

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION'S FUTURE

I am devoting this article exclusively to the subject of vocational education in Adams County and part of Brush Creek Township in Highland County. When our vocational facility was built in 1977, all students in Adams County were served by one school district—Ohio Valley Local School District. Since our county contained but one school district, we were not a part of a Joint Vocational School District (JVSD) for various reasons. Thus, other than some vocational funding weights for various services, we have never been able to tap into State Foundational Funds to help support this very important part of our overall educational program.

On July 1, 2005, a second school district was created in Adams County—Manchester Local School District. Since the creation of the MLSD, a contract for vocational services has existed between AC/OVSD and MLSD. Again, we still do not have a JVSD in Adams County, and we are still only receiving the weighted vocational funds from Ohio to help with the operating costs of this facility. There is one year left on our contract to provide vocational services to Manchester Local. It will expire June 30, 2010. Currently, expenses from the general fund accounts from AC/OVSD and MLSD are running around \$3.6 million for the 2008-2009 school year to pay for our vocational education programs.

Armed with this background of information on the history regarding our Ohio Valley Career and Technical Center, it is obvious that additional funding for this educational program must be sought in order to sustain a very good thing in Adams County.

Recently, representatives from both school districts met with several officials from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) at the ODE Region 14 & 15 Office in Waverly. The purpose of this meeting was to learn more about the possibility of our two districts being able to form a new JVSD. If approved, this would, in essence, allow for the creation of a third school district in Adams County—a Joint Vocational School District. Why is this being looked into as an option for providing and continuing vocational programs as we currently know them in Adams County? We believe that forming a new JVSD would bring significantly more State Foundation money into Adams County to help cover the cost of vocational education. While it is too early to put an exact dollar amount on this, we do believe that the additional State Foundation dollars that would flow into Adams County beginning in 2010-2011 would be substantial.

At this point, we still have a lot more work to do before any of this could or would become a reality. This is why we chose to get started on the fact-finding process now instead of waiting until next year. Needless to say, there will be more meetings taking place involving AC/OVSD officials, MLSD officials, and ODE personnel. One thing that officials want their students, parents, and taxpayers to know upfront is that this inquiry is being done with your best interest in mind. If, indeed, a new JVSD is created in Adams County on July 1, 2010, it will not solve all of our present or future financial problems. However, we do believe that creating a new JVSD in Adams County for students from both local school districts would go a long way toward easing some of our ever-growing cost of doing business financial pains, at least for a while. If you have any questions about this article, please contact Robert Ralstin, Superintendent, or Karen

Ballengee, Treasurer, at MLSD (549-4777), or you may contact Tina Hageman or myself at AC/OVSD (544-5586). You can also discuss this with our CTC Director, Tad Mitchell (544-2336).

STUDENTS COMPETE AT ENVIROTHON

The Annual Area 5 Envirothon Competition was held at Highbanks Metro Park, near Columbus, Ohio, on April 28, 2009. A total of 72 teams participated in the competition, involving 360 students. Adams County had the most teams competing with ten—two each from the county's four high schools and the Ohio Valley CTC. Three of these ten teams placed in the top ten at this level of competition. The top four teams move on to the State Envirothon Competition.

Team #1, from Peebles High School, placed 3rd at the Area 5 Competition and will move on to State Competition. Team members include Jesse Conaway, Kristen Bumgarner, Chris Dunlap, Taylor Huffman, and Abigail Rogers. Congratulations to Team #1 and Advisor Rebecca Minton.

Team #1, from West Union High School, placed 5th at the Area 5 Competition. This team may also be able to advance to State Competition if any of the top four teams are unable to go. State Envirothon Competition will be held on June 7-9, 2009 at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. Good luck to the students who will be representing the Adams County/Ohio Valley School District!

Charles P. Kimble, Superintendent