



Master Facilities Committee Meeting 2/24/2016 Feedback (Questions, Comments, Suggestions)

Questions:

Q: How do we convince high school parents that keeping non-resident students is important?

A: Continue to provide them with information. A document (Q & A) has been developed and is available on the district website as a resource.

Q: How bad would it be if it didn't pass?

A: There would be significant implications for Washington Township Schools if both proposed referendums (Operating and Construction) were not supported by the Community: Operating Implications: Significant increase in class size, reduction of staff at all schools, termination of academic and support programs, decrease in ability to recruit and retain outstanding staff and new families, unable to staff an 8th elementary school and a negative impact to home sales in Washington Township. No Construction Referendum Implications: Overcrowding continues in schools, increase in trailers at all schools, deteriorating school facilities, continued failing systems, safety and security concerns, unable to open 8th elementary school and a negative impact to property values and unable to protect the communities investment.

Comments:

- Great slide on property value study. Important to make sure it is the most recent.
- I think you give the community the big picture (and big number with caveat of what it does not/will not cover); explain that it is probably best/necessary to ask to get as much done as possible and then ask for their feedback.
- I love all the great data that will be shared to sell this need. However, we also need to sell the positive: performing arts, tennis, basketball, etc. Don't forget, people vote with their heart as well as their checkbook.
- I believe it is also an issue of marketing – the issue of focusing on the students, scholarships, accomplishments and everything positive.
- Out of the options presented, anyone who will approve the mid-range amount will approve the higher amount of \$185 million.
- Need to focus on the comparison of tax rates with other communities.
- Ask for the \$185 million as anything less doesn't get the job done.
- We should help with defeating tax abatements.
- We need to change "optimal" to "adequate" learning environment. We are misleading the public by saying it is going to be optimal. People need to understand that the improvements are getting us to adequate, marginal, etc.
- Increase of tax monies is a Pro. Keep staff and add staff for a new school. I know we lost good NC math teachers to Carmel for more money.
- A Referendum will protect property values. School's excellence is related to property values.
- It's time to meet the challenges of the future.

Suggestions:

- Advertise to younger voters with radio around morning/evening drop off times.
- Explain to voters how if changes are not made that ratings will go down because no one wants to send their kid to a 2 Star School compared to a 4 Star School.
- We need a 5 x 7 card showing summary of issues: what we get and what we don't get, impact of not doing something, etc. Have a few questions you really want to be asked on the card and we can get them answered.
- To help me share the news of referendum, I would like a short (5-10 points) for each category of resident: family of young children, senior citizen, and family with older children, etc.



Master Facilities Committee Meeting 2/24/2016 Feedback (Questions, Comments, Suggestions)

- Defining concisely “assessed valuation” so public is not confused. Similarly incorporating notion that we have and will do the best we can with what we have but even the well-endowed school districts still want to do the very best for their students and communities.
- Bulleted talking points to the tough potentially derailing questions are still needed.
- Need to show total taxes, not just the MSDWT lowest tax rate. This is only half the story – must also show the tax rate multiplied by the assessed value equals total taxes.
- What about getting a marketing firm (to donate services) to make a full-fledged campaign to “sell” the increase. Perhaps not the \$185 million but what the individual effect would be on a taxpayer? It may not seem so enormous if it emphasized the individual possible increase of their taxes.
- Do not use the scariest and most worrisome examples with the general public. The basic problems with infrastructure and overcrowding are the big stories. The horror stories might make non-school families suspicious or think that we are beyond repair or hopeless.
- Provide a worksheet or flip cards with answers to our of district information, assessed valuation explanation etc.
- Committee members should get out to many neighborhood communities: NCC, GAC, BRAG, CCCC, etc.
- Get the Indianapolis Star to include articles with great stuff that is happening in MSDWT.
- We need coffee conversation points to hit home the needs in a 10 minute coffee, 20-30 minutes coffee and longer conversations.
- What about having marketing stories that are geared towards who is telling the story? Make sure the most important points are told over and over by all speakers but then a more personalized story/points so it doesn't seem like we are recordings. New information/different information from different perspectives helps to keep the interest of the community and keeps them thinking.
- Share information, especially that we are the lowest tax rate in the area. Show monthly impact of tax increase.
- Educate neighborhoods and ask for feedback.
- Show what is wrong with pictures (example Nora playgrounds).
- Provide talking points that can be used with the community: brief talking points, tax impact in simple language, specific concrete examples of items/issues that will be addressed, plus information on registering to vote would be helpful. This could be a good role for Parent Council volunteers and they could register voters.
- Provide information to specifically refute negative information that renters may hear.
- Provide a general timetable to let voters and parents know that there is an inherent delay and a second attempt at a referendum would add a far greater delay that we cannot afford.