

Subject: FW: Information about Osseo Area Schools' 2007 Levy Referendum

Sent On: 10/4/2007 7:41:14 PM

Received: 10/4/2007 7:41:17 PM

From: To: SchoolBoardMembers; 279 - Sec Principals (LEAD Principals Only); 279 - Elem Principals; [REDACTED]

4 Attachments:

1. image003.jpg
2. image003.jpg
3. image001.png
4. image003.jpg

Dear Colleagues:

Many of you reported an erroneous email that was circulating today to various community members. Let's all agree that we will respond with truth and grace without ever embarrassing anyone else. I know who the sender was, where she lives, and where her children attend school, but I do not want to argue; I just want to share our story.

I sent this to everyone on the list that she sent it to, but notice those names do not appear here. Again...it's irrelevant. I share it with you, because perhaps you will find it helpful when you receive an email that you would like to respectfully respond to with accuracy.

Thank you so much for taking our future so personally. Your commitment and perseverance humbles me. Remember, our best resource is you...and you.....and you.....and you.

We're rich!!

Susan

Subject: Information about Osseo Area Schools' 2007 Levy Referendum

Dear Community Members:

An email from one of your neighbors was sent to me several times today. I do not have your neighbor's email address, and I was hoping that you would forward my response to her and others who may have received the email in order for me to make the connection that I need and want to make. I have had the privilege of meeting with other parents of private schools who requested information about our upcoming levy that they could share with their fellow parents. Although they pay taxes and tuition, they understood the potential economic impact on our community, and they also felt a sense of commitment to students who attend public schools. I appreciate their perspective, but I also empathize with others who may feel differently.

I remember your neighbor's father who attended our "Q and A Session with our Board" on Tuesday evening, October 2, and I want to apologize that we did not better inform and reassure him. Please find some basic information that I hope you will find helpful, and in addition, I would like to offer the following additional sources:

- * our Web site, <<http://www.district279.org/>> www.district279.org has a link for the levy with multiple information points and will soon have a 9½ minute video that summarizes the levy information; the entire presentation is being shown numerous times on Channel 21;
- * patrons may leave their questions at 763-391-8639 or <<mailto:levyquestions@district279.org>> levyquestions@district279.org and may expect a subsequent answer either on our web site or through a return call;
- * the public is invited to attend a second Q and A Session, hosted by our Board members on October 23rd at our Educational Services Center at 11200 93rd Avenue N. Maple Grove, MN;
- * we have a financial oversight group, called FISCAL, comprised of independent community members and parents, who meet regularly to examine our budget books and inform our Board and public. I would be happy to put anyone in touch with a member of this group; and
- * I would welcome an opportunity to personally meet with you to either answer your questions, find the answers, or just plain listen to your concerns. My number is 763-391-7222.

In case you do not have time to access these sources, allow me to share a few highlights for your consideration. Independent School District 279, Osseo Area Schools, has three levy questions on the ballot this November 6th. Our school district, Anoka-Hennepin, Robbinsdale, Elk River, Buffalo, Brooklyn Center and 95 other school districts in the state have levy questions on their ballots since state aid to schools in this biennium was only increased by 2% this year and 1% next year.

What is the true tax impact?

- * If all three levy questions pass, the cost will approximate \$9.00 per month for each \$100,000 of taxable market value.
- * The average market value of a home in Maple Grove is approximately \$350,000; therefore, the cost would be \$31.60 or \$379.00 per year. A homeowner, whose home has a \$500,000 taxable market value would incur an increase of \$45.00 per month or \$540.00 per year each year of the 10 year levy period.
- * If the levy questions fail, property taxes will decrease by approximately \$8.00 per month for each \$100,000 of taxable market value;
- * The passage of all three levy questions will provide the school district an additional \$16.9 million in operating funds for each year of the levy, plus \$5.0 million for student technology for each year of the 10 year levy.

What happens if the levy ballot questions fail? Osseo Area Schools will likely need to take the following measures to balance its budget:

- * a budget reduction of \$31-33 million out of 60% of our budget; the remaining 40% is ineligible for reductions because of various federal and state mandates;
- * approximately 300 teaching positions, 180 support staff and 20 administrators will be terminated;
- * students per classroom will increase by 8-12;
- * co-curricular and extra-curricular activities will experience multiple fee increases and/or be eliminated;
- * up to four schools will have to close;
- * school closures will force boundary changes that will require 4,000 or more students to be moved to other sites;
- * transportation will only be provided for students who live two or more miles from school;
- * students will be less able to advance through technology at the rate needed to compete in our global economy; and
- * our property values will be impacted; property values are directly related to the quality of the educational system.