

## **BOE Budget Forum #1**

### **Input from Participants**

*Clague Middle School 3/28/13*

*Attendance ~70*

*Compiled by Deb Mexicotte*

#### **Input from participants (not verbatim, but as scribed for content and spirit):**

- We should look at every dollar spent on things like grass cutting, or anything else, and consider the impact that spending has on class size. **(Class Size)**
- Exploration of a Recreation Millage. There are local examples (i.e. Saline) who have these. (1 mil for 20 years is allowable). **(Recreation Millage)**
- Lobbying to rework the State's retirement system. Worried that we will be right back here with the problem in a year or two or forever is structural deficit issues are not addressed at the State level. **(Retirement, Lobbying at State Level)**
- Looking for other advertising opportunities, such as billboards on school property. **(Advertising Revenue)**
- Class size concerns. **(Class Size)**
- Take a granular look at the choices being made in other districts that have less foundation grants. For instance, there are no substitute teachers used in Massachusetts. We should look at the Recreation Millage idea. We should harness the power of parents to explore these options if staff time is an issue. We should also ask ourselves what should have been cut or not implemented three years ago, such as the \$300,000 savings one could get by not have implementing the NWEA testing system. **(More Specific Functional Examination of District Practices (MSFEDP), Recreation Millage, NWEA, Substitute Teachers at High School)**
- Preserve Roberto Clemente. Student GPA has risen substantially, there is a family atmosphere. If you put the program in Pioneer, the important uniform piece won't be workable. Students have pride in themselves and the school. These are not the kids that would benefit from additional electives without the academic foundation. They will experience bullying at Pioneer. **(Roberto Clemente, Uniforms, Bullying, Academic Failure)**
- Athletics is one of our most student involved program, costing 2% of budget but receiving 33% of proposed cuts. Coaches already fundraise for the programs and are undercompensated. Nothing is more cost effective in addressing the achievement gap, esp. with the need to maintain GPA to participate. **(Athletics)**
- So grateful for alternative schools. Have students at Community and at the IB program. Grateful for such programs for student with ADHD. Block scheduling is also important to maintain. **(Alternative Schools, Community, IB, Special Needs)**
- Alternative programs are crown jewels and so special in Ann Arbor. Because of the schools, students return especially at high school level to generate revenue. What else can we do as a district to recruit

more students? We should look into bringing international or Chinese students in with their tuition dollars (model in St. Clair Shores). **(Alternative Schools, Student Recruitment)**

- Keep Community's block scheduling, and we should extend the model to middle school. Forum is a meaningful support for students and should be maintained. **(Community, Block Scheduling, Forum)**
- There is concern that we haven't gotten to all the efficiencies we can find. Should look at the line item budget and the Quad A list that was proposed. **((MSFEDP), Efficiencies)**
- Worried about 40 kids in the classroom, inequalities in class sizes between building, ratios between teachers and students. Is the solution another millage, shouldn't we be consolidating services more? **(Class Size, Building Inequities, Consolidation of Services)**
- In favor of keeping Roberto Clements and worried about the special needs population there and the bullying they will receive in any other program. Students are out of options or never fit in elsewhere when they come to Roberto, next option is detention where it is too late. Need to research different options for raising money. Sports are also all that some kids live for. We need to find other ways to ask businesses for help (example of the helicopter drop). **(Roberto Clemente, Bullying, Academic Failure, Athletics, Business Support, Fundraising)**
- Part of the Pioneer Theatre Guild but speaking on behalf of needing a way to get student voice and input into the conversation. This forum good, but not for students starting Spring Break. **(Theatre, Student Voice)**
- Parents need to stop seeing themselves as customers of the public schools but as owners, and have some sense of responsibility for the big picture. **(More Big Picture Thinking, Lobbying)**
- There should be an effort to try and integrate and coordinate fundraising methodologies. Centralized and stronger push for revenue raising. **(Centralized Fundraising)**
- Need to do things earlier calendar-wise for the budgeting process. **(Better Budget Planning Process)**
- Top priority is small classes. We also treasure the music program. There will be cuts in co-curriculars, so should explore more pay to play options to ensure that programs aren't eliminated. **(Class Size, Pay to Play)**
- Can we have the pay-to-play options in the 7<sup>th</sup> hour slot? **(7<sup>th</sup> Hour, Pay-to-Play?)**
- Class size – having 30 kids in a class is ridiculous. The environment is important. The regular high schools are too big, made the parent scared. Need to preserve block scheduling. **(Class Size, Block Scheduling)**
- Having line item reporting is great, but what is the district not sharing with the public? We need to know all the facts. **(Transparency, Budget Detail)**

- Loss of transportation will devastate certain populations and their school attendance, like Hikone. Have only a 65% graduation rate for economically disadvantaged kids. Without transportation some kids will really not be able to come to school. **(Transportation, Economically Disadvantaged, Graduation Rates)**
- There is a lot of movement from private schools to our public schools, to places like Community and Skyline. Block scheduling is a factor. Important to have students that are slow to set up be accommodated, better for science in longer class settings. Trimesters contribute to block scheduling @ Skyline, so this thinking about real savings there in moving to semesters deserves another look. **(Recruitment, Block Scheduling, Trimesters)**
- Brought students into the district from private school for Community and the block scheduling and forum. They are frustrated about the level of detail in the budget numbers versus the detail in other reports, like the facilities report. **(Recruitment, Block Scheduling, Forum)**
- Ann Arbor has brand name recognition for quality educational programs. “Brand” is what causes you to pay the higher taxes. We need school employees to be professional and keep class sizes low. **(A2 Brand, Class Size, Quality Teaching Staff)**
- Have to consider programs I love versus the need for transportation for a student to graduate. We need an active and vibrant community to be filled with active, vibrant adults. **(Transportation, Highly Valued Programming)**
- Principal sharing would be doubling the job for principals. That is terrifying to the parent. **(Principal Sharing)**
- Living in horror that Community might close. Their student could do well at the other comprehensive high schools. We are shooting ourselves in the foot if we close our “reward” school. **(Community High)**