

Dear District Staff and Parents,

I always want to ensure that we are operating in an open and transparent manner. And with that goal in mind, I think it is important for me to review with you the key takeaways from a survey we recently implemented in our school district community.

Stakeholder involvement in our schools is critical. Ultimately, these buildings belong to the community and I want to make sure that they reflect that sentiment.

Following the failure of the May 7, 2019 ballot issue, we began the tough work of identifying and communicating the cuts and reductions that we will have to make as a school system. Additionally, we knew that garnering direct community feedback through a valid, third-party survey would help as we navigate the future of our schools.

Through that survey, which was executed in early June 2019, the professional pollsters at Fallon Research collected and analyzed data, and then shared that data analysis with our board of education at the July 11, 2019 board meeting.

Moreover, what the data and all of this means to me is this: People surveyed believe that their taxes are high and are sensitive to any type of tax increase. Additionally, those surveyed believe that the schools have enough money and are in favor of making reductions in spending before or in addition to asking for more money. And although we do a good job with the amount of communication we do with our residents, most of whom overwhelmingly believe that we are doing a great job educating our students, we could be more articulate in our communication and more clear about the needs facing our district.

Both the survey results and the data analysis presented to our Board can be found on our website at <http://www.sugarcreek.k12.oh.us/CommunitySurvey.aspx>

The results of this survey are just one piece of information that the board is using to guide its decision about when to place another issue on the ballot. We will take these results to heart in addition to any additional feedback or information in order to make educated decisions for our district. Based on information gathered and the state of our current budget, we know we need to first identify further reductions. Doing so is not easy work - we know that cuts hurt. Identifying cuts and reductions to an already lean budget is not a place we ever wanted to be but it is something we must do and it will also help guide us in determining the scope of a yet to be determined future levy for our district.

It is not lost on me that our budget is so lean that cuts and reductions hit straight to the classroom. There is no way around it. Much like one's home budget we simply cannot fund what we can no longer afford. The fact that if we continue without additional funds, then we must continue cutting and with more frequency; and that we are forced to rely on our local taxpayers to support our local schools. Unfortunately, this is a fact that all school districts are facing and

this is where we are right now. Throughout the coming months, I will do my absolute best to make sure our community - especially you, as district parents and staff - are provided with the facts about our finances and the direction we are heading.

I am grateful for the experienced teachers who do an excellent job supporting one another while educating our students with the resources and knowledge they have. I am also grateful to be in a community that believes in public education in general and Bellbrook-Sugarcreek specifically, and would like to affirm it as an award-winning district that keeps students soaring toward excellence by maintaining high standards for personal and academic success.

I am hopeful for the future and we cannot let our schools falter. We're in this together.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or your building principal.