

Budget Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
03/16/2023

Member attending: Jon Poolman, Brett Stewart, Patty Dowd, Heather Dolan, Stephanie Wilson, Sam Herbst, Jen Chong Jewell, Tammy Bailey, Steve Coram, Julie Harris, Trevor Lewis, Liz Reynolds, Debbie Resler, Evan Mathiasen, Kim Parker

Agenda:

- Discuss questions from last meeting.
- Review Key thoughts from February thought exchange.
- Analyze and prioritize top themes on current Budget survey.

Minutes:

Jon Poolman reviewed the agenda.

Patty Dowd reviewed questions from the last meeting – slide in the PowerPoint.

- Trevor Lewis asks: two things
 - Losses from tech are better than the average district
 - Equity Policy and strategic plan – will we be using the equity tool
 - Some departments have used the equity tool but we have not used it on the whole budget – we may need to do that.
- Stephanie Wilson: not a good check out system for computers, need to establish procedures, 200 kids left without turning in their computers.
- Stephanie Harris: We can do better with accountability for stakeholders. Library fines – can create barriers but need to hold accountable – need better systems
- Patty Dowd: This is a complex issue – we will pass this information along and work on it.
- ESSR funds came to assist with needs but the needs are still there – difficult to say what it was spent on – lots of things
- Patty Dowd: Special education question – complex and hard to quantify because every student does not look the same – we are experiencing a very large spike with students with IEPs that have a one on one – we are trying to pull back the layers to determine the root cause of that – funds are large but many districts feeling this – hard to do a cost comparison – Everett spent about the same amount to supplement Sped budget – would require much more information than the budget committee has
- Braiding funds: as we have opportunities to continue to braid funds we will do that – a couple different ways to braid funds – we will look at ways to be more efficient
- Transparently student centered: Essence of us asking stakeholders for information. We are trained to ask students for what they need – how our district has staffed in the past has been very student/building focused. Jon adds – budget survey and thought exchange is specifically targeting students to ensure student voice is in the process

Jon: District comparisons: Reviewed slide with information from other districts –

Patty review February ThoughtExchange:

- Keeping class size at reasonable size
 - Don't overcrowd.
- Enough support staff to meet student needs.
 - Retaining well qualified staff is essential.
 - Maintain low staff student ratio.
 - Adequate staffing to provide students with best educational opportunities.
- Keep music and bring back art.
- Safety
 - Maintain staff at current levels.
 - More safety staff.
- Mental Health
 - Keep Electives
 - School psychologists and behavior specialists
- Special Education
 - Keep class sizes low to support students.
 - Training to support diverse learners.
- District
 - Eliminate district office administrators first.

Trevor question: Safety – keeping exterior doors locked – temporary solution in the hopes of a longer-term solution – will there be capital improvements to support a long-term solution – Brett Stewart: that is a capital project – we are working on this. Jon P adds – the budget issue is related to general fund not capital projects.

Sam Herbst: combining the top thoughts and would that change the results.

Patty Dowd: Top 10 themes: created them to rate them – current survey will ask folks to rate the top 10.

- Curriculum adoptions for updated instructional materials.
- Extra-curricular activities including athletics, clubs, and activities.
- Family supports including providing social services resources, family engagement opportunities, etc.
- Individual learning supports for students.
- Instructional and operational administration and support
- Mental health and behavioral supports
- School maintenance
- Class sizes
- Professional development and training for staff
- Safety and security

Jen Chong: Languages available in ThoughtExchange – Trevor went through the languages of respondents.

Activity: Break into two groups to discuss – Patty and Jon taking notes

Return from breakout rooms.

Is what we are doing going to the board formally all at once, or will it happen over time?

- Patty: We have two more meetings. We are on a fast track. We are taking all the information to the board, superintendent, and the cabinet –
- Jon: We provide feedback along the way – what we say will inform the process.

Jon- 4 minutes – two lists that are very similar:

- Group 2
 - Class size
 - Mental health
 - Individual learning supports.
- Group 1:
 - Mental health
 - Extra-curricular
 - Class sizes
 - Main mentions: Mental Health, family supports, extra-curricular.
- Overall
 - Individual supports may come up as third item as Extra-curricular did not come up in group 2.
 - Group 1 voiced agreement for using Individual supports as number 2.

Mental health v. behavior supports are very different. Is there a way to break those apart?

- Patty: there is not a way to do that at this time. There was a lot to go through and it was very hard to come up with themes.
- Many of the themes have many ways to interpret them.

Next meeting April 6

Notes will come out for review.