



Soaring toward Excellence

DEAR DISTRICT RESIDENTS,

January 2020

The 2019-20 school year is a critical and defining year for Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Schools. Last month, our Board of Education took the second of two necessary votes to place a 5.7-mill operating levy on the March 17, 2020 presidential primary ballot.

The single most important issue facing our schools right now is our budget. Due to our financial situation and the way public school funding works in Ohio, the district placed an operating levy on the May 2019 ballot but it did not pass. Subsequently, the district made \$1.8 million of reductions in two phases, starting in the summer of 2019. This was in addition to the \$500,000 of reductions already made in 2018, for a total of \$2.3 million. Our district budget is so lean that cuts are already hitting the classroom and the student experience; we cannot continue to make reductions without seriously impacting the quality of our students' educational experience.

And there is so much we have to offer in our schools! I am proud each and every day of what is accomplished in our district. Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Schools is consistently ranked among the best locally and across the state. The district received a "B" on the 2019 State Report Card that was released in September. The district's graduation rate of 94.2% earned an "A" while the student attendance rate is 95.4% and the number of 3rd graders that met the Third Grade Reading Guarantee was 100%

Ultimately it is up to the community to decide what kind of schools it wants, and it is my goal to make sure district residents are informed with the facts. I would like to invite you to visit our website at sugarcreek.k12.oh.us and click on the Communications tab to view the variety of ways you can stay informed and learn more about the district, as listed below:

- The Bridge is the district's newsletter and is mailed to every district household throughout the school year. The latest edition was mailed in December.
- This year we have published our inaugural Quality Profile, highlighting facts from the previous school year. This publication was mailed to all households in September.
- I have begun to write and post a blog—Dr. Cozad's Corner—that focuses on critical topics that impact our school district.
- We have made an effort to streamline and increase our social media presence this school year. Be sure to follow us on Facebook (@BellbrookSchools) and Twitter (@BellbrookSchool).
- I encourage you to attend an upcoming "Coffee with the Superintendent." All community members are welcome; this is a great opportunity for us to casually converse about a topic that affects us all—our schools. All dates are posted on our website.

For more information about the March levy, please see the back of this letter and visit the Levy Info tab on the district website. And on February 3 and 17, school district representatives will host levy information meetings to present the facts and answer questions. These will be held at Bellbrook Middle School at 6 pm. David Graham, county auditor, will also be at the February 3 meeting to discuss real estate taxes. You can also contact us at info@bss.k12.oh.us to ask additional questions about the levy. I am grateful to be part of our supportive community and am hopeful about what the future may bring.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas A. Cozad".

Dr. Douglas Cozad, Superintendent

FACTS ABOUT THE MARCH 17, 2020 OPERATING LEVY

The district is on the ballot for a

5.7-mill
operating levy.

The district last passed a levy for new operating dollars in

2015

An operating levy helps fund the district's **day-to-day operations**, such as staffing, utilities, transportation, maintenance and supplies.

Only

27%

of the district budget comes from the state—compared to the state average of 44%.

The district has made over **\$2.3 million in budget reductions**

between the summer of 2018 and Phase I and II reductions in 2019.

If passed, the levy would cost district taxpayers

\$16.60

per month per \$100,000 appraised market value.

WHAT IF IT **PASSES?**

If the levy passes, we can continue to provide the excellent experience we do for our students, families and staff. It will also provide much-needed financial stability for our schools and prevent deeper cuts that would have a direct, negative impact on the education we offer to our learners.

WHAT IF IT **FAILS?**

The district will have to make devastating cuts to the budget, which will undoubtedly affect the experience, programs and services available to our students. Reductions may include a reduction in specials or electives being offered, increases in class sizes due to further staff reductions, further reductions in transportation services, increases in fees, reductions in sports and/or extracurriculars, and an overall reduction in services and supports.

Voting Information

FEBRUARY

18

Voter Registration Ends

FEBRUARY

19

Early Voting Starts

MARCH

17

Election Day

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT VOTING, VISIT

sugarcreek.k12.oh.us/Levy.aspx

Remember, as a presidential primary election, polling locations may be busy—plan accordingly!



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