



The *Sandusky City Schools* Compass

Volume Number 12

November 2008 - February 2009

Edition 2



Difficult decisions are on the horizon...

Difficult decisions are on the horizon for everyone due to the state of our present economic condition both locally and across the nation. Our future is dependent upon our youth to become the leaders of tomorrow. It is imperative that our children have the knowledge and education necessary to be prepared to make responsible and informed decisions needed to lead our country out of economic despair. Funding for education in Ohio has been left to the local voters to determine the fate of local school districts. State legislators have failed to fund schools adequately and the burden has been placed squarely upon the local property owner.

Two local school tax issues will be on the ballot on November 5th. One is the renewal of a \$1.5 million emergency operating levy. To eliminate that renewal would be devastating to the school district. Over the past several years the school district has cut over \$3 million from the budget by closing school buildings and eliminating staff. Over that same period of time our test scores have made dramatic gains. Secondly, the school district is asking voters to replace a 2 mill Permanent Improvement (PI) levy. The PI levy was first passed in 1985. It generated \$600,000 annually and has not been increased by the voters for twenty-three 23 years. During that time period dramatic changes have taken place in education with respect to the use of our aging facilities. Technology is vital, but to update the infrastructure of the buildings and to purchase the needed hardware and software is very expensive. Additionally, the cost of purchasing and maintaining our bus fleet has become exceedingly costly. Buses cost in excess of \$70,000 each. By purchasing three buses annually it means that each bus is in service for twelve years before being replaced. We can only currently replace one bus per year due to financial constraints. After twenty-three years inflation has put the school district in peril and it is necessary that we renew our funding to the level approved over two decades ago so that our students have adequate facilities, equipment and buses for transportation.

Sandusky voters have been great supporters of their school district over the years. Both levy issues combined will increase the taxes on a \$100,000 home less than \$40 per year. Most homes in Sandusky are valued closer to \$50,000 and that would be less than \$20 per year, or about 5 pennies per day.

Bill Pahl

Bill Pahl, Superintendent

Mills Elementary School is an *EFFECTIVE SCHOOL!*

Through the hard work of our teaching staff, students, and parents we were able to overcome the academic gap and are now on the up road to success. This “*Effective*” rating by the Ohio Department of Education is the third best rating the state can bestow on school districts and individual buildings within a school district.

What does this all mean? Our students are growing academically every year; they are successful in the classroom; and are scoring well on the Ohio Achievement Tests exams. Through the daily dedication of a supportive, hard working staff, Mills School is becoming an academically sound building. The staff works a countless number of hours preparing our students for success. Our students work hard to please and want to be successful. The parental support is growing and our parents are beginning to understand the high expectations that we as a staff, have for their children. *These children are our future and our future is important.*

Our philosophy at Mills Elementary School is simple: Show Pride in your school by: Respecting ourselves, respecting others, and doing the best that you can do everyday! Mills School is an *EFFECTIVE* school moving toward excellence!

Progress Continues... Sandusky City Schools now has four of nine buildings with an “Effective” rating from the State of Ohio. Our other five buildings are working to move from “Continuous Improvement” to “Effective” status every day. Continued support by our parents, students, and staff is making the difference as we strive for “Excellence.”

Inside this issue:

You Asked:	
Questions & Answers	2
Voting	
November 4th	2
New Treasurer	2
Bullying Prevention Program	3
Gentlemen’s Club	3
Daylight Saving Time Ending	3
Ohio Graduation Test Coming	3
Parent/Teacher Evening Conferences	3
Board of Education Meetings Notice	4
Sandusky Calendar	4
Test Tips for Parents	4
Bonus page on website:	
www.scs-k12.net	

Sandusky City Schools Levy Information... Keeping you Informed

You Asked: Questions & Answers

Question: *What impact does the current economic condition play with respect to the November election?*

Answer: Utility costs and fuel for buses has increased dramatically and placed a tremendous burden upon the school district. Additionally, the cost of text books, supplies, and technology are increasing at a rapid rate. Also, total district value has declined, which is contrary to our expectation of growth in home value, largely due to House Bill 119, the Homestead Exemption act, which reduces taxes for homeowners over the age of 65. Filing for this exemption will decrease a homeowner's payment by \$38.66 per year for these two levies.

Question: *What would happen if the \$1.5 million emergency levy was not renewed?*

Answer: \$1.5 million would need to be cut immediately from the budget. Because of the unavoidable increases in fixed costs (utilities, fuel, textbooks, supplies, etc.) the cuts would need to be in personnel. Coupled with the recent reductions made this past year this would result in very large class sizes. Approximately 25 positions would need to be reduced.

Question: *Why is it necessary to replace the Permanent Improvement (PI) Levy?*

Answer: Dollars from the PI Levy can not be used for salaries. They can only be used for such things as maintaining our aging facilities, the purchase of school buses and purchasing technology equipment. During the past twenty-three (23) years the costs for such things has increased tremendously through inflation, and our current budget can no longer meet those needs. Our buildings are very old, and it is very costly to maintain them to meet current standards. Like all old buildings, they would literally fall apart if we did not keep up with their level of need.

Our fleet of school buses is aging quickly. We can only afford to replace one school bus per year when we should be replacing three per year. The cost of maintaining old buses is costly, but the critical issue here is safety. We can not afford to be running older buses that could risk the safety of our children.

Question: *Is there room in the high school building to place the seventh and eighth grade students and classes?*

Answer: To place an additional 700 students into the high school building may be physically possible, but facilities would need dramatic changes to accommodate the curriculum needs of junior high school aged students. The building would need to be drastically reconfigured which would require many upgrades to meet current standards which would be very costly.

The best configuration for the school district would include; four (4) K-5 elementary buildings, one (1) 6-8 middle school, and one (1) 9-12 high school. Sandusky High School is a comprehensive high school that, in addition to providing academic classes, it also provides for career and technology training. It is less costly for the taxpayers of Sandusky to provide this career/tech education than sending our students to EHOVE.

Additionally, the high school building offers an extensive adult education program that utilizes space in the building, providing educational programming to help keep our community workers educated and up-to-date for future business trends in our community, focusing on future job prospects.

Question: *How much will the two issues cost the taxpayers of Sandusky?*

Answer: For both levies combined, taxes on a \$100,000 home will increase less than \$40 per year (10 cents per day). Most homes in Sandusky are valued closer to \$50,000 and that would be \$20 per year, or about 5 pennies per day.

You have questions... We'll get you answers! Call 419-626-6940



November 4th

Poles are open 6:30 A.M. to 7:30 P.M. Remember to take a valid identification. This may include a current and valid photo identification, military identification, or a copy of a current (within the last 12 months) utility bill (including cell phone bill), bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document (other than a notification mailed by the board of elections), that shows the voter's name and current address (including from a public college or university).

Questions or need assistance, call:

Erie County Board of Elections

2900 Columbus Ave.

Sandusky, OH 44870

Office Hours: 8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M., M-F

Telephone: 419-627-7601

E-mail: erie@sos.state.oh.us

Web site: www.electionsonthe.net/oh/erie/

New Treasurer

New to area, own and living in Sandusky.

CPA

Experience...

Financial outlook

5-Year forecast

Sandusky City Schools Continue Improvement

Steps to Respect: Bullying Prevention Program

Parents, teachers, and school administrators are all well aware of the negative impact bullying can have on children. It can affect the child being bullied and the one bullying. Even those students who are not directly involved, but witness the acts are impacted. Bullying can also take a toll on a school in the form of student absences, behavior problems, and classroom disruptions. In order to create a safe school climate for all students, it is critical to address bullying directly.

This year students in 4th – 6th grade in all elementary buildings will participate in *Steps to Respect* which takes a whole-school approach to bullying, bringing staff, students, and families into the picture. A school-wide approach sends a message to students that it's safe to come forward when there is a problem and that adults will take steps to help them. *Steps to Respect* includes eleven (11) skill-building lessons and two literature units incorporating social emotional learning as a part of academics. Students who are better able to manage their emotions can pay attention better, can and absorb and remember information better. This leads to an improved learning environment and fewer classroom distractions.

Through *Steps to Respect* students learn to recognize, refuse, and report bullying. There is also an emphasis on the importance of the “bystander” to help stop bullying and improve the entire school climate. Most bullying episodes last less than 7 seconds and therefore cannot always be seen by an adult. That is why it is important for other students who witness it to recognize and report it. Students learn the difference between reporting and “tattling.” *Steps to Respect* was piloted in some of the elementary classrooms last year and received rave reviews from both teachers and students. This year all lessons have been adapted for SmartBoards for even more interactive learning.

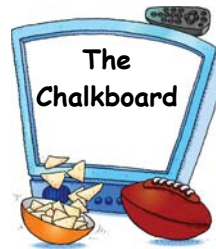
Sandusky City Schools Gentlemen's Club

The following young men were recently selected to join the Sandusky City Schools Gentlemen's Club.

This was a very difficult selection process this year as we had 33 students who applied and they were outstanding candidates.

The Gentlemen's Club is in its second year of existence. We are a community service based organization whose mission is to *“Improve the quality of life inside our community while providing opportunities outside our community.”* We are extremely proud of all the young men who took part in the application process and are proud to present the following new members: Rae' Shun Adcock, John Sullivan, Michael Cheek, Michael Mingus, Xavier Seavers, Justin Gonzalez, Brandon Seitz, Jonathon Roumo-Callwood, Derrick Kirkwood, Oshay Scott, Eric Woods

We also are pleased to have the following charter members active at SHS under the direction of Larry Fuqua: Keith Koehler, Michael Brown, Devin Aaron, Keegan Russell, Vanuel Williams, Terrance Scott, Ford Wagner, Dequarious Pate, Marquette Watson.



Sandusky City Schools
on Cable Channel 81
or Sandusky Schools
on the web at
www.scs-k12.net

Parent/Teacher Evening Conferences Grades K-12 ❖ November 6, 2008

You will be receiving an appointment sheet from your child's school with the date and time for your appointment. If you have not received an appointment notice by November 3rd, please contact your child's building office to schedule a time. The district number is 419-626-6940. For direct dial numbers and email addresses, please check our website at www.scs-k12.net/staffDirectory.aspx. or www.scs-k12.net.

Daylight Saving Time Ending

Daylight Saving Time (DST) Ends November 3rd, remember to set your clocks back before bed. At 2:00 AM on November 4th daylight saving time ends.

Please check your smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector, and replace the batteries. A few dollars could make the difference in saving lives. Daylight Saving Time returns March 9, 2008

The Ohio Graduation Test

is coming (OGT)

November 3-7

Is your SHS student ready?

For test tips, check out the list
on page four.

Sandusky Calendar Schedule

November

- 3-7 Ohio Graduation Test
- 3 Adams Band Concert, 7:00 PM
- 4 Election Day, Polls open from 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM
- 4 SHS Fall Sports Banquet, 6:00 PM
- 6 Parent/Teacher Conference, Evening Schedule
- 11 Parent/Teacher Conference, Evening Schedule
- 18 SHS Football Banquet, 6:00 PM
- 19 Junior's College Planning Night, 7:00 PM
- 20-21 SHS Drama Club Production, 7:30 PM
- 25 Gospel Choir Concert, 7:00 PM
- 26-28 Thanksgiving Break
- 28 Downtown Lighting Ceremony

December

- 3 SHS Prep Choir & Brass Choir Concert, 7:00 PM
- 4 Hancock Winter Program, 9:45 AM or 12:45 PM
- 6 SHS Winter Dance, 8:00 PM
- 9 Mills Winter Program, 10:00 AM or 1:30 PM
- 9 SHS Symphony, Orchestra Concert, 7:30 PM
- 10 SHS Red Cross Blood Drive, 7:30 AM to 7:00 PM
- 10 Adams Winter Concert, 7:00 PM
- 11 Ontario Winter Program
- 12 Madison Winter Program, 9:30 AM or 1:00 PM
- 15 A Cappella Choir Concert, 7:30 PM
- 16 Osborne Winter Program, 9:30 AM
- 16 Jackson Winter Program, 7:00 PM
- 17 A Cappella Choir Concert, 7:30 PM
- 18 Venice Winter Program, 9:00 AM or 1:00 PM
- 22-31 Winter Break – NO SCHOOL

January

- 1-2 Winter Break – NO SCHOOL
- 5 School Resumes K-12
- 11 SHS Winter Band Concert, 3:00 PM
- 15 SHS Senior Financial Aid Night, 7:00 PM
- 19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – NO SCHOOL
- 28 ABC Streak Math Blast, Adams Auditorium, 6:30 PM
- 29-30 SHS Drama Club Production, 7:30 PM

February

- 4 SHS Red Cross Blood Drive, 7:30 AM to 1:30 PM
- 16 President's Day – NO SCHOOL
- 18 SHS Symphony Orchestra Concert, 7:30 PM
- 25 ABC Social Studies Challenge, 6:30 PM
- 26 Blues in the Night Jazz Concert, Adams Auditorium, 7:00 PM
- 28 SHS Winter Dance, 8:00 PM

Board of Education Meeting Dates

November 17, 2008 7:00 p.m. Administration Building
December 15, 2008 11:30 a.m. Administration Building
January 12, 2009 7:30 a.m. Administration Building
Citizens may address the Board by sending a signed, written request to Superintendent's Office, 407 Decatur Street, with topic(s) listed, at least one week prior to Board meeting.

Superintendent's Office 419-621-2718

Superintendent's Exec. Asst. email: fpalmucci@scs-k12.net

Test Tips for Parents (The OGT is Coming)

The following tips will provide suggestions for parents on how to approach test taking with their kids.

- ✓ Ensure that your child eats a healthy breakfast and avoid heavy foods that may make him/her groggy and avoid high sugar foods that may make him/her hyper.
- ✓ Make sure that your child gets enough sleep on the night before a test.
- ✓ Make sure that your child gets up early enough so that he/she will be on time to school.
- ✓ Make sure that your child does all their homework and reading assignments which will help make sure your child is prepared.
- ✓ Encourage your child to space out their studying and homework assignments so that they won't be forced to cram on the night before.
- ✓ If you are anxious about your child's test it's ok, but try to keep cool around your child, you don't want them to get anxious about their tests too.
- ✓ Encourage your child to do well, but don't pressure him/her, you may stress him/her out, it is important for your child to stay relaxed on the test.
- ✓ Keep a positive attitude about tests.
- ✓ Provide a quiet, well lighted area with little distractions to help your child study efficiently.
- ✓ Mark down test days on your calendar so you and your child are both aware of testing dates.
- ✓ Let your child relax for a few hours before bedtime, it can be stressful for a child to study all night.
- ✓ Talking about the test with your child can relieve stress about test taking.
- ✓ If your child is struggling on their tests, talk to them about it and meet with their teacher to find out the best way to help your child.
- ✓ Praise/reward your child when they do well on a test or for their hard work preparing for a test.
- ✓ Encourage them to do better if they don't do well.

Look for our
BONUS
page online at
www.scs-k12.net

(Forms link to *The Compass*
Newsletter) or
(Superintendent's Message
link to *The Compass*)
www.scs-k12.net

Sandusky City Schools
407 Decatur Street
Sandusky, OH 44870-2442

Sandusky
Postal Customer

Non-Profit
Organization
U. S. Postage
PAID
Sandusky, Ohio
Permit No. 283