

LWVS Statement
Board of Education Meeting
March 24, 2014

As an organization whose mission is to promote the active participation of citizens in government, the League encourages the Board to continue to be proactive in engaging the public in the budget process, making clear that the views of the public will be taken into account in developing the budget that is ultimately adopted by the Board. The League further urges the public to use the opportunity at this time, as traditionally is the case in the budget process, to articulate its priorities and goals for the 2014-15 school budget.

The League commends the Board for numerous improvements in how budget related information has been made more available and accessible to the public this year. The League notes, however, as we had at a Board meeting last month, a difference in the Board's approach to the development of the budget.

This year the budget discussion appears already to have been circumscribed by Board and Administration choices made within a set cost parameter in which, for example, items included in the proposed budget were said to require a trade-off with items excluded from the proposed budget. As a result, members of the community may have the impression that there is little room to modify the proposal or that their input may have little impact on what will be the adopted budget.

The League notes also its concern that the Board ensures it has a clear read of the community's priorities regarding what is funded in the proposed budget. The League recommends in particular that the Board seeks community input on decisions that could compromise the quality of our education, such as the decision not to restore the Helping Teacher in English Language Arts, the Middle School Librarian and the Middle School Computer teacher (0.5), and the decision to propose a budget that contemplates a tax levy that is less than the tax cap.

We thank the Board for its consideration and look forward to the community's active engagement for the remainder of the process.

The League will provide a more comprehensive statement on the budget in the coming weeks.