

## CAN IT GET ANY WORSE?

This is a question that we have probably asked ourselves from time to time, or maybe you have heard someone else ask this question. Can it get any worse? The answer that usually follows is “it can always be worse.” It would seem that when it comes to the discussion surrounding Ohio’s budget and financial woes, this is definitely the case. Let’s take this one step further to school finance in Ohio. We definitely found out last week that when it comes to school finance in Ohio, things can always get worse—and in a hurry.

In case you missed the announcement on September 29th, the shortage of tax revenue in Ohio coupled with the problems associated with Governor Ted Strickland’s Video Lottery Terminal proposal, is threatening to put many of Ohio’s school districts in a complete financial tailspin. This includes the Adams County/Ohio Valley School District. The possible 10% cut in school funding in FY2010 would take our school district from a positive year and balance of \$2,400,000.00 to a negative of \$200,000.00 balance by June 30, 2010. An additional cut in FY2011 would take our school district to a deficit of nearly \$5 million by June 30, 2011. This amount of money is bordering on “catastrophic” for our school district, and would certainly entail a large reduction in force among other cuts.

Over the course of the past year, the Board of Education and I openly pursued some ideas to both save the district money and to bring additional state money into Adams County to offset educational costs. Perhaps, two of the most thought provoking options we have

studied are dual bus routing and the possibility of creating a new Joint Vocational School District in Ohio. No decisions have been made on either of these two items. However, given what we know today, all options are on the table for consideration unless some good news comes out of Columbus in the near future. I would ask that everyone please be patient and understanding with the district as we work our way through whatever the final word on funding cuts may be from Columbus. If this latest news holds up, there will be many tough and unpopular decisions that will need to be made. Though it would be impossible for classroom instruction not to be impacted by cuts in funding of this size, the district will focus efforts on maintaining the best instructional services that it can afford. When I say to you that all options are up for consideration, this could also include the possibility of a tax levy in the spring of 2010. Right now, it is too early for the district to make this determination because we know that with our present economy, the timing is not very good for such a request. While we hope to not be forced into a situation of making staffing cuts in the middle of a school year, even that possibility cannot be fully ruled out at this time. My hope and prediction is the Governor and our legislators will come up with a plan to prevent the financial collapse of so many school districts. However, we must all be on guard at the district level in the event this doesn't happen.

#### BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE

Work on our three new elementary buildings has now entered the final phase. With just a few weeks of work left at each site, the buildings are really taking on a "final finish" appearance. Teachers and principals are visiting their new buildings in preparation for

packing for the big move in December. The district is working on a final plan for moving, which will begin with the relocation of the libraries by the end of November.

I want to remind all of you once again that our dedication ceremonies are scheduled for Saturday, December 12, 2009. We will start at North Adams Elementary at 11:00 a.m., move on to Peebles Elementary for a 1:00 p.m. dedication ceremony, and wrap up at West Union Elementary at 2:30 p.m. The moving of the contents from the existing buildings will begin the week of December 14th. We will plan to complete all moving before December 24th.

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

Thank you.

Charles P. Kimble

Superintendent