

To: sensiblesolution@yahoo.com  
Sent: Friday, January 26, 2007 8:01:03 PM  
Subject: anonymous comments

Dear SS Team:

Please accept the following analysis anonymously and feel free to post it on your comments page on your website:

FROM: AN ACTIVE MUSIC FAMILY AT STATE HIGH

Thank you for the opportunity to review your proposal. I printed it out, I read it cover to cover, and then I compared it with the School Board's plan. Thank you for doing it.

As an active Music family at State High, it has been known for years that the facilities for music and arts at State High are substandard. The band room has flooded (though I wonder why this has not been repaired years ago). Our award-winning programs are most certainly due for major facility upgrades, and in fairness, it IS music and arts turn. Any building proposal must take a hard look at this area, in addition to athletics, and provide solid upgrades. It's time. It's past time.

Having said that, I strongly favor the Sensible Solution plan and have many reasons for this endorsement which I will spell out as clearly as I can. I appreciate the opportunity to be anonymous. Politics in large schools is as thick as it gets, and I suspect that if the School Board's plan goes through, it will get worse before it gets better.

1. The Sensible Solution offers lots of wonderful upgrades to the music, theatre, and arts areas. It provides TWO auditoriums.
2. Perhaps the orchestra pit can be added to the SS plan. It would be a welcomed addition and could be added on.
3. We would get a new band room, new choir room, and many other upgrades to support our fantastic music/band/theatre curriculum.
4. Having spoken personally to two lovely ladies who had lead roles in prior State High musicals, I was told that the one-school plan is NOT the best choice. The personalities of the North and South buildings are different - but in a good way. 1300 kids in one building and 1300 in the other is manageable. It has worked for a long long time. If we do anything, we should increase the offerings and take advantage of TWO auditoriums. We should do a 9th/10th grade musical in the South building in addition to the one in the North. If we save 40 million on this plan, lets ask for another faculty member to be hired to produce plays, teach scenery construction, or lead special interest band ensembles that would surely attract our talented students. Opportunity, opportunity, opportunity. We are moving further and further away from it at State High and it concerns me greatly.

5. Things that are not said due to large school politics but should be expressed.

- a. How many kids tried out for the spring musical 'Seussical'?
- b. How many are in it?
- c. How many didn't bother to tryout because they knew they didn't have a shot at a role?
- d. How many kids try out for Jazz Band? How many make it?
- e. Are the second-runners-up talented? Would they benefit from another opportunity? How about a Jazz Band in the South Bldg?
- f. Is Thespians an open and welcoming group - open and welcoming to all? Has it taken on that large-school clique feel?
- g. Do you notice the same last names showing up over and over and over? The top spots in the choirs, the roles, etc.?  
With 650 in a graduating class, are we serving the kids?  
The average kids? The kids who simply want to look back in 15 years and say, 'I was in a musical in high school. I wasn't that good, but I was in it and what a memory'.
- h. When our top musicians at State High are headed to Julliard, Harrt, and musical theatre in top colleges, this is GREAT.  
Can we look a little deeper though? This is High School!  
It is a juncture in a young persons life where their confidence is looking for a place to bloom. How well are we doing in that regard at State High? Can improvements be made?
- i. Our marching band is awesome, and I must say that to my knowledge, everyone gets in it that wants to be in it. This is spectacular. Auditioning is fine and its wonderful to have top choirs with the best of the best. I am not saying it isn't - so do not accuse me of that. I simply believe we can do better, and I do not see it happening with this new huge school plan. One massive auditorium - from the images I've seen of it -- is almost intimidating. This is High School!
- j. We can serve more community groups with TWO auditoriums. If we go with the School Board plan, community groups will be limited in their opportunities to use that huge auditorium. We are reducing our opportunities and actually offering less to the community.
- k. The 'same last name over and over' principle holds in Athletics as well - and I'm not saying it doesn't. This is what happens in BIG schools. The opportunities are minimalized as kids go out for something. Just look at our IM Basketball teams. All these kids didn't make V/JV basketball, so they are playing intramural. The sad thing is that they can't

have spectators. Kids crowd in there to watch, but there are no bleachers to enjoy watching your friends (you know the ones that weren't good enough to make the team) - to watch them PLAY! Who is served? No one. Not the player, not the friend, not the school. No one is served by a BIG school. The only thing we gain is a massive curriculum with tons of course offerings like culinary arts in Italy. Great, but where is the balance? We have PSU in our backyard. We can continue to send kids up there for courses. Our LE program is incredible.

1. One other suggestion on 'inclusion' regarding the musical. When I was in high school, the musical director took one song from the play (it was actually the finale), but it could be any song. He put 110 kids on stage in that song. All those kids who tried out and weren't the best of the best got to be in this one scene. Guess what? It brought the house down. The audience LOVED it. Those 85 kids who would have been passed on, perhaps would have done crew, scenery, got to sing after all. That memory goes with them. That director was a genius. He knew what was important. He made it happen. Everyone won.

The Sensible Solution plan for State High is better. Bridge or no bridge (I personally vote for crossing the street and getting fresh air), the SS is the better of the two plans and it saves this community 40 million dollars. It keeps the environment in a workable, manageable, size. So, we cross the street. We gain in SO many other ways.

Thanks for listening.