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[CE SBAC] Cape could have had 2 new schools for \$16-18 million in 1993 - see attached

1 message

Rob Krauser <rob@rekroommedia.com>

Sun, Mar 31, 2024 at 10:36 PM

To: cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org

Cc: cesb@capeelizabeth.org, cetowncouncil@capeelizabeth.org

Hi there - attached is an insert from the October 22, 1993 issue of the Cape Courier, detailing the effort at that time to solve issues with Cape schools.

On page 3 of the insert, it explains that Cape Elizabeth could have built TWO NEW SCHOOLS in 1993 for an estimated cost of \$16-18 million dollars.

It says the reason the Building Committee passed on this option at the time was because it was "too costly." Instead, they did a renovation that was supposed to last 20 years. Now here we are, 30 years later, still talking about two options that are renovation only.

If that is not kicking the can down the road, then I don't know what is.

The cost to build new now is over \$100 million dollars (for two schools at least, it sounds like a new Middle School would cost around \$75 million). The fiscally responsible thing to do is to FINALLY build at least 1 of the new schools that Cape Elizabeth has needed since at least 1993. It will only continue to get more expensive. The price has already increased from 2 years ago!

If you're annoyed I'm saying you may kick the can down the road, then don't put forward options B and C. These options continue what Cape has been doing for at least 30 years - spending less for renovations when a new build is needed.

Did 62% of voters vote no on the referendum in November 2022, yes. But 38% voted for TWO NEW SCHOOLS in that same referendum, despite the Green Sign Brigade's well-run and well-funded misinformation campaign about tax impact.

And talking to people about overall cost and tax percentages is only going to scare them. You will have tax impact number's from Joe Cutera, so you can actually talk to Cape taxpayers about the cost to them.

And as SBAC committee member Larry Benoit said during the January 18, 2024 SBAC Communications Subcommittee meeting (at around the 48 minute mark):

"Vast majority of voters just looking at cost to them and taxes." I agree!

You'll have ACTUAL tax impact information, talk about that and forget percentages. The percentage info is so scary/misleading, that despite 38% of Cape voters voting yes on a 22%+ increase in November 2022, when they were asked about tax percentages in the last survey in 2023, only 12% said they would approve that tax increase.

If you talk to folks about the actual tax impact these options will have, it will likely be easier to explain to them how option E is the most fiscally responsible choice. I would actually argue that overall cost and tax percentage is irrelevant - tell folks how much it would raise their taxes monthly. The old option E2, which had an overall cost of over \$135 million, would cost a median income house in Cape less than \$150 a month/\$37 a week/\$6 a day.

And if you're going to keep saying that there are folks on fixed incomes who are living paycheck-to-paycheck here in

Cape (which I'm sure there are!), don't just keep saying it - figure out a way for us to come together as a community and help those people instead of just throwing up your hands again (as they did in 1993, when the cost of two new schools was only \$16-18 million) and say we can't build new cause it's just too expensive. Repeating a problem over and over and over again instead of doing something about it doesn't make it go away and helps no one.

If you put forward yet another renovation only plan you will:

A) once again continue Cape's 30+ years of kicking the can down the road

B) lose a significant portion of "yes" voters from Nov 2022 (including this one, and I can tell you for a fact I am not alone). And if you want to pass something in November 2024, you probably can't lose too many of us.

I do appreciate all the time and effort the SBAC has put into this (8+ hours last Thursday alone!), but I hope that you will stop repeating past mistakes and help chart a new path for Cape schools.

Thanks for your time,
Rob Krauser
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