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## [CE SBAC] Project decision

1 message

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Gretchen Noonan <gnoonan77@gmail.com>

Tue, May 7, 2024 at 8:36 AM

To: cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org

Dear SBAC members-

I briefly scanned some of the email correspondence you've received in the last few days and wanted to reach out with many of the same arguments. But in an effort not to be too repetitive, will make a few additional points in favor of option E.

-my only child is a sophomore, so he won't benefit from any of these projects. Yet I still support E - the schools he was raised in were paid for by someone else, and now I want to do the same for the next generation. Even if you never had children in the schools, this is what we do as a community. It's time for all of us to step up.

-people's taxes are going to go up even with NO project. Our schools are in need of some major repairs that have been purposefully deferred while deciding on a path forward. That bill will come due very soon. So the difference between "do nothing" and "option E" is quite a bit less than it appears.

-we all recognize that any of these projects will be a burden on some budgets. But municipal spending is a reality. Any spending, even new pickleball courts, affects taxes. Yet every year we approve new projects. The best thing we can do is, as Caitlin said at the last meeting, be good stewards of those dollars and do our best to ease the burden in other areas. All three of the projects cost money, but in my opinion only E is an actual INVESTMENT. (And if you haven't looked at the equalized tax rates from the state, please do. Comparatively speaking we have pretty low taxes. And some of our peer towns who already have higher taxes are also considering major capital projects - what we are considering is not at all unusual.)

-I've heard the argument that in many places you'll find buildings that have been around for hundreds of years, there's no reason we can't do the same with our schools and just renovate (AGAIN). First, historic buildings are very costly to retrofit and maintain. (I was shocked when we heard from Dave B what it costs just to repoint the bricks on our school facades!) I'm sure that Harvard and Yale spend quite a bit more than we ever could on maintaining their historic buildings. But more importantly, all buildings are built for a particular purpose. Sometimes historic buildings are still fit for that purpose, or sometimes their purpose changes when they are no longer appropriate for their original intent. A building built in the 1930s (or '50s or even '60s) is no longer fit for educating students as educational needs and practices have changed drastically in that time. This is why it may be appropriate to stop using our buildings for education yet keep some of them for another use. Also, why double (triple! Quadruple?) down on a poor design? These buildings, while well-intended over the years, have become a Frankenstein's monster of systems, materials, exterior doors, long hallways, etc. This has been confirmed and emphasized by our incredibly capable architectural team. It's time for someone to say "enough". Anything other than E continues to just have our buildings limp along. Let's make an investment and set ourselves up for many years of educational excellence.

Thank you for your time and attention to all of the correspondence you seem to be receiving.

Gretchen

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