

Education Report October 25, 2016

Based on feedback from attendees and candidates themselves, last week's BOE Candidates' Forum was successful. We estimated about 90 people in attendance from throughout Columbia. The format worked well and we were able to devote an hour and 15 minutes to audience Q & A and give everyone who lined up an opportunity to ask a question.

Many thanks to the members of the education committee who put a lot of thought and effort into this since we committed to doing it back in the spring. They generated a lot of ideas and good discussion, and they also had important suggestions on ground rules and format.

Thanks also to the other villages and Village Managers who got the word out to their residents.

Special thanks to Sandy and Brigitta for managing the logistics, developing the communications, staying on top of the candidates, staying on top of me (I was a bit tardy on a few of my promised contributions), and having everything ready to go without a hitch last Thursday night.

The HCC MCRC once again provided excellent facilitation. As you may know, these are volunteers and they provide the service free of charge. Much as we do with the OMHS band at the fall festival, we will give them a \$100 donation, paid from the event fund, as a token of our appreciation for the hours they spent preparing for and facilitating the forum.

Based on what I heard at the forum, I also charged the committee with a next step. I think we need to discuss the Elementary School Model here in Oakland Mills since two of our three Elementary Schools have it, and our middle school and high school will be impacted as a result. Most of the candidates are questioning parts or even the whole. One even questioned whether we should be treating schools more equally. ESM aside, I believe in equitable over equal. If various policies lead to poorer and richer schools, then the funding decisions need to help correct for that, so putting an more expensive program into a poor school may not be equal, but it may very well be equitable.

Regardless, the candidates said they want data and feedback on ESM, but as far as we know, they have not actually come to either of our schools for feedback. The SFES PTA supports ESM. I've asked the TSES and OMMS representatives to get back to me with where their school stand so we can determine whether we can have a united group voicing its support for this program.