

League of Women Voters of Jefferson County Colorado
Discussion Questions for May 2023 unit meetings

UNIT MEETING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

School Board Candidate Forum

1. Please come up with questions to ask the potential school board candidates (for our school board candidates forum in September/October). [3-5 would be great.]

Student Based Budgeting

2. What are your thoughts on the SBB allocation; should we leave it up to individual schools to have that much control over their budget, or should the district decide?
3. Do you think that SBB's importance will increase with the school closures?
4. What do you think about the effectiveness of using SBB as part of the total budget? Do we want to advocate to change the process (way it's used, or even if it should be used in the first place)?
5. Did the revised formula provide greater equity?

School Closures

6. Demographics:
 - a. We are facing the challenges of declining enrollment.
 - b. The demographics are a significant driving force behind the school closures.
 - c. Member comment?
7. What do you think should/could be done with the school buildings that will be vacant when the elementary schools close next year?
 - a. School disposition committee – should we monitor it? When do they meet? Who are they?
8. How do you feel about the need for school closures?
9. Which of the following criteria should the Board use for the upcoming school closure decisions?
 - b. School size?
 - c. School demographics?
 - d. Nearby schools that could serve their students?
 - e. Transportation needs if neighborhood schools are closed?
 - f. Safety issues for crossing major thoroughfares to get to new school?
 - g. Consider the number of special programs or students being served by special programs in certain schools?
 - h. What is fairest to the most number of students?
 - i. What kind of condition is the school in? (i.e. from a facilities upgrade perspective)
 - j. What else?

Charter Schools

10. Charter Schools (publicly funded, privately managed schools):

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- k. We discussed a few of the criteria that are used to approve charter schools. Note that the criteria are mandated by state law to accept an application.
 - i. What do you think the criteria should be to approve a new charter school?
 - ii. Is that something we should advocate for at the legislature?
- l. Are the criteria for renewals fair and appropriate?
 - i. Do they consider the student population taking advantage of the Charter school?
 - ii. Should they consider the effect it has on the local community and the nearby neighborhood schools?

Direction for League

- 11. What other education issues are of interest to you and what other topics would you like included in future presentations?
 - m. Retention
 - n. Educator effectiveness laws (judging teachers by student test scores)
 - o. Salaries so that teachers can afford to live in Jefferson County
 - p. Book banning?
 - q. Curriculum choices (particularly social studies)
 - r. Transparency of school board meetings/open meetings laws
 - i. HB 1259 (transparency), requiring anyone who brings a legal challenge against a school district and loses to pay the costs/attorney fees.
 - ii. Do we have issues with transparency of Jeffco School Board? (They do stream their meetings and study session; post agendas; post presentation materials).
- 12. Thoughts and Ideas for Unit Action Plans:
 - s. Is there anything your unit wants to do on the education front?
 - t. Keep the school board election in November 2023 on your calendar and stay tuned for voter services candidate forums in advance of the election to learn about the candidates.
 - u. Does anyone from your unit want to join our Education Interest Group? We would love to have you!
- 13. Ken Witt, formerly the President of the Jeffco School Board is now the superintendent of schools in Woodland Park. The education interest group recommends that members track his actions including reviewing the recent CPR interviews.