

President's Report

Mark Curtis

February 1, 2017

Good evening and welcome families of Samuel Bissell Elementary School and R.B. Chamberlin Middle School. I am Mark Curtis and it is my privilege to be your board president. We are now at the time of year where the unpredictable nature of northeast Ohio weather has graced us. Just days ago, it was 60 degrees outside and some of us out in shorts and flip-flops. Days later, we're dealing with lake-affect snow and slippery roads. Kids seem to love either situation, adults, not so much. Now having said that, we like to take a moment to remind our community about all that goes into 2 hour delays and school cancellations. As I'm sure the Superintendent will go into further detail, she is literally up at an ungodly hour traveling our roads in 3 municipalities trying to determine whether or not it is safe to send our children and our bus drivers out for school. It's never easy to cancel school, but our ultimate priority in doing so is to avoid unnecessary harm. Although it might be an inconvenience to some, we'd much rather err on the side of caution and we hope that you can appreciate this thoughtful approach.

I'd like to acknowledge the retirement of two district employees. Liz Eaton who is a Cook Manager at Bissell with 17 years of service, and Maureen Waldeck, who is a cook also at Bissell with 19 years of service. We appreciate all that you have done and given to this district and wish you well in your retirement.

Finally, as I have stated previously, the board has finalized the steps necessary for placing a Levy on the ballot in May for purposes of replacing tax revenue due to cuts initiated at the state level. Ultimately, these state cuts will amount to \$9.8 million dollars. It is extremely important for our community to understand that the district has already initiated significant cuts in staffing to help offset this reduction as part of a comprehensive Operational Change Plan in 2012. Thus far we have been able to do more with less. For example, the district participates in several group purchasing consortiums to leverage cost savings for items such as buses, liability insurance, diesel fuel, paper, cleaning supplies, gas, and electricity. Additionally, we participate in a large health care consortium risk sharing pool to

help mitigate the rising costs. These are only a few examples of what this administration has done to ensure good stewardship of your tax dollars.

Although we do these things, the public must know the ways in which we continue to be adversely affected by policies that are created at the state level. For every \$1,200 in foundation dollars that we receive from the state, approximately \$5,800 is taken away and given to charter schools. For every mandate that we are required to implement, such as the third grade reading guarantee or college credit plus, we must fund these initiatives out of our own coffers without reimbursement.

Our forecast is largely reliant upon the Governors biennial budget. Based on a recently released draft, there is little to suggest that school districts can expect any relief in a significant way. Therefore we hope for the best and plan for the worst.

The proposed May levy will be critical in allowing us to replace the anticipated reduction in state tax revenue. Your support of our school district is never taken for granted and we truly appreciate it. We will continue to our efforts to convince the individuals making these decisions in Columbus, that they place undue stress at the local level. However, the truth of the matter is that they've heard enough from us. They need to hear from you, the taxpayer. Please make your concerns heard by contacting our representatives in the Statehouse (Rep. Kristina Roegner & Sen. Frank LaRose).

Having said that, let's now turn our focus on why we are all here; our students and their achievements. To that end, I will now turn the meeting over to Mrs. Powers for the Superintendent's Report.