

Aging buildings focus of Bloomfield Hills district's town hall meetings – Mark Kapel – Oakland Press

Bloomfield Hills School District superintendent Robert Glass made a promise to the audience: No means no.

If voters turned down a bond issue to build new high or hybrid school, Glass would be a firm believer that the people's answer to a new school was indeed a firm no.

There will be no more bond issues for years to come, he said. The Bloomfield Hills School Board would work with what it had and make the best of it, he said.

Perhaps in five years, if and when things became desperate, the issue could be revisited.

According to Glass, eight years of controversy was enough and the time had come to resolve the matter one way or another, and then to move on.

In 2003, the board asked for \$123 million for new high school and the voters rejected it. In 2007, the amount of \$146 million was voted down. In 2010, \$97.5 was sought and failed to pass.

The superintendent said the bond issue defeats indicated reasons for failure — the plans were too elaborate and expensive, the people wanted a reasonable plan, and the public wanted to keep both schools.

Glass said that when he first came to Bloomfield Hills, he wondered why the district would abandon two schools with excellent reputations.

However, the high cost of maintaining two facilities that averaged more than 50 years of age convinced him of the need.

Glass made his remarks at a Town Hall Meeting, one of many the school board has scheduled with residents, to get the public's opinion and provide information.

Is the message getting through?

According to Chris Fellin, a spokesman for Bloomfield 20/20, a grassroots group that frequently opposes the school board, the board's message is reaching less than 40 percent of its intended audience.

He counted 39 people in attendance, 16 of which he believed were either school board members, members of Bloomfield Hills Education Associates, or teachers.

Eight others he knew to be members of One Bloomfield United an organization which usually supports the school board or 20/20 which often opposes the board. That left 15 members of the community as true participants.

FYI

Future Town Hall for the Bloomfield Hills School District meetings are scheduled:

10 a.m., Monday, Feb. 6, Bloomfield Township Library

7 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 7 at Lone Pine Elementary

10 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 8 at Bowers Farm Schoolhouse

7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 8 at Bloomfield Hills Middle School

7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 15 at Eastover Elementary