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## [CE SBAC] Option B feedback

1 message

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**Gretchen Noonan** <gnoonan77@gmail.com>

Sat, May 11, 2024 at 12:35 PM

To: cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org

Cc: cesb@capeelizabethschools.org

Dear SBAC members (with a copy to the school board)-

Just as I absolutely didn't enjoy making a critical comment the other night, I take no joy in writing this email. In my mere three years on the council we faced an unusual number of controversial issues and I received lots of emails like this (and frankly, much much worse) so I know what it feels like to receive them. But I'm extremely disappointed in your deliberations and decision and there may still be a chance to fix the grave mistake I believe you've made.

First, I have to be frank - based on some of your comments and discussion, I worry that even after all this time and effort some of you just didn't understand the assignment and/or all the information you received, or have simply chosen to ignore it in favor of your own preferred narrative. You seem to have ignored concerns about student disruption, concerns about the functionality and safety of the current school layout including long hallways, inflexible classrooms, lack of proper storage and restroom facilities, etc. Information about the unknowns of renovating such old and patched together facilities. I'm less confident in my own ability to judge how you've handled the finance aspect of this, but given the amount of time the finance committee spent on things that were completely out of their scope (enrollment, seriously?), I don't have much confidence in that arena either.

The most important part of my statement the other night, which I didn't get to because of a rule change that we weren't made aware of (even if he'd said it at the beginning, I could've done a quick edit while I was waiting to speak) was this - I feel certain that the tax question on the survey is not a valid predictive measure. That is, you CANNOT tell how people will actually vote based on that question. There are far too many variables at play, especially when the actual project hasn't even been identified yet. People are complicated and this issue is complicated. I am absolutely certain there are people who would say they want a tax increase of no more than ten percent because, let's be honest, who wants to pay more in taxes? But who, when push comes to shove, absolutely will vote for a 13 percent increase if it's that or nothing for our children (and our property values).

Finally, I simply don't understand the logic in choosing a project with a peak tax increase of 9.3 percent but that addresses so few our most important needs and, according to Harriman's rating, creates ONE HUNDRED PERCENT student disruption, versus the slightly higher 13.7 percent for E which is the design that was vastly more popular on the survey, gives us a brand new building that addresses so many needs, and is less disruptive. For a median house, that difference is \$30 a month. That athletic fields and the size of the school gym were so heavily leaned upon as arguments is, frankly, offensive.

I'm going to close with your car analogy (which I'm not a fan of, it doesn't do any justice to the sacred responsibility we have as a society to educate and support our community's children, but people seem to like it so I'll use it). Think of a car brand that isn't super reliable or doesn't have a great reputation to start with. Saturn maybe? Then choose one that is not only reliable but has a particular purpose that it's typically used for. Maybe a Subaru or Ford pickup, or one of those Sprinter vans. Our choice was between a 2010 Saturn (their last year in production I believe) that is \$20,000 because the dude who sold it to you recently replaced a bunch of parts so hey you think you can squeeze a little more life out of it, or a brand new Subaru for \$30,000. AND YOU CHOSE THE SATURN. And not only that, but you're going to need to buy the Subaru in a few years anyway, and then it's going to be \$40,000. For all the concern about households (and ironically, households with children seemed to be left out of this equation) and their financial health, how is buying an old, patched-up Saturn good stewardship of their precious tax dollars? I hope at least one of you who voted for B has slept on it and realized your mistake.

Gretchen

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