mind.

This gentlemen I speak of is just one example of the conversations that lead me to believe that we're not effectively reaching our community. There are so many perspectives, values and experiences driving folks reactions and opinions about which option is best.

I work in Revenue/Sales Operations for service oriented technology companies - and one thing I very much believe in - is the value of consultative selling. First we listen, then we educate, and then we help people make an informed choice.

I believe that everyone on this committee wants to do well by our students, school faculty/staff, and community - and that it's hard to find compromise between all of the needs. I am worried about this next survey because I have seen first hand how data can drive the wrong actions and how it may hinder the work to accomplish this project on a holistic level.

The last meeting I sat in demonstrated to me how the committee is divided on the purpose of this survey. I was heartened to hear members of the committee emphasize the need to hear more from the public about their questions and concerns.

At the end of the day, I believe that educating the public is most important. They can't be responsible for designing the solution because they don't have the context. They can however help us understand what matters to them and what is leading them to choose renovate vs build and \$60 vs \$120 monthly increases in taxes.

I believe we have people in our town who are truly worried about how they'll handle an increase in taxes. We should worry about them too and help them. There are ways that we as a town can make this feasible for those that are financially burdened by this change, especially if they're over the age of 65.

Please don't have the public vote or rate option B, C or E. There are too many variables driving their decisions within each of those options and you will walk away with incomplete data.

This survey is clearly going to happen - it's a train that has left the station and it has momentum driving it. If you can't beat them, join them and at least use it to learn real information.

Example: Rate the following:

- renovate vs rebuild
- comfort with the separate cost scenarios (3 questions)
- ability to pay
- confidence in their knowledge of what's wrong with the schools

I hope that Bruce is able to keep an objective mind with respect to who he gives deference to on the committee and the way he designs the questions. Given that he has stakes in this outcome (as a Cape resident), I worry a great deal about bias.

Lastly, I want to reiterate the opportunity before you to acquire data that can then help you educate the public. And even without that data - there should be more articles in the courier highlighting the challenges in the schools and less focus on just communicating out what the SBAC is doing. I appreciate the transparency and accountability, however the public needs to learn more about the very thing they'll need to pay for.

If you for put the time in, then you can't control the narrative and those with their own vested interests will write the narrative for you.

Thank you for considering my perspectives.

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