

February 23, 2025 – updated V1

Thanks for allowing me to speak with you and share some thoughts.

I am Morris Lenczicki, from Milford, which is in the Cincinnati area. I am chairperson of Partnership for Milford Schools, which is a group of actively engaged citizens within Milford Exempted Village School District, who support the Administration and Board of Education in promoting/passing school operating levies and bonds. We are a fully registered 501 c4 nonprofit organization and are listed as a ballot issues committee PAC. The organization was initially established in 2012 for an upcoming 2013 levy (which passed). Once that Levy passed, it went dormant and resurrected by a new group of parents for a May 2019 bond (which failed). Thereafter, a new process was created to form an ongoing, sustainable group of parents that would learn about School District operations/finances, educate others and ultimately facilitate factual and transparent information to the community regarding levies and bonds when on a ballot. So, this current group has been together for 6 years and has had to manage 4 elections during that period (May 2019 bond failed, November 2021 bond passed, November 2023 levy failed, and November 2024 levy failed).

It was important to provide that background, so you appreciate the efforts, knowledge and utmost commitment our PAC has for public school education. We have a dedicated core group of 10 community members with another 15-20 who volunteer when needed. Many are parents where their children have graduated from Milford schools but still believe in the great foundation provided by a public school education.

So, number 1, we ask all Ohio Legislators (Representatives and Senators) adhere to the commitment made to FULLY Fund the Fair School Funding Plan, as first identified in 2017. It is imperative that School Districts be provided the necessary funding that was promised. Not doing so puts an unfair burden on all State of Ohio citizens as the monies must then come from local district taxes. There needs to be a sustainable mechanism for School Districts to be able to forecast State revenues for their proper fiscal responsibility, their fiscal management and accurate budgeting. Additionally, with the fact that school district revenues from local taxes are 60% or more of the total school district revenues, it is imperative that Ohio Legislators find a process that adds revenue to the public school education stream. As we all know, HB920 negates any inflationary property value benefit to

school district revenues, forcing school districts to ask voters for additional revenue, in many cases simply due to inflation. There needs to be an ongoing funding solution.

Secondly, it is very questionable why Ohio Legislators are providing EdChoice from the essential funding to private school families versus fully funding the Fair School Funding Plan. As the statistics identify, 88.6% of students in Ohio attend a public school. Don't get us wrong, we support a choice option for those in need from low incomes, those in the inner city that don't have a choice, those in rural areas that don't have a choice. But to allot funds from public schools to those that have the means and have already chosen to go to a private school, as well as those earning up to \$140,000 for a family of four, is not equitable.

Lastly, we want to focus on the efforts it takes a PAC likes ours to run a campaign. There is the human workload, the fundraising, the time and effort to learn, educate and facilitate the information. Just think if these dedicated community members used the time and effort to volunteer within the school district, focusing on educational aspects that will ultimately help our students. And let's not forget the funds necessary to run an election, each between \$25,000 to \$50,000. What if we were able to raise those funds towards student enrichment, scholarships, monies for lower income meals, etc..... are Ohio Legislators considering and appreciating the waste associated with having to go back to voters every 3-5 years for an operating levy. And elections every 3-5 years splits most communities as school district levies or bonds are a simple way for them to feel in control of their property taxes, not needing to understand the bigger picture associated with public school education for our children. To put this into perspective, with over 600 school districts in Ohio, the total campaign spending equates to \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 annually of wasted spending. This doesn't include the human factor of volunteer time and the Ohio Education Association spending and efforts, All in all, huge monetary waste.

We ask that when reviewing the next two years and ultimately the future of Ohio public school funding, you consider the three points shared with you. We all know that our future is with our youth, their education, knowledge and preparation for their own adult years. Investing in public school education provides the State of Ohio with resources for growth, expansion and investment in the state. Businesses look to move into areas that have skilled workforce and invest in those areas, it all starts with proper funding for public schools education.

Please feel free to reach out to Partnership for Milford Schools for any clarification, inquiry or need for further details.