

Gene Unger

Answers to TUF Questions

1. What is your opinion of the outside review?

The Operational Performance Review of our school district by MGT of America was a thorough assessment of our current operations and provided a framework for future functional improvements as well as potential savings. More importantly, it validated many of our Superintendents observations as well as his future plans for the district. Many of these recommendations will require a substantial investment in our facilities and the projected savings related to transportation for special needs students did not include these costs as well as related costs for instructional support. The savings projected for 2009/2010, \$2,297,500, were unrealistic given the timing as well as investment required by the district. A substantial portion of subsequent years savings are probably attainable if we begin the district re-design and budgeting process as early as April of 2009.

Overall, I'm pleased with the result and that I believe the various Board committees should begin the process of analyzing the MGT data and determine what the course of action should be. In particular, the transportation committee should begin the process of determining the impact of a reduction in courtesy busing in the district as recommended by MGT. And, working with a common agenda, all committees impacted by the special needs students busing issue, should provide guidance to the superintendent in a timely manner in order to impact the 2010/2011 budget and planning cycle.

TUF COMMENT: Mr. Unger ran in 2006 stating that he supported the outside review. Yet on the initial vote for the review he voted against it. TUF asked him why and he responded – “I, personally, felt it would be a vote of no-confidence in Mr. Seto if I voted in the affirmative. “

2. What is your impression of the performance of Mr. Seto?

Mr. Seto is an outstanding superintendent and leader. In a very short period of time he has changed the course of the Franklin Township School District and inspired many of our administrators and students to reach higher - to dream the impossible dream. I'm proud to have been part of the selection process as well as part of the voting process that brought Ed to our district.

I'm not going to offer any additional detail since the Board is currently conducting the superintendent's evaluation for the 2008/2009 school year.

3. What is your impression of the leadership of the BOE? Do you want to make changes?

Our current Board president, Eva Nagy, is a dedicated and respected leader both at the local and state level. Our Board vice-president, Andy Holtzheimer, is a dedicated and passionate advocate for the Franklin Township School District. Both of these outstanding members of the Board were elected at our re-organization meeting to their respective positions. Are there other capable Board members who would be outstanding Board leaders? Of course - but this selection process is a function of the Board at our up-coming re-organization meeting. It will be the new Board that selects the leadership for the future - each candidate has an opportunity to make a

presentation to their fellow Board members and seek support for their candidacy. The Board then votes and selects its leaders for the next cycle.

4. Do you support the budget?

I absolutely support the budget and urge all voters to please turn out on April 21st and vote - YES!!

As a member of the Finance Committee, I was an integral part of the budget development process. I know first hand what it took to get to where we are today. Multiple iterations and input from the public via Board members or from public hearings helped shape the final budget. Nothing was taken lightly. The reality of increasing costs, decreasing financial resources and the need to support the district goals all became part of the process. Newly mandated efficiency standards drove staff reductions in custodial, security and classroom aides. These findings were also supported by the MGT report. The High School restructuring, which reduced the school day from nine to eight periods and increased the length of each period, not only saved a substantial amount of money for the district but will offer additional instruction time for critical disciplines as well as increasing security for the school by allowing students who are not in the classroom to be challenged and redirected as necessary.

5. What changes, if any, do you wish to make in the school system?

I'm very confident in the direction our district is embarked upon. Ed Seto has identified six initiatives that will be the guiding template into the future. These six initiatives are supported by the four district goal statements that are the guiding principles that will enable our district to improve in all areas in the future. The challenge of increasing test scores to keep up with mandated standards is a monumental challenge and will test the district as never before. Our superintendent needs a supportive Board and a Board with the will to make un-popular decisions. We do need to improve the way we manage our facilities - buildings as well as grounds. Productivity improvements must be made in all areas and updated processes put in place. A merger with the Township in a shared service configuration should not be out of the question as we strive to lower costs and coincidentally improve the level of service.