

School Funding Action Committee (SFAC) Meeting Minutes

07-13-10

In Attendance: Cathy Epervary, Martin Johnson, Julie Feasel, John Scherr, John Schmarr, Amy Mignogna, Eileen Watts, Bob Hart and Nadine Palmer

Handouts:

- Minutes from 05-27-10 meeting
- List of websites tracking work of Ohio's School Funding Advisory Committee
- OLS SFA Committee Topic Outline
- Middletown Journal article: Cuts are Coming for Ohio Schools (07-02-10)
- Meeting Agenda

Cathy called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. Cathy made a motion to approve the minutes of the 05-27 meeting, which was seconded by Eileen and approved by the members.

Meeting Schedule - The committee agreed to set the SFAC meetings for the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. When discussing what we are doing with the community, it will be helpful to have a standard meeting date and time we can mention to interested residents.

List of Unfunded Mandates - Julie reported the Ohio School Board Association (OSBA) is compiling a list of all education-related mandates for review. As of the meeting they had already discovered 71 mandates. She is going to forward these to Cathy for distribution to the SFAC. After reviewing this long list the OSBA will probably look more closely at key mandates which still significantly affect school districts today.

Miscellaneous Topics

- The next update regarding the Race to the Top bonus funding competition will be available in September.
- OLSD annual budget is approximately \$140 million. We've already reached our enrollment projection for this year and are increasing class sizes and hiring less teachers to help compensate for less funding. We've put "worst place scenario" cuts in the works so we're ready and can protect the great district we have. Items such as re-vamping the strings program allows us to still give our students top quality services in a cost-efficient manner.
- Neighboring districts such as Big Walnut are going through tough times. They're going to be scaling down to state minimums and will only have a 6 hour school day due to state funding cuts and failures on their last 3 levy attempts.
- The OLSD received a one-year waiver for the all-day kindergarten mandate (currently have 1,285 students enrolled in K). We're working in buildings to

create additional classroom space so we'll be ready to implement the all-day K program starting with about 300 students per year.

Evolution of SFAC - Now that this committee is on the move again, we need to create an action plan to make sure we keep pushing forward in the right direction. Cathy passed out a list of websites we can check to see what the state's School Funding Advisory Committee is working on. Julie mentioned Kris Jordan referenced the OLSD on the House floor when he was discussing the Obesity Bill, so we have proof we're being heard. We want to continue our momentum in order to have a head start on upcoming issues and not just practice crisis management.

Amy, as a registered lobbyist for Ohio CPAs, pointed out that getting letters to lawmakers is crucial because they need to HEAR from the voters before they discuss bills in committee or vote. We need to focus on non-parents in our district also, as 56% of the registered voters do NOT have school-age children. Levy issues are the only instances where these voters have an opportunity to vote up or down on direct taxes, so they often become involved and follow issues closely. All voters are concerned about 1) Property values; 2) Excellent reputation of OLSD; and 3) That their tax dollars are used efficiently. Julie is going to find out the number of registered voters in our district.

Besides addressing funding issues at PTO meetings, open houses, booster meetings, and other school events, it is critical for the SFAC to get its message out through the two local newspapers (This Week News & Olentangy Valley News), homeowners associations, rotary clubs, chambers of commerce, and maybe even the social media. We need to find out how we as a group can possibly use Facebook, Twitter, etc. to get information to district residents, as well as the various OLSD list serves.

Next Steps - Marty presented portions of the spreadsheet he prepared as a starting point for the SFAC Communications/Action Plan. He'll forward a complete copy of what he created previously, with the additions the SFAC came up with tonight, to Cathy in a format she can access and distribute to the entire committee. Marty did a good job highlighting the key initial issues (OLSD is a unique district; State of Ohio school funding cuts: and Unfunded mandates). He also indicated the various audiences we need to reach and the separate routes we need to travel to do so. The full draft copy of the Communications/Action Plan will be reviewed and finalized in August.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 10 at 7:00 p.m. in the OLSD Curriculum Room.

Respectfully submitted,
Nadine Palmer