

BOE Budget Forum #4

Input from Participants

Scarlett Middle School 4/20/13

Attendance ~ 60

Compiled by Deb Mexicotte

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

Hope candidates for Superintendent are informed about the difficulties here in Ann Arbor, and about the budget. I hope we can have discussion about the last two years, and convince the Superintendent to tell us her reasons for leaving. **(Supt. Vetting, Debrief)**

How will you expect different results if you use the same search firm? **(Search Firm)**

What will be the “incidental costs” of a search firm? **(Search Costs)**

Can we expect turnover in the cabinet as well? Some stability would be important. **(Administrative Turnover)**

We need better control over our textbook losses. \$16,000 in textbooks were lost just at one high school. Have staff as part of any policy discussion change – last year’s brouhaha over a textbook at Pioneer changed policy without input. **(Textbook Controls, Staff Input in Decisions)**

We need to increase revenue through an operating millage, and everyone needs to be more political all around. The BOE needs a better relationship with teachers. There are 36 students in class, we could convene committees. Need a stronger voice as a Board, Lansing is the problem. We should not open schools in the fall until Lansing relents. **(Enhancement Millage, Political Work, Teacher, BOE Relationships, Class Size, Lansing Focus)**

There are talented people here, we need someone from the district. Nickels and dimes add up, for instance, why have meetings during the school day with sub costs. A Rec and Ed millage sounds like a good idea. What about the number of school days, the half days for professional development need to be eliminated as they are very expensive. Move those whole professional development days to a Monday or Friday for long weekends.. Redistrict. Don’t sell vacant buildings, tear them down and sell the land – we have competitors using our buildings. **(Local Candidates, Nickels/Dimes, Meeting Savings, Rec and Ed Millage, Professional Development Scheduling, Redistricting, Building Use/Sale)**

Do we ever have brand new Superintendents? Will we give additional weight to local candidates? **(Local Candidates, Supt. Experience)**

Love performing arts and sports, but think extracurricular cuts should occur there first. Smaller classes, limit online classes. Don’t want increased stress on teachers. Cutting block scheduling at Community is a bad option – it could be a health issue (carrying heavy backpacks more frequently). **(Extracurricular Cuts before Academics, Teacher Stress, Block Schedule/Community, Health)**

Super Pair has a wide range of socioeconomics, was involved in the transportation changes there. What is the criteria for going after the Superintendent for a business sense? What do we believe as a community and map candidates from the bottom up. Also, why is our time off not mapped to either of the two major Universities? **(Supt. Experience, Community Values/Supt. Criteria, Vacation Coordination)**

Trimesters and Block scheduling – can we afford them? What does it say to Lansing when you use fund balance. **(Trimester and Block Scheduling, Fund Equity)**

Yes to redistricting. Close some elementaries. Our student population is stable or going down. Less students means less money. Teachers should support extracurriculars as part of their jobs in their contract. Cut extracurriculars before class sizes – 30-50 in a class in is fine in High School and reflects a college experience. **(Redistricting, Extracurricular Integration, Class Size Rise Okay)**

Concerned over increased class sizes, especially with the elimination of 7th hour. Need more online learning for testing out, more promotion at the district level for both. Athletic cuts will place burdens on families, don't push us off a cliff. **(Class Size, Online Learning Promotion, Athletics/Pay to Play Increases)**

Organize and say enough is enough. Need a strategy. It is too bad Lansing not supportive. Need to raise funds county-wide, then locally. **(Lansing Advocacy, Revenue Enhancement)**

Support Roberto Clement, do not close it now. There is a task force being formed to look at the program and sustainability. **(Roberto Clemente, RC Task Force Formation)**

Rec and Ed Millage. Ask teachers to identify waste, maybe an online survey. Why is it about closing Roberto all the time, why not Angell? What will any administrative concessions look like? **(Rec and Ed Millage, Building Input Process on Budget, Roberto Clement Targeting, Administrative Concessions)**

Thanks to the 7 people on the Board. Care about alternative education, think changes there will lead to false savings, students will chose private schools, lack of success for some students without alternatives, Community. **(Alternative Schools, Cuts Real Savings, Recruiting)**

Private fundraising, consider allowing community targeting giving for where they think it is worth it. Website, deadline, funded or not. **(Fundraising, Targeted District Giving)**

Need athletics and art, wouldn't have made it without alternatives,. Don't have places for kids, especially in electives. Ask communities in schools for cuts **(Extracurriculars)**

Don't cut 7th hour. Accept cutting buildings, are other high schools receiving appropriate cuts. **(7th Hour, Building Equity)**

Safety more important than education. Removal of the police officers concerning. Transportation already cut for athletes and is dangerous. Give teachers a huge voice in the principal choice at Skyline. **(Safety/Police Liaisons, Safety/Transportation)**

Disagree about not having competitors. Need a dashboard to see the metrics, make visible competitive metric so accountability is direct. I teach flipped classrooms and they work well. Need to fundamentally change to step up. **(Transparency, Competition, Fundamental Change)**

The Co-curricular and academics are always pitted against each other. Keep in mind the whole educational experience. **(Importance Academics/Co-Curriculars)**

Never vote for a budget with a structural deficit. Get a lot out of small pieces. Go back to the vendors and renegotiate contracts. Do lots of small things like contractual changes. Get more efficient staffing with HR director. Extracurriculars, be careful with teachers, especially those putting in the most work, they are leaders in their buildings. **(Nickels/Dimes, Efficiencies, Vendor Renegotiation, Extracurriculars, Teacher Leadership)**

Heard Reading Intervention teachers we maybe eliminated, what is on the list we know to have benefits? What do we get to keep. If a cut will be okay, tell us why? Are we allowed to or interested in asking the handful "What would it take"? **(Reading Intervention, Budget Solutions, Targeted District Giving)**

School system is an important recruiting tool. If Angell goes, lots of folks will go to private schools. Is the only choice an enhancement millage? **(Recruiting, Retention, Revenue Options)**

Public education is the foundation for democracy. Importance of arts and athletics, not to be underestimated. Prop A good for Michigan, not good for Ann Arbor. Stability good for Ann Arbor, large raise for cabinet created distance from staff. A national search will unfortunately lead to a repeated outcome. The answers are here, from teaching staff. Find someone here to lead the process (hopefully me!) **(Extracurriculars, Administrative Salaries, Search, Teacher/Building Input)**

Criteria for search most important thing to consider, core values. Clarity in what matters most matched to candidate. Ecology of our system. Need aggressive marketing models, attract more people to our community. **(Community Values, Marketing, Recruitment)**

Benefits in Virginia of county-wise districts, efficiencies. Greatly value sports, could we do intramurals without travel expense. **(County-Wide Consolidation, Athletics Efficiencies)**

All of us should make a donation to the Ed Foundation - pay your taxes to them. Let's have a five year look, no more wishful thinking. Where will we be in 3-5 years. Metric should be how many kids are leaving the district, need a marketing campaign, someone whose job it is to get and keep students in the district. **(Foundation Support, Marketing, Recruitment)**

Need to change state policy, all of us should find extra time. Michigan Parents for Schools. **(State Funding)**

Consider in budgeting that we go back and renegotiate contracts with current vendors. We have high teacher expectations, include them in decision making. Look at local superintendent candidates. A2 is a unique place. Consider an appointment process, it worked out for Board positions. Maybe weight local more heavily. **(Vendor Renegotiating, Teacher/Building Input, Local Candidates)**

Legislative action will be the most positive, cut administratively, be clear about cuts made. **(Administrative Cuts, Lansing advocacy)**

Hate to see athletics, art curtailed. What does it matter without transportation? Arrowwood, Green Baxter, etc. don't have luxury. AATA insufficient. Showers in girls bathrooms at Scarlett have no cold water – have we looked at an energy audit. Textbook tracking is bad, got notices for books returned, no

notices for not returned books at Huron. **(Extracurriculars, Transportation, Energy Savings, Textbook Controls)**

Faculty is very articulate, should be organic engagement for building strategies. We are leaving qualified staff on the bench. Maybe a secondary group for an internal search. **(Teacher/Building Input, Internal Search)**