

Residents of the Conneaut Area City School District,

Following the defeat last November of our district's 1.4 million five-year emergency levy, the Board of Education initially talked about placing the same levy back on the ballot in the May primary election. However, after much thought and reflection, the Board and administrative staff concluded that we first needed to discuss the district's dire financial situation with the community before making such an important decision.

On February 1, we hosted a community meeting that was attended by approximately 200 people, half of whom were staff members, and half who were community members. During the meeting, we shared information about our school district's finances and the educational impact of having to make \$1.2 million in budget reductions this past year. We then asked meeting participants to break into discussion groups and provide us with their thoughts and suggestions about placing an emergency levy on the May ballot and about other topics

While many of those at the community meeting expressed a growing concern about the reductions that already have been made in our school system and indicated they support the idea of placing an emergency levy on the May ballot, a number of residents who attended the meeting said they feel there are a number of other important issues that also need to be discussed in our school district.

A detailed listing of the comments from each of the discussion groups is attached. In response to the question "What are your views on an operating levy for the Conneaut School District", the 25 number one issues from each table are printed on the pink paper. Next, on the yellow paper, are all the responses from each table. The 107 people who turned in their individual responses can be found on the green papers. This information is also included on our school district website (www.conneautschools.org) and is available at the Conneaut Public Library, the Conneaut Chamber of Commerce and the Conneaut Area City Schools Administration Office.

While an operating levy will need to be approved by the end of this calendar year to avoid having to make additional reductions to educational programs and services in the Conneaut Schools, we have decided not to place a levy on the ballot this May. This difficult decision is based in a large part upon public input from the community meeting and other conversations we have had with school district residents. We believe that the overriding message from the recent community meeting is that we need to come together as a community and discuss in a frank and open manner the need for more school district operating funds as well as a number of other issues and concerns. 163 people who attended the meeting completed cards which indicated their further interest in community engagement. We are asking those of you who are interested in joining with us in this continued discussion about the future of our school district to please contact us by calling 593-7200.

Thank you for your concern and participation in this effort.

Sincerely,

Board of Education
Conneaut Area City Schools

