

- **Questions asked**

- read in plain dealer that administration can not audit a teachers class unless they knew they were coming...wants to know the policy of our district...

Our administrators are able to and do observe teachers on an unannounced basis. In addition, all of our principals have been trained to do regular stop in visits to give teachers feedback. These are done on a regular basis.

- Why does the board/supt approve of pay raises in a contract when we know we don't have money for them?

This has not happened. In fact, by law, we cannot enter into a labor agreement with either of our associations unless the Treasurer can certify that we have the funds to meet all of the obligations of the contract. Our current contracts are certified by the Treasurer and expire on June 30, 2010. There is an additional year added to the agreement but it is only good IF the Treasurer can certify that the appropriate funds are available.

- Why are raises being given out for years down the road if we don't know where the money is coming from?

Please see above response.

- How much of the budget is for personnel and personnel expenses?

Approximately 61% of our budget is comprised of salaries and 22% in benefits. Please remember that education is a labor intensive business. All school districts have labor expenses that comprise percentages similar to ours. We are not unique in this regard.

- What are the board's listing of recommendations about potential cuts..

That is one of the reasons we are engaging the community in this discussion. We want to know the areas of budget reductions that the community feels would be appropriate. The Board understands that decisions like these ultimately rest with them but they want to make sure as many voices as possible are heard so that they can make an informed decision. In the financial situation we are in, everything is on the table as a possible reduction.

- What would be the next presentation..to show another power point won't be effective for him...he wants to dialogue and have questions answered..

We plan to have numerous small group conversations in the community over the next several months to do exactly that. I would be happy to meet with anyone to answers any questions they may have. I can be reached at my office at 330.689.5411. That number is a direct line to my office. My cell is 330.351.0986. I can be reached at that number almost any time.

- Commonality/point is the concern of decreasing student population..

Our student population is decreasing. Here are our current numbers:

Grade 1: 398

Grade 2: 426

Grade 3: 412

Grade 4: 423

Grade 5: 409

Grade 6: 430

Grade 7: 417

Grade 8: 453

Grade 9: 472

Grade 10: 464

Grade 11: 519

Grade 12: 469

- As we look toward the future..what do we want for our students to come away with.. Governor Strickland's vision for education was developed after numerous community meetings held around the state. To be successful in the future students need to be able to work in a team environment, be able to access information, be able to communicate in a variety of formats and to quickly synthesize a great deal of information. In addition, students will need a variety of technical skills to compete in our ever changing world.
- It seems like I get a lot of paperwork sent home with my kids. Can any of that be eliminated & possible replaced with emails? Could this save on paper costs & costs of someone actually making all those copies?
We have encouraged everyone to double side all copies and to use electronic correspondence when possible.
- Cost of all supplemental programs?
Our supplemental contract costs for all academic and athletic activities totaled \$687,400 last year. Costs would be higher in this are if not for the recent decision to not fill 64 of these positions and institute the pay to participate policy which reduced our costs by approximately \$200,000 per year.
- What is the number of registered voters vs. the number of people who voted?
In November of 2008 there were 21,673 votes cast. According to the Board of Elections there 28,992 registered voters in the Stow-Munroe Falls City School District.
- What is the Pay to Play cost?
\$100 per sport (including marching band) and \$75 per activity at the high school.
- What is the opposition to this? (Consider an interactive website)
We are considering changing our website to be more user friendly.
- There is a lot of misinformation in the public (i.e. pool at the high school, classroom sizes). This needs to be corrected. A forum through the Stow Sentry needs to be set up to educate the community. How are you going to do this?
I have been attending the "Coffee with the Editor" discussions that the Sentry hosts. This has been a good format for me to get correct information out. This format of Key Communicators is another vehicle. I am also looking into the possibility of a superintendent's blog.
- Why were the teachers/staff given a new contract with pay increases, when no new money would be coming in? How did the district plan to get the money to pay them?
Please see the response that indicates by law this cannot happen.
- What was the plan if you didn't pass a levy?
First, let's be clear. There is no plan for a levy. This Board has no intention of asking for a levy at this time after five losses at the polls. It is now time for us to listen to members of the community. That is truly the purpose of the Community Engagement process. What kind of school district does the community want?
- Can a sales tax be explored to help fund SMFCS?

Unfortunately the law does not allow our school district to raise revenue with a sales tax. The county can levy a sales tax that is earmarked for schools but only after all 17 districts in Summit County agree. The superintendents have had this discussion and we cannot get all districts on board for a variety of reasons. Finally, a sale tax would be revenue that could only be used for permanent improvements. This means items that last for five or more years. We could use this money for building improvements, paving, roofs etc. but could not use the money for the daily operation of the district.

- What financial performance matrix is being used? Revenue/student, cost/student, # students/activities, student/teacher by school

I have attached the CUPP report from the Ohio Department of Education which details our costs per student in a variety of categories. It also compares our expenditures with “Similar Districts” and the “Statewide Average”. Line “E” breaks down our student costs per administration, building operation, instructional expenditure, pupil support, staff support and total expenditure per pupil.

- What are other school districts in the same predicament doing?

They are doing some of the things we have been doing: eliminating administrators, not replacing teachers who leave the district, reducing classified personnel, cutting supplemental positions, instituting pay to participate, reducing building budgets and eliminating board paid professional development for teachers. Others are reducing bussing, closing buildings and reducing teaching positions to the point that class sizes are at thirty students.

- How can citizens get detailed financial information from the district? (Some people feel the district is hiding information)

Our Treasurer Catherine Bulgrin will be happy to provide any financial data requested. Her office phone is 330.689.5416. One can also access a great deal of financial information by accessing the district website, clicking on “Administration” and then click “Catherine Bulgrin”. The next screen provides numerous financial documents.

- So many Stow residents don’t vote at all for the levy. Would it be possible – or financially feasible- to send absentee ballots home to all school children (by family) to at least try to increase the voters that way? Maybe more people would turn those in since they don’t seem to all get out to vote.

That is a good suggestion. If the district has a levy on the ballot at some point we will give this idea consideration.

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- We are here for the children..tired of hearing this..”they hear teachers say I am going to pass Johnny on because I am tired of his crap”...doesn’t like to hear that..we do have some committed teachers..but also believe there are people here who here for just the money..

The vast majority of our teachers are very hard working individuals who have committed their careers to children. Despite what some people may think, teachers are not rich. In fact many have foregone more lucrative careers because they have a calling to work with children. It is the job of the administration to help that small minority improve their practices.

- You won’t believe what goes on (discipline) and not taken care of

I am not sure if there is a question here. However, I can assure you that our principals and teachers enforce discipline in our schools. I see the suspension and Saturday School paperwork on a regular basis.

*****once around the table

nothing more to add than what was added

see school personnel from lowest to highest to be more responsible..esp our treasurer...from what was read and seen...doesn't believe the board is using finances wisely..which is why people are saying no to levy..

.problems of the school how to stop being tainted by state and fed money we have to accept because rules come with it..

Other thoughts expressed:

- Need to keep process going and keep something accomplished..set a goal
- Wants to see all of the comments on the website since they all couldn't be told
- Their suggestion is that only know one of the school board members..it would be helpful if there was a mechanism so people could come and know who these school board members are
- Resentment over pay, benefits, hours – need to present the other side – hours teachers commit, support, etc
- School needs to be perceived as addressing union – everyone is willing to make sacrifices
- Specific fundraisers – computers, etc
- Busing – not a big monetary effect (smaller bus, combine routes)
- Keep textbooks, materials
- Close buildings at 4:00
- Cut athletics except at high school
- Try to keep class sizes smaller
- Elementary art & music?
- Well rounded education – important
- Extra-curricular activities not necessary
- Community groups pay to use buildings
- Parks & rec use of buildings
- Keep selling positive – people buy positive
- Misinformation – letters to editor
- Average 14 kids in classroom is not true
- What do you do about poor information – i.e. swimming pool at hs, small class sizes
- Many older people don't own computers – but they read Stow Sentry
- Negative media is killing us
- Inaccurate info in Stow Sentry
- Weekly reports should be included with correct information
- Schools need to continue media efforts – positive news
- Negative information affecting public opinion
- What is the largest expense? What rate are expenses increasing each year?
- Lorain county passed a ½% tax
- Is there a set of standards to compare school districts to compare how we manage funds?
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- Cut busing

- Add crossing guards
- No busing – would truancy go up?
- 2 mile limit for busing
- Don't cut academics
- Keep the cuts “non academics”
- People feel if the levy doesn't pass it forces the state to help
- Aging population says they can't afford a levy
- Population perception is that 80% of costs go to teachers salaries
- Freeze teachers salaries
- Try to get more involvement
- Without state involvement – no progress
- Cut busing
- Longer school days option
- Charter schools – are they actually going there
- Why don't they have to meet the same qualification as public schools?
- Lack of trust
- Build a website for community to “inform” just on this issue – include pro's & con's
- why levy failed – how can we pass it?