

Question. Smaller schools to help better engage students – what is the plan to engage parents?

- Parent/Teacher Org discouraged in middle & HS...why?

Answer. It was generally recognized by Mr. Shea and Mr. Hopkins that parent involvement was vital to the success of a child's education...in the past, after elementary school, in Rochester, parent/teacher organizations were discouraged...according to Mr. Hopkins that mind set has changed and more parent involvement is taking place at the Middle School...we also suggested that parent engagement be a part of the investigation of a second HS in Rochester...Mr. Shea took note of this...

Mr. Shea and Mr. Hopkins, when further quizzed about parental involvement, both felt it was paramount and they would encourage it and not block it...

Mr. Shea also went on to describe the possibility of doing away with the distinctions of freshman, sophomore, junior and senior for the second HS...he believes that these are types of stigmas that could hold students back because of the clearly defined lines of what is taught and learned in this traditional approach of HS education...

Question. Project based learning

- Problematic?
 - Opponents of Project Based Learning warn against negative outcomes primarily in projects that become unfocused and tangential arguing that underdeveloped lessons can result in the wasting of precious class time. No one teaching method has been proven more effective than another. Opponents suggest that narratives and presentation of anecdotal evidence included in lecture-style instruction can convey the same knowledge in less class time. Given that disadvantaged students generally have fewer opportunities to learn academic content outside of school, wasted class time due to an unfocused lesson presents a particular problem. Instructors can be deluded into thinking that as long as a student is engaged and doing, they are learning. Ultimately it is cognitive activity

that determines the success of a lesson. If the project does not remain on task and content driven the student will not be successful in learning the material. The lesson will be ineffective. Like any approach, Project Based Learning is only beneficial when applied successfully.

Answer. Mr. Shea concurred that PBL by itself was not the way he would want to go...he expressed his strong belief that lecture would need to be included in the mix of teaching, but creating critical thinking students was an important aspect of his belief...

Question. What Happens to Spaulding?

- Who goes to this new HS?
- Who decides who goes to this new HS?

Answer. Mr. Shea outlined several initiatives that have begun and will be studied for Spaulding HS:

- Lower enrollment
- Effective/powerful 8th to 9th to 10th grade transition (Freshman Academy)
- Powerful curriculum
- Better school day schedule
- Greater number of quality/rigorous options for learning and earning credits

As far as who would attend and who decides who goes to this proposed second HS, these are not yet defined, but they would be students that would derive clear benefit from the environment and not miss some of the extra-curricular activities provided by as typical HS...

Question. The Past – result? – Failures? – Just another fad?

- Block scheduling
 - Team teaching
- Open concept
- There will be a lot of the same people involved with this second HS idea

Answer. This was recognized by Mr. Shea...he expressed his belief that whatever the outcome of his 12-16 month research, all "stakeholders" concerns & ideas would be reflected in the proposal...

We expressed our concern that a lot of the same people would be involved in the decisions to try past failures...

Question. Funding

- Foundation money with strings attached – what is your belief on this?
 - UNESCO's vision
 - One world order where local education is control from the top – takes local control of education out of our hands
- Will there be a whole new administration?

Answer. Mr. Shea and Mr. Hopkins both unequivocally rejected the idea of seeking funding sources that had strings attached that would compel the school district to political or personal agendas...

Mr. Shea was not aware of who UNESCO was, but he firmly believes that all educational decisions will remain local...

There will be a new administration, but smaller than the current HS...Mr. Shea went on to say that we currently have a \$50 million dollar budget that supports 12 schools – 8 elementary, 1 middle school, 1 HS, the tech center and the drop out aversion school...Mr. Shea said that what we are looking at with a second HS is a \$50 million budget supporting 13 schools...so, what we heard was no net increase to taxpayers...

Question. Teachers for new school

- Have you considered how teachers unions will react to a second HS outside of traditional HS environment?
- Collective bargaining's affect on educational performance
- What is being done to cycle out under-performing teachers now?
- Relationship with students – personal?

- Quote from Edutopia – The George Lucas Educational Foundation

Small schools generally have higher attendance rates and lower dropout statistics than their larger counterparts, but size alone doesn't guarantee that the hours spent in school will leave students better prepared for life after high school. For that, says Fine and others, schools need to think about restructuring the school day, creating longer classes, **and allowing time for sessions in which students and their teachers get to know one another and tackle academic and personal issues.** Perhaps most important, they need to create a community of teachers who are committed to "doing whatever it takes" to serve all students.

Answer. Mr. Shea said that some early dialogue has taken place with union and that that will evolve...

Mr. Hopkins, while not able to speak specifically about collective bargaining, was not able to fully answer the question about its impact on performance but did offer comments about teachers not returning because of performance issues...

NOTE: We will be revisiting this issue because we believe there should be performance measures built into every collective bargaining contract negotiated and approved by the School Department and City...this can also be referred to as merit based pay...

With regards to teachers spending time with students tackling "personal issues", Mr. Shea was clear that teachers would only try to understand a student with the intention of providing educational guidance...it is generally understood that human nature dictates a degree of personal understanding in all relationships...perhaps the best way to describe what Mr. Shea was saying is that the student/teacher relationship would be a professional relationship held within the confines of providing the best possible education...

Question. Vouchers

- Why are we not considering vouchers for private schools to create education competition to foster improvement?

Answer. This was not initially considered, but it was stressed that if the goal was to truly reform HS education that vouchers needed to be included in the thought process...Mr. Shea responded that he felt that vouchers had a limiting effect and that most people who would be able to take advantage of vouchers are those that already could afford to send their kids to private schools...we disagreed with that because we know many people who choose to send their kids to private schools that really can't afford but find a way to do it any way...additionally, even if that were true, if the intent was to provide a better education to all students, then that should include students in "better off" families...after all, they pay taxes too...