

## ENDING AND BEGINNING

Well, we are already well past the middle of June. Many plans for the 2006-2007 school year have already been finalized. I feel very pleased and fortunate to be able to report to you that we will end the fiscal year in a positive healthy manner. What does this mean exactly? Simply stated, it means that we find ourselves in a position of not needing to reduce classroom staff or classroom programs for the coming school year. The same cannot be said for many school districts throughout the State of Ohio. Due to a lack of current and projected funds, quite a number of school districts have had to make some very tough decisions in cutting programs and/or staff at the classroom level.

While our school district has not had to take this approach for next year, this certainly doesn't mean that we aren't continuing to watch our pennies and stretch our dollars. While we have made some additions at the classroom level, we have also made some cuts in other areas in an attempt to closely monitor spending and our overall cash flow. Let's face it, all school district budgets took major hits this year just from the ever-increasing utility and diesel fuel costs compared to the 2004-2005 school year. Yet, for the majority of school districts there was little or no increase of funding, either from the state or federal level or from increased local taxes. Yes, our voters have approved a 4.64 mill tax increase. But, this is designated to be spent on the specific items of new construction and renovation, and not the day-to-day operating expenses of the district. Herein lies the problem for school districts. More and more programs are mandated at the state or federal level that are often soft funded---if at all. To date, there has been no major overhaul of the school funding process mandated by the Ohio courts. Operating costs continue to rise. Unfortunately, school districts have little power to control these costs. Therefore, this leaves personnel as the only arena where school districts can actively affect the school's budget.

Many districts are exercising this ability right now. Again, fortunately the Adams County/Ohio Valley School District is not one of those districts at this time.

There are two driving forces that affect the district's overall financial condition. One is increasing costs. The other is incoming funds. When the costs surpass your revenue, then you have a problem. This last occurred with our school district some four years ago. As state funding of Ohio schools is subject to change biennially, it's difficult to project our financial picture definitely beyond the next couple of years. Let's hope that we can avoid financial difficulties for as long as possible. In the meantime, the district will remain committed to providing the highest quality of programs for all students that we can afford to offer. And, we will continue to train our staffs on the use of best practices so that they will be empowered to work both hard and smart.

This is my last scheduled article for the 2005-2006 school year. After all, you could probably use a break from my written meanderings! This column will reappear in August with the approval of *The Peoples' Defender*. I would like to thank *The Peoples' Defender* for printing this bi-weekly column. I would also like to thank those of you who read and look forward to the next article. Your support and encouragement are both needed and appreciated. As always, if you have any questions, just give me a call at 544-5586. Make it a safe summer! Thank you.

Charles P. Kimble

Superintendent