

Town Hall Meetings – Nice concept, but it isn't working – Chris Fellin

The idea of 12 town hall meetings to inform and seek input from residents sounds appealing, but in reality it isn't working based on my experience at East Hills last week. I believe this board and administration will use the "feedback" from these town hall meetings as basis for driving their pre-determined plans: a) May bond proposal, b) \$78M project, and c) \$67M bond (by using \$11M funds on hand). They may even put two proposals on the ballot: 1) \$70M for school and 2) \$8M athletic upgrade. Why my pessimism?

1. There are around 32,000 registered voters in this school district. In the meeting at East hills there were 39 people in the room, but only 11 were actually there for information (possibly fewer).
2. There were more people in the room from the board and administration than people who were undecided.
3. The presentation is clearly biased toward a May election, a standard practice used by schools and local governmental bodies which will benefit from small voter turnouts.
4. Almost every small breakout session had either a board member or an administrator "selling" the bond proposal and May election timing.
5. Anyone in the room can fill out their survey (and as many as they wish as well). The survey follows on page 2 & 3.

6 Board Members

1 BHEA Union President

6 BHSD Administrators or teachers

1 Facilitator

1 Reporter

1 Berkley board member

4 Hard NO voters

8 Hard YES voters

11 Undecided's

39 Total

So bottom line, be informed and **Vote** on May 8 or get your absentee ballots

Part 1: Preferences regarding a Unified High School

1. I support the construction of a hybrid (36% renovation, 64% new) unified high school at Andover.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. The following decisions would increase my support for a hybrid unified high school. (Check one)

<input type="checkbox"/>	More information on the project	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lowest possible millage increase
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not possible to gain my support	<input type="checkbox"/>	The athletic upgrade package
<input type="checkbox"/>	The learning community upgrade		

3. My design preference for the unified high school as follows. (Check one)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Base package only (\$68M - \$69.5M)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Base package + athletic upgrade (\$75.1M - \$76.7M)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Base package + learning community upgrade (\$76.6M - \$78.3M)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Base package + athletic + learning community upgrade (\$85.5M)

4. My investment preferences for the unified high school project are as follows. (Check one)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't invest any of our funds – fund the entire project as debt.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Invest \$11M as indicated.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Invest significantly more than \$11M, as much as we can in a fiscally responsible manner.

5. My preferences regarding a millage vote. (Check one.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	May 2012	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nov. 2012	<input type="checkbox"/>	No preference
--------------------------	----------	--------------------------	-----------	--------------------------	---------------

Part 2: Identification of Concerns (Check all that apply)

✓	Potential Concern
	Confusion about what will happen and when will it happen.
	My child's education will suffer during any transition.
	Traffic issues during the transition (at Andover or Lahser).
	Another millage vote will further divide our community.
	The FNI ideas about "open education" are not proven.
	An investment in a high school project will cause neglect for our other facilities.
	If the bond fails, our high school education will deteriorate.
	If the bond passes, my taxes will increase.

Other Concerns:

Optional: Name _____ Phone: _____