

It is time for Dr. Jones, any other staff member, board member, levy committee member and city politician who agree with Dr. Jones' statement that "until the community feels the pain they have no intention of voting yes."

Each should be removed from their respective positions as soon as possible. The people of this community have felt the pain. Not everyone receives such wonderful benefits, annual raises, and a pension that is unheard of in the private sector. The overwhelming majority of people work hard to pay the superintendent over \$150,000 in salary and benefits. There is not a private sector business that could survive the lack of accountability and management that prevails within the SMFCSD. Where else can you miss 20-30 or more days in 9 months every year and still have a job? What company could exist if it had to pay an employee and a substitute when an employee is absent from work?

It's obvious you have been in the public pocket for too long. It's time for you to go!!!!!!

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BOARD UPDATE

Dr. Russell Jones

AUGUST 2008

Levy

Obviously, we are all deeply disappointed in the failure of our most recent levy. From my perspective, we've tried just about everything from an earned income tax to a large mill levy. It seems that whenever voters have an opportunity to say no like with school levies, they say no. I'm particularly disappointed because we have been very honest with the community and done all that we can to keep the cuts outside of the academic arena. Nonetheless it appears that until the community feels the pain they have no intention of voting yes. As we look towards November, we need to consider that perspective. I would like to thank all the board members for their work and participation in the various levy coffees that we held throughout the summer. Also, I would like to thank our committee co-chairs John Harris and John Pribonic for their work in this effort. In addition, our Levy Steering Committee met on an almost weekly basis to prepare the strategies that we used for the levy. There are a lot of good people doing a lot of good work and I sincerely appreciate all that they have done. This is not a sprint it is a marathon and we need to stay positive and keep after it!

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Apparently Superintendent Russell Jones really thinks that we, the taxpayers are very naïve. He and the Board of Education want us to believe that they just do not have enough teachers for the number of students we have for the 2008-09 school year. He has stated that they've cut 9 certified teaching positions for this year, when in fact they all retired.

There were 355 certified teachers in the Stow school district, 9 have retired (355-9=346), 8 are in counseling positions (346-8=338), 14 who job share or are part time teachers (338-7=331) and another 8 who are intervention specialists (331-8=323). We have 323 certified teachers.

The Stow Sentry reported on August 27, 2008 we have 5,617 students in the school district, so let's do the math, 5,617 students, divided by 323 which equal 17.4 students per teacher. My question is this, why wasn't the teaching staff reassigned throughout the district?

Is it because the school board on the recommendation of the superintendent, hired the Human Resources Director with no experience in Human Resources and Supt. Jones' himself with little experience? They've had since early spring and throughout the entire summer to reassign teachers and their choice was to do nothing. We have some overcrowded classrooms in some of our schools and not in others. Was it in fact their plan to make the taxpayer in S-MF hurt, which is what Dr. Jones had stated in an update to the board after the last levy failure this August, "It appears that until the community feels the PAIN they have no intention of voting yes. As we look toward November, we need to consider that perspective".

We need to hold the school board accountable to the citizens for our children's sake by getting control of this reckless use of power.

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In response to the article, Wednesday, April 30, 2008, Catherine Bulgrin treasurer in SMFCSD stated, "even if the levy passes in August there will be a deficit of 23 million dollars by the year 2012."

According to Bulgrin "there is no fluff." I believe there are numerous accounts of fluff within this budget that cost we, the taxpayers more than is necessary. Consider the following:

A husband and wife employed by the district and **each receive family** benefits. Medical insurance costs are hurting everyone which burdens the taxpayers and is an unnecessary expense.

Teachers and full time employees receive 15 sick days, 3 personal days, and 5 calamity or snow days (costs the district approximately \$200,000. each day missed). Any vacation, sick or personal days that are unused are rolled over from year to year or can be taken upon retirement and receive all of the accumulated days in one lump sum at their highest rate of pay. Some take 1-2 days off many weeks throughout the school year in order to use them up. When a teacher takes a day off we pay them and also the substitute brought in.

Free all day kindergarten is really not free. It's more beneficial for taxpayers and parents to pay a one time charge rather than a permanent tax increase.

There are approximately 300 supplemental contracts and there must be a way they can be reduced or combined. For example, one teacher has **5 supplemental contracts that total \$11,402.00 plus their salary.**

In the last negotiations the contract raise was 2.95% plus step increases to make the average annual raise 7% for teachers, and with step increases classified employees receive approximately 4% annual raise.

We all need to tighten our belts, which includes the school district!