

Public Comment
Darrell Wilson
1/6/10

Facts to consider:

The budget for all Custodial and Maintenance salaries is 3.8 million dollars.

We understand that the District has financial and budget issues. Here are some of the concessions that have already been made by Custodian and Maintenance Staff in order to help with these issues:

- Given 3 paid holidays back to the District
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- Given 12 sick days per year, but only allowed to use 7
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- Gave a week of vacation to the district that is mandated to be taken during the summer in order to save costs to the district (subs, buildings are already closed)
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- Increase in co-pay for health insurance every contract year since 2006
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- Over the past 9 years, we have taken two wage cuts for starting employees.
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- Within the next 10 years, due to attrition, it is estimated that the Ann Arbor Public Schools will have all custodial staff making no more than 10.85 per hour.

**WE ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE ANN ARBOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BECAUSE.....**

1. Security of the buildings
 - Balas example
 - Federal data base
2. Security of the students
 - We are the people in the buildings early in the morning, late at night, and on weekends.
3. Cleanliness of buildings (subs from private company has notoriously not done the same standard of cleaning as regular employee)
 - Complaints from staff when their room is cleaned by a sub
4. No accountability of private company
 - District loses control over hiring and discipline
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5. Reliability and consistency of staff
6. We do jobs that would “cost extra” in a private company
 - Shoveling snow
 - Cutting grass
 - Setting up and organization of special events and meetings.
7. We are the “first responders” to medical emergencies and have all been trained in

Comments to the Board of Trustees
Ann Arbor Public Schools
January 6, 2010

Good evening.

My name is Harold Miller, and I'm a resident in the Ann Arbor Public Schools district.

You heard Dr. Geltner say that the public needs more information about the operations of our schools. I'd like to give you some concrete examples of the kinds of information that would allow the public to provide more useful feedback concerning our budget issues.

First, I expect that AAPS regularly benchmarks its operations and costs—in detail and in total--against other school districts, and against acknowledged “best practices.” Please provide us with the results of your benchmarking. If you don't regularly use benchmarking as a part of your management and oversight processes, please let us know why you don't.

Secondly, let us agree that desired student outcomes should determine the curriculum and other activities of our schools. In order to provide you with useful feedback concerning the curriculum, the public must first have a detailed understanding of what is now being offered. Accordingly, we ask that you provide the public with a complete inventory of the curriculum/activities, by school, by grade level, with relevant direct and indirect costs, and numbers of students served in each class/activity.

It is incumbent upon AAPS leadership to articulate its views about the strength of the link between each element of the curriculum/activities and student achievement. You should provide your views about which elements are candidates for reductions, which elements should be expanded, and the basis for your conclusions.

I could go on, but that would obscure the most important point, which is this: The public needs to understand the concepts and details of how your educational philosophy and strategies are translated into a curriculum; how that curriculum drives costs; and the effectiveness of that curriculum in achieving desired student outcomes. All information you have that touches on these issues should be readily available to the public. Supplying only cost data (and a fairly limited set of cost data at that), as you have thus far, leads to decisions based solely on costs. This not student-centered, and is not an effective way to deal with our budget issues.

Thank you.

Statement from Ted Annis to the AAPS, 6 Jan 2010 Board Meeting

Dr. Geltner has just spoken to you about your Budget Forums. She has asked piercing questions and expressed concerns about the limited information that the AAPS has provided so far. Her questions are a guide for improving your budgeting process. In view of your \$9M deficit in 2009 and the \$19M increase in Expenditures in the last four years despite no increase in enrollment, one must conclude that your budgeting process does not work properly.

On Monday, 4 January 2010, Governor Granholm signed Bill 981, which embraces the "Race to the Top" principles with specific language. Part of that language mandates a fair performance evaluation system to remove "ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and school administrators..." It also provides for "Promotion, retention, and development..." This Bill has great importance for AAPS.

As has been pointed out to you multiple times from multiple sources, AAPS does not have a Revenue problem; it has serious Expenditures problems. The looming deficit for 2010 must be fixed by reducing Expenditures. Because the majority of your Expenditures are for personnel (all 2055 of them), this means both reductions and promoting the best teachers rapidly.

Quite frankly, the AAPS and the teachers' union must finally come to grips with the excessive employment and the ever-escalating expense of step-increases. More and more AA Taxpayers are paying attention to these. Statements such as "The teachers have not had a raise." when in fact they have a guaranteed annual raise called a step-increase make you and the teachers' union appear disingenuous.

The State has cleared the decks for you to make the needed reductions, which must be done according to the provisions of Bill 981. This permits an effective outcome for AAPS because they are performance-based and displace Seniority as the primary guideline.

You continue to explore additional Revenue, instead of focusing upon reduction of Expenditures. This is starting to look like brinksmanship toward attempting another Enhancement Millage rather than balancing your Budget. I urge you to not attempt this.