

SCHOOL FUNDING EXPLAINED: PART 2



In the last newsletter, I began discussing the two reasons why school districts are regularly back on the ballot. I first discussed the component of local tax revenue.

Next, I'll talk about the state funding component. I want to start by saying that the funding system has been declared unconstitutional on four separate occasions by the Supreme Court of the State of Ohio. I say that only to let you know that the state's system for funding schools is broken and has never been fixed.

Also, please know that there are complete courses devoted to understanding school funding and why it doesn't work, so suffice it to say that I am not going to be able to explain the complexities of all the pieces parts of school funding in the limited space that I have. However, there are certain basic principles in school funding which I think are important for tax payers to understand. First, it is simply underfunded. The state doesn't devote enough dollars from the state's budget to education. That is the conclusion of many studies done to determine the actual cost of what it takes to educate a student. The state has just not made funding education a priority of its budget.

Secondly, the state determines school funding to be a shared responsibility between the state and the local district, so a formula is used to determine how much each will pay. There is a component in the state's funding formula that uses the district's property valuation to determine what is called the "state's share percentage." That state share percentage is

then used to determine how much of the "state's funding per pupil," the state is actually going to pay the district. The result of the formula is that the higher a district's property valuation, the less state funding the district receives. The problem is, as we learned in our previous discussion about local property taxes, when a district's property value increases due to inflation there is no increase in the amount of taxes that the district receives. So, when a district's property valuation that has increased over the years due to inflation, the state uses that higher valuation number in the formula, thereby reducing the "state's share percentage," and the amount of money they fund a district. So, on one hand (locally) you don't receive any additional taxes for property valuation growth, and on the other hand (state) your "state share percentage" decreases as your valuation goes up, and you receive less state funding.

As I mentioned at the beginning, it is built into the funding system that a district will eventually need to be on the ballot, as is the case with Tallmadge City Schools. If HB920 was never passed back in 1976 and levies were allowed to keep pace with inflationary growth on property values, and the state funded schools at a sufficient level and used a formula that was fair to local schools, districts would not have to keep going back to the voters asking for additional funding.

Thank you,
Jeff Hostetler
Treasurer
Tallmadge City Schools

As you read this and future newsletter articles from my office, please feel free to contact me with comments or questions about Tallmadge Schools' finances at:
hostetler.jeff@tallmadgeschools.org



TRADITION VISION EXCELLENCE

TALLMADGE CITY SCHOOLS

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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



At the Tallmadge City Schools, we are well into the second semester of the school year and we kicked it off to a great start!

After winter break, the students and staff at Munroe Elementary were welcomed back to their building with the creation of a 21st-century model classroom. The goal of this classroom is to prepare teachers for the classroom spaces that will be in the new elementary and middle school buildings. The new classrooms will incorporate technology and encourage collaboration. We want to determine what works best now, so we have the tools and resources in place when the new buildings open. Earlier this school year, we opened a model classroom at the middle school and will open one for Dunbar over the summer so every teacher can experience a 21st-century classroom setting.

Speaking of our new buildings, construction continues to progress with more of the initial site work being done. Although the weather can be a challenge to predict this time of year, we are optimistic that the site work will be able to continue on schedule. The next step is foundation work and we hope to see the building start to come out of the

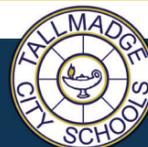
ground this spring. The goal is to be under roof by next winter, with the opening of the middle school set for the beginning 2019-2020 school year. The new elementary building will then open mid school year.

With the new buildings, our top priority is to create safe places for our students to learn. These new buildings afford us the opportunity to include state-of-the-art security features in the initial construction, versus adding on as we've had to do with our older buildings. These features will allow us to enhance the safety and security of our students.

Additionally, the district is in the process of creating its next strategic plan. We want the plan to reflect the goals of our entire district, including our students, staff, parents and community members. As such, we held several focus groups with key stakeholders to gain a better understanding of how we can meet the needs of all of our residents while maintaining a high-quality education for our students. Thank you to everyone who has participated in this process! The final plan will be presented to the Board of Education this spring for approval.

STAY WARM!

Jeff Ferguson
Superintendent
Tallmadge City Schools



CAREER FAIR HELD AT TALLMADGE HIGH SCHOOL

Tallmadge High School hosted a Career Fair on Thursday, Jan. 18, during the school's academy time.

The Career Fair introduced freshmen and sophomores to the Career Tech Education (CTE) programs offered through the Six District Educational Compact. Student representatives and ambassadors currently participating in the programs talked to students about their experiences in the programs and the advantages of participating in a CTE program.

The Six District Educational Compact offers more than 27 different CTE programs including Automotive Technologies, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Health Career Technologies and more.



TALLMADGE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT TO HOLD KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION NIGHT

The Tallmadge City School District will hold its annual Kindergarten Registration night on Thursday, April 5 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Dunbar Primary School (731 Dunbar Road). Students eligible for entrance into kindergarten must be 5-years-old by Aug. 1.

Beginning at 5:30, parents can enjoy refreshments while meeting with building principals and district administration.

At 6:00, the parent meeting with the principals will begin, where parents will learn about the kindergarten program, as well as information about the new elementary building. During the parent meeting, incoming kindergarten students will spend time in kindergarten classrooms with preschool and kindergarten teachers. Babysitting will also be available for siblings of the kindergarten students.

Parents are encouraged to register their child prior to registration night by visiting the district website at www.tallmadgeschools.org.

As in the past, parents will need to bring their driver's license, a lease or closing agreement, two additional proofs of residency, and their child's birth certificate and shot records. For more information on the documents needed, visit our website.

TALLMADGE CITY SCHOOLS PUTS SAFETY FIRST

The first priority of the Tallmadge City School District is the safety and well-being of our students and staff.

After an event such as the recent school shooting in Florida, we reflect on all that we do to keep our students safe while they are in our buildings. As a district, we regularly review, update and practice our safety plans. Our staff are trained on how to handle those situations and our students routinely practice lockdown drills.

We are fortunate to have Officer Dave Quillen as our school resource officer. He is a regular presence in all of our buildings. We are also grateful for the relationship we have with the Tallmadge Police and Fire Departments, who partner with and support us in our safety efforts.

We are also fortunate to be building two new buildings, which will increase the safety and security of our students. These measures include more cameras, shatter-proof glass, built-in secure entryways and secure areas for lockdowns. In addition to safety practices, we also work to create a culture of inclusion where all students feel safe and loved. Our counselors are always available to talk to a student who may be struggling in some way. And all of our teachers and staff work to build positive relationships with their students to give them a safe place to come with their thoughts or concerns.

To our students, staff and even community members, if you see something you don't think is right, please say something to help keep our schools safe. You can also use the Keep Tallmadge Safe Community Hotline, which can be reached in the following ways:

Keep Tallmadge Safe Community Hotline
Phone: (877) 265-6534 or
www.safeschoolhelpline.com
Text: 66746, then type TIPS

Thank you for your continued support of the Tallmadge Schools.

TALLMADGE MIDDLE SCHOOL HOSTS 5TH ANNUAL CAREER NIGHT

The 5th annual Career Night took place on Feb. 8 at Tallmadge Middle School (TMS), open to all seventh and eighth-grade students.

"This event allows our students to explore different careers and gain an understanding of what it takes to reach those positions," said Principal Jeff Manion. "It offers students the chance to consider which career path they may want to pursue and to understand how much impact their high school experience can have in achieving that goal."

At this year's program, 25 outside professionals participated and showcased their careers. Throughout the night, students and their parents were able to listen to three professionals speak about their industries.

Also on Feb. 8, eighth-graders were excused from school to conduct shadowing experiences. Some of the students' shadowing experiences included Ward Jet, Goodyear and The University of Akron.



TALLMADGE TO PLACE OPERATING LEVY ON NOVEMBER 2018 BALLOT

On Tuesday, Nov. 6, the Tallmadge City School District will have an operating levy on the ballot. The funds generated from the levy are critical for the district to maintain educational programs and services for our students, and avoid a negative balance.

Specific details regarding the millage of the levy and the cost to residents is still being determined. The district will provide this information as soon as it is available.

The district is in need of additional funding for two main reasons:

- Funding cuts. Like many districts, Tallmadge has been a victim of changes in state funding. These funding changes have resulted in lost revenue of \$2.5 million annually.
- The school funding cycle. In Ohio, school operating levies do not grow with the economy. Therefore, districts typically ask for new money in cycles of every 5 years in order to maintain quality programs for students. As a result of ongoing consolidation and sound fiscal management, Tallmadge's last operating levy (passed in 2009) has kept the District in the black for nine years.

The time has now arrived when additional funds are necessary to ensure we continue to provide high-quality services for our students. The funds generated by the operating levy will be used for operating expenses, such as supplies, heating expenses, transportation, salaries, activities and programs. Failure to pass a levy will result in drastic budget and service reductions across the district. These reductions would include staff, programs and services that we provide our students.

The funds from the bond issues passed in 2016 are only used for costs related to the construction of the new buildings. Regardless of the bond issues, the district would have been on the ballot now for operating dollars.

We join many districts being impacted by the dual threat of changes in state funding and the funding cycle. Twinsburg, Woodridge, Cuyahoga Falls, Field, Aurora, Stow-Munroe Falls, Manchester, Norton, Waterloo, and Ravenna are just a few of our neighboring districts facing this dilemma.

The dollars that will be generated by the operating levy are critical for Tallmadge to maintain a high-quality education for its students.

FUNDRAISING SHOWCASES TALLMADGE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S DEDICATION TO GIVING BACK

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, Tallmadge City Schools participated in numerous fundraising projects and raised over \$17,300 for various organizations and charity projects.

At Tallmadge High School, members of the student senate raised a total of \$3,000 by hosting several different events, such as Polar Express Day, Drop & Shop and selling Candy Grams and hot cocoa to students at the Blue Devil Café.

The Tallmadge Middle School's (TMS) Builders Club raised money through Danny Boys Dine to Donate event, which was used to provide Tallmadge students with needed winter items. The TMS student council raised approximately \$850 through admission and raffle tickets at the student vs. staff volleyball game. The student council's profits were donated in the form of toys and clothing purchased at Toys'R'Us to the Summit County Children's Services.

In addition to fundraising, the TMS student council organized a Thanksgiving canned food drive that allowed them to support 15 Tallmadge families during the holiday season. Also, the TMS Project PANDA (Prevent and Neutralize Drug & Alcohol Abuse) made 16 blankets to donate to underprivileged children in Summit County.

The most successful endeavor was the K-8, 12 Days of Christmas. With the combined efforts of Dunbar Primary, Munroe Elementary, and Tallmadge Middle School, along with a raffle from the Tallmadge Police Department and private and business donations, over \$10,000 was raised to help 80 families in Tallmadge. Some of the fundraising activities included a Penny War at Munroe, which raised approximately \$1,800, a Jean Drive at all the schools, where staff members were allowed to wear jeans between Thanksgiving and Christmas, raising \$1,500 and the Tallmadge Police Raffle which raised \$4,465.

With the money raised, Tallmadge Schools, along with members of Tallmadge Police, took 30 students shopping, our version of Shop With a Cop or a Teacher. Another 50 families from all the schools, including the high school, received a gift card to help during the holiday season. This is the 12th year this program has been in place.

Thank you to everyone who supported these fundraising efforts!

