

UPDATE ON CALAMITY DAYS

Since my last article appeared in the paper, we have had to cancel school on Tuesday, February 16th (waiver/in-service day), and Wednesday, February 17th, due to snow-covered roads. February 16th, which was scheduled as a waiver day for staff development, has been rescheduled for Friday, June 4th. Students do not have to make up this day. February 17th will be made up on Thursday, June 3rd for all students except seniors. Seniors will make up February 17th on Friday, May 28th, thus preserving our previously approved graduation dates of May 28th (WUHS), May 29th (NAHS), and May 30th (PHS).

Any further calamity days used during the present school year will be made up by extending the school day for thirty minutes for eleven days per each calamity day beyond the tenth calamity day. If you have any questions about this information, please contact your building principal.

MORE MILK?

I wanted to give you just a little bit of follow-up on my comments in the last article concerning the serving of milk in school lunchrooms. While I am very supportive of the system that Ohio already has in place, there is actually a soy milk product, called *Silk*, available on the market now. Those with milk allergies are well aware of this product.

Recently, I tasted *Silk*. Actually, I was surprised by the flavor, which I found to be rather rich—much like cream. Obviously, *Silk* contains nutrients that are typically found in milk. So, there are other ways of receiving that nourishment other than through milk. Having shared this with you, my personal preference between the two products is still good, old-fashioned milk that originated from a cow. However, some people are not fortunate enough to have that option. Their option is *Silk*.

CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

Over the course of the past several months, I have made it a priority to not only keep our district staff informed as to our growing financial concerns, but also the general public. This week's article is going to be devoted in part to outlining the district's plan for cutting General fund expenses.

Before we get to the plan for cutting General fund expenses, let's take a moment to briefly discuss two other funds that the district utilizes. One is the Permanent Improvement (PI) fund. Money from this fund is used to buy things such as books, computers, buses, etc.—things that are going to be around for more than five years. You cannot use PI funds to pay for salaries and fringe benefits of employees. Because of our recently completed construction and renovation project, the district has a second fund that it can tap into—the Maintenance fund. This fund can be used to cover expenses associated with maintaining the buildings and grounds—from replacing heat pumps to replacing roofs to purchasing mowing or snow removal equipment. Both the Maintenance fund, which was actually a part of our bond levy that voters approved in 2006, and the PI fund contain funds that cannot be used for paying the salaries and fringe benefits for teachers, principals, bus drivers, cooks, etc. In some instances, maintenance personnel may be able to be paid from this fund.

So, having provided some background for you regarding some of our funds, let's switch to the General fund. Our budget for FY2010 (2009-2010 school year) was spared from mid-year cuts to staff with the Senate approval of the HB1 Budget Amendment Bill. Since I explained all of this in an earlier article, I won't go back to cover it again now. Keep in mind that just because we were spared from doing mid-year cuts this school year, the passage of the HB 1 Budget

Amendment Bill did nothing to address our projected deficit of nearly \$6 million in FY2012 (2011-2012 school year). Therefore, in the absence of more money coming in on the state or federal levels, the Adams County/Ohio Valley School District must enact and follow a plan to reduce General fund expenditures beginning at the conclusion of this school year.

A great deal of input was solicited for this plan for reducing costs which has been approved by the Board of Education. The plan calls for additional cuts to be made in administration, teaching, and classified positions. These cuts are being spread out across the district from the Central Administration Office to the Alternative School to individual school buildings. Some cuts may occur through resignations or retirements. It is hoped that this plan for reducing General fund costs will not be too intrusive or cause too much of a negative impact on the services that we offer to students. However, about the only way that a school district can significantly reduce costs is through personnel.

Finally, the board members and I fully understand the situation with our economy. It is with much thought and a good deal of reluctance that the board will likely plan to put an operating levy on the November 2010 ballot. They are doing so because they feel that the public has a right to help decide just how deep the cuts are going to have to go. Please keep in mind that in our school district one mill raises about \$300,000.00. This sounds like a lot of money, and it is. However, when you have close to 500 employees and you are battling rising costs in everything, \$300,000.00 doesn't go very far. Again, our projected deficit in FY2010 is about \$6 million. I know that some have understandably questioned why we would consider creating a joint vocational school district in Adams County at this time. The reasoning is simple—finances. While it is true that we will receive less money in our school district from state sources if a new JVSD is created, the new JVSD will receive a great deal of money, thus lessening the burden on

our General fund for supporting vocational education. As an example, our bill to support vocational education from the General fund would be reduced by close to \$2 million should a new JVSD in Adams County be funded in the next biennium budget (summer of 2011).

If you have any questions about this article, please feel free to contact me at 544-5586. Thank you.

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Superintendent