



Verbatim Responses

Recorded on worksheets as a result of the small group work activity
Community Engagement Session #4 • Sept. 14, 2022

On Sept. 14, 2022, Unite U-46 held a small-group work session to discuss the school finance and different plans to move school buildings forward. After a presentation on the topic, participants divided themselves among four tables in-person at the U-46 Welcome Center and five groups via Zoom and prepared responses to the following activity and tasks:

Activity:

Task #1: Finances

What are three things you learned tonight about U-46 finances that you think should be better communicated to those who live in our school district?

What additional questions do you still have about school finances in U-46?

Task #2: Plans

Please come to consensus and rank the plans (A,B,C) presented this evening with 1 being your most preferred and 3 being your least preferred:

Why did you choose plan _____ as your most preferred plan?

Please provide two pros and two cons for each of the plans presented:

IN-PERSON

In-Person Group #3

Task #1
district has health financial management and savings; international recognition re: budget management; plans to lower deficit
2/3 options have no tax increase
elimination of COVID funding offset by reserves - tax rate is not high compared to neighbors
What would it take to get from 63 to 80% (equitable funding) - why aren't we higher?
Task #2
Most Preferred - 1
C

Preferred - 2
A
Least Preferred - 3
B
Most preferred plan and why
B, no tax rate increase; easier to convince voters; more bang for your buck; improve infrastructure at all schools
Plan A Pros and Cons
cheap, easy to accomplish
addresses most significant needs economically
no long-term view (band aid)
doesn't address tech needs to be equipped for today and the future
Plan B Pros and Cons
no tax rate hike; addresses immediate needs and \$10m maintenance to increase safety/security
no tax rate hike
focus on elementary and not middle school
not setting up for future needs of students
Plan C Pros and Cons
investment to increase property values and increase enrollment into district
increase quality of education
hard to convince voters b/c it is increasing property taxes
focus exclusively on infr., exchanging educational value; if plan C, calculator to figure out exact tax impact

In-Person Group #4

Task #1
Complexity of school finances; money can't always be moved
disparity of funding between districts
surplus funding
How does the U46 budget fare against other districts? Do businesses pay same?
Task #2
Most Preferred - 1
B
Preferred - 2
C
Least Preferred - 3
A

<i>Most preferred plan and why</i>
B, Biggest bang for the buck; more likely to execute and convince the public
<i>Plan A Pros and Cons</i>
need another middle school
need 6 grade in middle school
inequality of middle schools
<i>Plan B Pros and Cons</i>
more maintenance funds
No tax increase
lots of transitions
minimal middle school improvements
<i>Plan C Pros and Cons</i>
modern middle schools
tax increase

In-Person Group #9

Task #1
Bond rating - positive financial state of district
We have options
taxes
Are student teacher class ratios being considered? What are enrollment projections for the future? Do we know what the future of learning really looks like?
Task #2
<i>Most Preferred - 1</i>
C
<i>Preferred - 2</i>
B
<i>Least Preferred - 3</i>
A
<i>Most preferred plan and why</i>
C, more comprehensive long term benefits
<i>Plan A Pros and Cons</i>
no tax increase

sports pre-k and middle school plans
does not address all needs
bandaid/quick fix
Plan B Pros and Cons
includes removal of old buildings
allows more reconfiguration
of boundaries
no rearranging of middle school population.
Plan C Pros and Cons
long term
not addressing equalizing of sizes of districts

In-Person Group #10

Task #1
How much existing equity school district has.
Improved bond rating.
The progress of payoff of existing debt.
What are the tax multiplier differences between counties? How much will the \$10m increase for maintenance affect the budget (%)? What is included in misc. part of budget? How will staff for pre-k and reduced class sizes impact budget for wages and benefits? Where does elementary school gifted program fit into the budget? Can you clarify what each network area is? How long into the future do these improvements serve the community? Will remaining buildings be put on a schedule going forward for renovations, etc.?
Task #2
Most Preferred - 1
B
Preferred - 2
C
Least Preferred - 3
A
Most preferred plan and why
B, We were a 4 person table and qually split on choices. Ranked choices by math.
Plan A Pros and Cons
No referendum
Additional prek classrooms
Bare minimum and lack of before and after care

Doesn't address class size. Potential risk to prek block grants. Currently, prek principals file those grant applications moving prek to elementary schools put responsibility on elementary school principals.

Plan B Pros and Cons

high likelihood of success

affects most students/schools/ without tax increase

more work later; need long term plan

lack of schedule for other buildings not touched (maybe 3-5 years per bldg.)

Plan C Pros and Cons

addressing needs of all MS students

increase student morale, pride, and identity

political risk

tax increase

IN-PERSON

Virtual Group #4

Task #1

Learning the district is in a good financial standing.

Basic information on how the district is funded.

Fully educating the public on any referendum options.

Are there any other funding options to explore to compensate for the inconsistent state funding?

Task #2

Most Preferred - 1

Plan C

Preferred - 2

Plan B

Least Preferred - 3

Plan A

Most preferred plan and why

Plan C - the middle schools NEED to be addressed.

Plan A Pros and Cons

It's already in the works.

Doesn't raise property taxes or require a referendum.

Doesn't address the middle schools.

Doesn't do enough.

Plan B Pros and Cons

Renovating more buildings, reaching more students.

Increasing the maintenance budget is much needed.

Doesn't address the middle schools.

It doesn't meet the needs of all students.

Plan C Pros and Cons

Updating the middle school buildings.

Giving students the best chance for success.

Possibility of referendum not passing.

The headache of boundary changes.

In-Person Group #13**Task #1**

No good food distribution in our schools.

Good savings that the district has

Better education for our kids.

What is the proposed professional development for teachers and for staff? What is the proposal to improve the school food service?

Task #2**Most Preferred - 1**

Plan B

Preferred - 2

Plan C

Least Preferred - 3

Plan A

Most preferred plan and why

B, This is the plan that would obtain more.

Plan A Pros and Cons

Transition from elementary to secondary

The preschoolers would have more opportunities.

Changes the student's environment

Plan B Pros and Cons

Renovation of various schools

basic repairs

it would require a referendum

Plan C Pros and Cons
the renovation of 8 schools
There would be more room for grades 6 through 8
Cover all the necessities of the students.
Emotional/Academic impact

In-Person Group #14

Task #1
Financial wellbeing of U46 today
How does our funding compare to neighboring districts.
Evidence-based funding bar chart - explaining what it means
Average assessment of homes (broken down per community) Student to teacher ratio not spoke on; teacher salary
Task #2
Most Preferred - 1
C
Preferred - 2
B
Least Preferred - 3
A
Most preferred plan and why
C, address middle school and technology; even across the board/equity
Plan A Pros and Cons
something better than nothing
no taxes affected
It's a bandaid approach and does move district forward
No middle school or technology
Plan B Pros and Cons
More elementary
somewhat address tech in schools
No middle school with 6th grade transitioning
pre-k model is not great needs to be full day
Plan C Pros and Cons
most comprehensive tech for success
addresses all schools

pre-k model not addressing full day

Virtual Group #5

Task #1

How taxes were broken down

We have a surplus of savings.

First two plans would not cost any additional money to the taxpayers.

Where is U-46 getting the money to pay off the bonds or loans?
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Task #2

<i>Most Preferred - 1</i>

Plan B

<i>Preferred - 2</i>

Plan A

<i>Least Preferred - 3</i>

Plan C

<i>Most preferred plan and why</i>

We picked Plan B because Plan A & B will come at no additional cost and would cause the least disturbance to students.
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<i>Plan A Pros and Cons</i>

No additional taxpayers dollars.

Least disruptive to the students

It doesn't do anything for any of the other middle schools.

It is limited to only four buildings.

<i>Plan B Pros and Cons</i>

No additional cost to taxpayers.

More comprehensive than Plan A

What are the students doing when 5 elementary school are being rebuilt?

It will cost the district more money. District will have to use reserved funds.

<i>Plan C Pros and Cons</i>

Plan C brings all of our schools to up to date.

It brings equity across the community.
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Most disruptive to the students.

Cost the most.

Virtual Group Spanish

Task #1
Everything will be costly
que tenemos que pagar por algo que posiblemente no sea beneficioso para nosotros
un poco mas de transparencia para saber de donde vienen los fondos
en que estan basando el presupuesto. cuanto va a costar exactamente. que % esperan que venga de la comunidad de los impuestos
Task #2
<i>Most Preferred - 1</i>
Plan B
<i>Preferred - 2</i>
Plan B
<i>Least Preferred - 3</i>
Plan B, Plan C
<i>Most preferred plan and why</i>
<i>Plan A Pros and Cons</i>
todos queremos una escuela nueva pero a que costo
habilidad de tener un edificio nuevo
de que manera se van a transportar los estudiantes y el costo
la transportacion sera de ida y vuelta al cerrar los centros preescolares?
<i>Plan B Pros and Cons</i>
mejores edificios
mejorar las fronteras de las escuelas
no queremos el cierre de hanover countryside
el cierre de hs a la transicion de otras escuelas esta muy lejos
<i>Plan C Pros and Cons</i>
los estudiantes estarian felices con una escuela nueva
la mejora de edificios
no queremos que nos quiten mas dinero de los impuestos
es costo es muy alto