

Citizens Finance Committee

Background

In an effort to further community understanding and involvement in district financial planning, the Board of Education, in early 2006, endorsed the formation of a Citizens Finance Committee.

Purpose

The Citizens Finance Committee's (CFC) purpose is to:

1. Meet regularly with the central office administration to offer feedback about the budget development process and means through which it can best be presented to the community.
2. Offer feedback to the administration about elements of the proposed budget as it is being formulated for presentation to the Board.
3. Meet at least once annually with the district's Audit Committee to review that Committee's progress.
4. Become aware of legislative issues which influence school funding and cooperate with other organizations to promote awareness of same.
5. Review updates on progress of capital facilities project in terms of actual vs. projected costs.
6. Offer feedback on the district's multi-year financial planning as a context for annual financial decisions.
7. Give input to the administration regarding ways of formatting and distributing public information that will enhance citizens' understanding of the budget.

The Committee's overall purpose is to broaden perspectives and enhance understandings. As such, for the benefit of all involved parties, the Board believes that it's important for discussions to be open and honest, yet focused in scope. The Board's intent is for the Committee's work to result in positive outcomes which might otherwise not have been accomplished without the Committee's participation in the process. With this in mind, in May, 2007, and in each year thereafter, the Board will solicit input from committee members and administrators to determine if the Committee's role is accomplishing its established goals, or somehow be restructured for the following school year.

Role

While the Committee is advisory to the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Business and does not report directly to the Board, the Committee will occasionally update the Board on the status of its work.

Membership

The Committee will be comprised of:

- a. Five to Nine community members, designated by the Board on an annual basis, each for a one-year term. (It is understood that charter members of the Committee, established in February, 2006, will continue to serve through the next full term, through June, 2007.
- b. At least two but no more than three representatives of the Board of Education.

Search for Members:

Each year, the Board will solicit Committee membership for the following year through public advertisement. Membership applications will be by letter of qualification to the Board, with members designated by the Board by June 15th of each year. Members will be designated based on the following:

- Qualified background and interest
- Intent toward supporting the joint goals of achieving academic excellence and fiscal responsibility.

Although Committee members are not intended to represent any one segment of the community, the Board will make an effort to diversify the membership across community lines.

Operational Procedures

The overriding purpose of this Committee is to foster open dialogue among members of the community, Board and administration in an atmosphere of openness, trust and good faith. To support this goal, the following guidelines are established:

- Since the administration will rely on the Committee for meaningful input and dialogue, it is understood that information shared with the Committee preliminary to review with the Board or community will not be released by members of the Committee.
- Decisions will be made by consensus.
- Minutes will be published to generally note topics discussed or decisions of the full Committee only as a whole.

