

September 21, 2010

Parents of Middle School Students Involved in Extracurricular Activities:

This letter is intended to address concerns about potential reductions if the November levy fails.

We certainly appreciate the positive influences of athletics, music, and all extracurricular activities on the development of our young people. Being part of an extracurricular activity fosters positive attributes, contributes to the development of a well-rounded individual, and provides a unique sense of belonging.

Any reductions in our extracurricular programs would not take place until the 2011-2012 school year, but it is important that our parents understand the serious nature of our financial situation.

We have cut 10 million dollars from the budget in the last five years. We have cut dozens of teaching positions, reduced our gifted program by 40%, and closed an elementary school. We do not have any more room in our ESOL program for our growing population of Limited English Proficient students and we need another nurse to administer shots to our increasing number of diabetic students. Clearly, we have many pressing needs.

We must protect our core academic program at all costs. If we cannot pass a levy, at some point, everything outside of the core academic program becomes expendable.

If we do not pass the levy in November, we will lose all of the anticipated new tax revenue for 2011, about 6.4 million dollars. Our choices then would be to, again, cut deeply into our staff and programs or attempt to pass a much higher millage levy next spring.

We stand to take in about \$150,000 per year for four years from Race-To-The-Top funds and an additional \$300,000 per year over two years from the Federal Education Jobs Fund. This money makes up about .5% of our budget. Like the lottery, the amount of money is so small, it would almost be better to do without. Citizens sometimes come to think that state and federal monies can replace local tax responsibilities, but, clearly, this is not the case.

We are cautiously optimistic that we can pass our levy in November. We have some factors in our favor that we did not have in the spring. We made Excellent with Distinction, our teachers and administrators accepted a pay freeze, we have reduced our millage request, we have significantly reduced our expenditures, and the City Council has endorsed our levy.

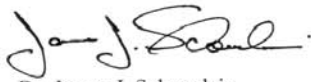
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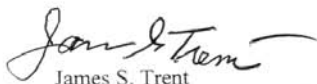
Even with these positive factors, this will be a tough fight as there are people out there who have sworn to do everything they can to defeat the Kettering Schools levy. We hope you don't let this vocal minority dictate the quality of your child's education.

Let's hope that we can turn our passion, anxiety, and frustration into a positive force, work together, capitalize on our strengths, and **get the job done in November**.

If you have any questions, please call the superintendent's office at 499-1430.



Dr. James J. Schoenlein
Superintendent



James S. Trent
President, Board of Education

Dayton Daily News

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By Jeremy P. Kelley, Staff Writer

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Kettering schools officials say they would eliminate all 2011-12 extracurricular activities — including sports and band — and reduce busing to state requirements if voters reject the district's 4.9-mill property tax levy Nov. 2.

"If your back is to the wall, and the voters say no in November, I don't think you can justify continuing to fund those things," Superintendent James Schoenlein said Thursday, Sept. 9, during a meeting with the Dayton Daily News editorial board.

The levy would cost the owner of a \$100,000 home \$150 per year and would raise about \$6.4 million annually. The district's general fund is about \$80 million. A larger levy was rejected in May.

School board Vice President Julie Gilmore said the district's focus is on getting the levy passed, but added the board is "in full agreement" with the 2011-12 cutting plans if the levy fails.

"Some people are going to say, 'Now you're threatening us,'" Gilmore said. "Well we didn't threaten them (in May). We said, 'This is what we need,' and it didn't work. Now, as the board, we've said we are going to explain these cuts that we have to make. People may say it's a threat, but it's also reality."

Fairmont High School junior cheerleader Caitlin Hageman said the "reality" would eliminate things that make high school special.

"Cutting cheer or any sports team would be huge," Hageman said. "These activities play a big part of the high school life for four years. They give you a chance to be a bigger part of the community."

Kettering students currently pay \$30 to \$60 per sport to play, with a family cap of \$150 per year. Those figures are lower than some surrounding districts, but Schoenlein said he didn't envision keeping some programs alive by increasing the participation fees.

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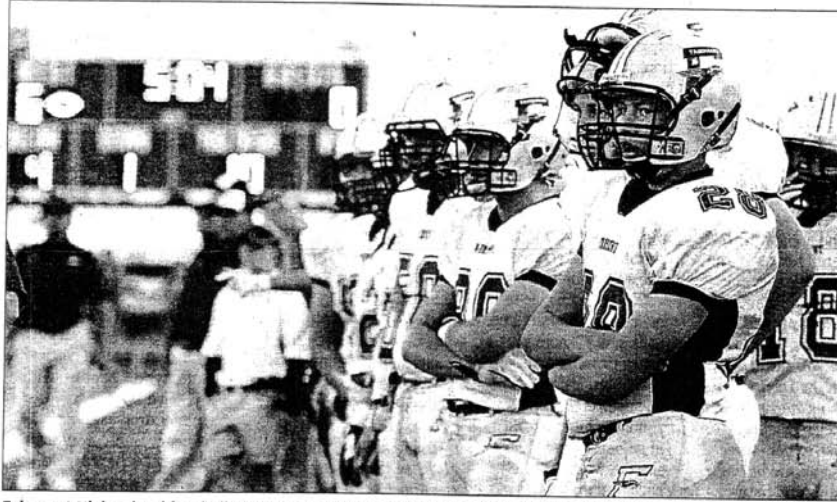
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District's plan to cut activities if levy fails alarms community



Fairmont High School football player Logan Holbrook stands on the sidelines with his teammates Sept. 10, during their game against Lakota West. Kettering schools recently announced that all extracurricular activities would be cut in the 2011-12 school year if the levy fails. Contributed photo by Jessica Uttinger

By Jeremy P. Kelley
Staff Writer

KETTERING — Many parents, students and coaches at Kettering City Schools were surprised to hear last week that the district plans to cut all extracurricular activities in 2011-12 if the 4.9-mill levy is voted down Nov. 2.

Bob Henry, who has two students in Kettering schools, was disappointed at the potential of "a very severe cut," and questioned where state funding such as promised lottery money had gone. But he also counted himself as a supporter of the schools.

"As much as I'd hate to see them lose that stuff, I'm very, very happy with the school system overall," Henry said.

Eric Weber of Citizens Advocating Responsible Government echoed the

idea that many problems facing local schools stem from a lack of problem-solving at the state level.

But he also said Kettering schools risk creating a rift in the community between those who have kids in school and those who don't. Weber called for a much clearer accounting of the district's recent budget cuts, which officials say totaled \$2.25 million.

Superintendent James Schoenlein and school board Vice President Julie Gilmore said district leadership is in agreement that sports, music and clubs would disappear next fall if the November levy fails, while busing, intervention and enrichment programs would be drastically reduced, and 30 teachers would be cut for 2011-12.

Schoenlein said busing could be cut by about 80 percent, with no service to high school students, and

with only those elementary and middle school students who live more than two miles from their school being eligible for busing.

All of those changes would happen only if the five-year levy is rejected Nov. 2. The property tax levy would cost the owner of a \$100,000 home \$150 per year and would raise about \$6.4 million annually.

Fairmont High School football coach Andy Aracri paused to "digest the news" when he was told last week, then said he hoped school supporters would step up.

"This is a great school district. ... It's a great place to live, and go to school and to work," he said. "We're going to do everything we can as a community not to put ourselves in that position."