

# *Blue Ribbon Panel*

Final Report  
August 26, 2013

# *Blue Ribbon Charge*

- 1. Review the IAC Exploratory Committee Report.
- 2. Review the recommendations from our administration.
- 3. Consider the opportunity of the BEST Grant.
- 4. Identify most critical needs for the District.
- 5. Provide feedback from the community on the following:
  - A. Assess the community's perspective regarding the District's critical needs.
  - B. Assess community's perspective in relation to the BEST Grant and their willingness to provide the additional funds needed to address these critical needs.
  - C. Determine if there is basic support in the community to pass a Bond issue supplemented by BEST Grant funds.
  - D. Determine any of the critical needs for the District that would be added to the possible Bond issue.

# *Needs met under current District resources...*

- Replace/Add knock boxes to allow both fire and law enforcement access to building.
- Replace/Repair Elizabeth Middle School smoke doors and exterior doors
- Install protective barrier on windows adjacent to Child Care play areas
- New system for raising theatre lights in cafeteria - Improve the safety of our theatre students and staff
- Repair lighting in Elizabeth High School parking lot. The school district has replaced bulbs for some and has ordered new ballasts for others.
- Repair Water Repellent Coatings and Joint Seals on Masonry Building at EMS

# *Deemed Urgent and Critical Needs*

- 1- Replace Running Creek Elementary School Fire Alarm System \$125,000
- 2- Install Bi-Directional Amplification (BDA) Systems to Improve First Responder Communication Capability, Install Improved Intra-School Communication System \$150,000
- 3- Repair Elizabeth High School Track/Pole Vault Surfaces.\$100,000
- 4- Install OSHA standard shower Station at Transportation Maintenance Facility \$5,000
- 5- Repair Fencing and Gates at Elementary School Play Areas and improve Fencing Surrounding Child Care Facility Play Areas \$25,000
- 6- **(BEST Grant)** Replace Singing Hills Elementary School Roof \$459,966 .  
Inspect/Repair Elizabeth High School Elementary School Roof- \$913,139 *(The roof numbers include the required reserve amounts and are based off of original quotes used in the BEST Grant).*
- 7- Repair Water Repellent Coatings and Joint Seals on Masonry Buildings \$140,000

# *Identified Transportation Critical Needs*

- 8- Replace up to Five High Mileage Busses **\$100,000** (*Price check for **five** busses requested*)
- 9- Install Additional Diesel Storage Capacity \$25,000
- 10- Rebuild retaining wall at transportation by CR13 and add a security fence \$60,000

## *...Intra School Communication*

- #2- Improve Intra Communication at Schools (Options still to be reviewed)

We recognise the need for improved Communications in the schools. However, the suggested Phone install was deemed by the BRP to be too expensive. We would like the Bond to include **\$60K** for improved Intra Communications. We request that the District and BOE carefully research and consider the diverse communication options available. We would also ask for a District review of the specific communication needs for each school.

# *Community Review*

A total of **10 Urgent and Critical Needs** have Identified by the Elizabeth C-1 School District, The IAC, and the Blue Ribbon Panel.

It is the opinion of the Blue Ribbon Panel that all 10 Urgent and Critical Needs be included in a possible Bond.

# *Numbers...*

- As the IAC made basic estimates, the district has an actual, recent quote for repairing the water repellent coatings and joint seals on masonry buildings, and it is \$60,000 more than the IAC estimated (\$140,000 versus \$80,000). We suggest that the BOE needs more info on the recent quote.

IAC Quote: \$80,000

Recent District quote: 140,00

The BEST Grant a long process that started with a initial estimate. The BEST Grant award is based off of that initial quote. So the numbers on the IAC report and the BEST Grant for the price of both SHE and EHS are different.

- **We ask that the District use their resources to qualify all the numbers used by both the IAC and the BRP. We ask the BOE to use these most recent and reviewed numbers to decide on the final amount used for the considered Bond.**



# *Community Roof Questions...*

Recommend as part of the Bond Statement that any excess would be used to pay down the bond and the duration of the Bond be 10 yr or less. Although BEST pays up to 10% extra for unexpected overages, the most likely replacement cost will be lower, in the \$9/sq ft range . It would be disingenuous to assume overages. We need a knowledgeable Roof Consultant to assess both of the roofs, in particular the EHS roof to assess possible replace or repair which would likely be much less expensive (\$747 or \$498K ( $9/13.5=.667$ ) to replace or ~\$221K to repair). The BRP is in no position to estimate a cost without a consultant's recommendation so we must go with a **range** until a Consultant assessment is made.

Discloser: The BRP was appointed by the School Board to independently advise them on the Bond Issue. All dollar estimates are from the Best Grant, IAC and Administration. The maximum dollars on the roof above are taken directly from the Grant, and the IAC cost estimates are stated by them to be "rough order of magnitude cost provided... ". The estimated roof replacement costs vary from \$9-13.50/sq ft. The lowest cost for the High School roof is, if roof is repairable. BRP strongly recommends ASAP an Independent Roofing Consultant to evaluate. We claim no superior construction expertise and assume no responsibility for the cost estimates. Although we were asked to do a citizen survey, in no way does it reflect a scientific survey. All final decisions and responsibility are the School Board's.

# *Independent Consultant*

Note that the BEST grant pays 40% of the actual cost. If the roof costs less they pay less. However, the Elizabeth taxpayer pays 60% of the District's **Estimate** identified on the Bond tax issue. Inflating the estimate would likely pose a threat to voter Trust which could endanger a successful outcome vote. It would also reflect badly on BRP and the Board.

- In an effort to be independent of the BOE or any other community interest we consulted the BEST Grant Administrators to give us recommendations for Consultants to assess the Roof at Singing Hills Elementary and Elizabeth High School.

Through them, we have hired Bob Cave of Cave Consulting.

## *Assess the community's perspective...*

Without access to time or a survey option the BRP talked with the community to try to assess the general community perspective.

“ I think the bond will pass as long as the cost savings/stewardship that the Board and District have shown over the last few years is clearly detailed in the propaganda they send out.” Tony Baker

We have talked about the same issues in different ways. We have received a positive response when talking about the needs in a positive way.

We believe, The citizens can choose to pay ALL or just PART of the roof replacement cost, depending on whether they pass the bond or not. If properly worded, this could be very persuasive.

# *Business Community Response*

The Business Committee in the Elizabeth Area has been receptive to the idea of making our local schools safer and more secure. They all realize that the Youth of the area are the Future Leaders for all of us. When presented with the information, they respected the fact that the School Officials obtained information from non-bias community expert members. The IAC Committee was the first example of this. The Blue Ribbon Committee was the second. The Business community realize the items that are on the critical list are needed. They also realize the schools do not have the funding to do everything on the list. Not taking the money from the State (BEST Grant) was not an option. No one declines “free” money in this economy. Overall the response from the Business Community was positive in terms of asking for a bond in the November election. This response included people that had children in the school district as well as those that did not.

The only negative comments heard were from business owners that owned the buildings they were located. There are very few business in the Elizabeth School District that fit this description. These owners pay a high amount in taxes in this area. The economy still is not steady enough for them to carry more taxes. Exact payment numbers would bring this into perspective for them. Again, this was a very small minority of the business community.

# *Communication*

Through our discussions with Community members, Parents and the Buisness Community we suggest...

- Positive Perspective
- Answer questions about the Roofs
  - Insurance and Warranty questions
  - Address difference in numbers quoted from different sources
- Show Photos available for Critical Needs included in the Bond
- Acknowledge other needs in the District but focus on these being urgent and critical regarding saftey

# ***SAFETY***

Many of the critical and urgent needs identified by the District Administration, IAC and now the Blue Ribbon Panel are related to Safety.

These improvements also have the support of first responders in the area.

“Fire Departments rely heavily on technology like fire alarm and radio amplification systems. These systems not only immediately evacuate occupants but also allow fire responders to effectively communicate during an emergency.”

- TJ Steck, Fire Chief, Elizabeth Fire Department

# *Oversight Committee*

Upon a successful election campaign, The Blue Ribbon Panel enthusiastically recommends the creation of an independent citizen's oversight committee free from Board/Administration presence (except by invitation) to monitor the completion of items included in the Bond.

- Monitor timelines through District and Committee cooperation
- Monitor budgetary items (address overages)
- Report to Board of Education at key points in timeline