

The Sandy Post

Editorial & Opinion

Scott Newton, editor
Kimberly Nelson, advertising representative

Vote 'yes' on both school measures

We recommend "yes" votes for both the Sandy Elementary and Sandy Union High School districts on the Sept. 16 mail-in ballots.

The high school district is attempting to run its operation another two years on about the same budget it has operated on for the past two years.

We don't consider the costs for running the district out of line, and therefore feel their request is reasonable.

The high school district will ask for a higher rate per \$1,000 property value, but it is not their fault that property values in the district have fallen. They are put in the uncomfortable position of asking for more while making do with less.

At the Sandy Elementary District, we are troubled by the extra \$390,000 cash on hand. It would be a display of good faith for the board of directors to give that money back to property owners, giving them a break of \$100,000 each year for two years.

Though the district's levy request is fair, the board could afford to levy \$100,000 less this year and delete \$100,000 more during the budget hearings next year. That would be our solution to the problem; one that would be less detrimental than even the threat of another school closure.

There are a couple of reasons for the large amount of cash carryover. One is that the district doesn't have a business manager; otherwise it might be able to estimate closer to the mark.

Also, the district didn't get its current operating levy passed until December. It was probably because of prudent management that they didn't spend the money they had received.

We don't think costs are out of line in either district, and both provide sound educational programs.

We therefore recommend "yes" votes for the elementary district's one-year operating levy and the high school district's two-year, rate-based serial levy.



Letters to the editor

Supports both school requests

I respectfully request that the patrons of the Sandy Union High School and Sandy Elementary School districts vote yes on the Sept. 16 operating levies for both districts for these reasons:

1. Your property tax for the two districts combined will be about the same or slightly less than last year.
2. Passage of the September levies will tell our children and those involved in their education that we care about them and their futures.
3. Passage of the September levies will eliminate the need for November operating levy elections. Failure in November would be a nightmare and disaster for all of us.
4. Passage of the levies now would begin a process of restoring financial sanity and stability as well as help to dispell Sandy's image of being "anti-education."

Again, I ask you, please vote yes in September. Now is the time to save our schools!

Larry Richard Kennedy
Sandy

Coach thanks all for support

I am writing to say thank you to the wonderful people of the Sandy area.

I have had two fund raisers recently for the Sandy High School cross country team, and in each case people treated my young athletes with love and generosity.

I can not say enough good things about the people at Bowman's Sandy Thriftway. They lent us a hot dog stand and ate hot dogs for two days just to help us out.

The people at Janz Berryland were magnanimous, helping our car wash meet its goal as people donated generously.

The experiences were so warm and positive that my runners have asked to do it again.

Thank you, neighbors, for making me proud to be a part of the Sandy scene.

Darold Beymer
Head cross country coach
Sandy Union High School

Family thanks friends for aid

The families of Eugenia Boitano wish to thank relatives, friends and neighbors for the food, prayers and cards following the death of our mother.

Olga Holloway and Mario Boitano
and family
Sandy

Citizen opposes money measures

This is an open letter to the taxpayers of the Sandy High School District. On or about Aug. 29, you will receive your ballot in the mail from the Clackamas County Clerk's office so you may vote by mail on the new unrevised tax levy proposed by the Sandy High School Board, and budget committee.

If a majority of the voters vote for the levy, you will be authorizing the school district to levy taxes in excess of \$3,499,000. This does not include money received from other state and federal sources used to operate the school which also comes from the taxpayers' pockets.

We residents of this district have been told repeatedly by the school district officials during the budget process that they would be asking for a zero increase budget, and that our tax assessment may even go down because of the recent large commercial developments in the district. I am one resident who did not believe this.

If you did not attend the last school board meeting you may not know that if you vote yes you are asking the school district to levy taxes on our property that will increase the tax assessment for Sandy High School District from \$5.51 during the last tax year to \$5.84 during the next tax period. The following year of the two-year serial levy may see a higher increase. This amount is per thousand dollars of assessment. The reason for the increase is due to the fact that the value of the property has decreased in the last year.

In recent months and many times in the past month we have read or heard news reports of people being shut out of their jobs or having to take wage cuts some in excess of \$3.50 per hour. Some of these people may even live on our community. How can they continue to pay higher taxes when their livelihood is being slowly eroded by less wages, benefits and higher taxes? Not only will your taxes go up for the school levy but due to the lower assessments your taxes will increase for other taxing bodies to make up for the lower assessed value. This means you pay twice, your equity in your property has decreased and your taxes have gone up.

It is time for the taxpayers of this community to stand up to the people who run our schools and tell them we have paid enough.

During a recent high school board meeting the school board voted to give all certified staff a 2 percent raise. The classified staff received a 2 percent increase. Other staff were given raises by changing their class of positions. The personnel officer received a raise of 5 percent. The business manager received a raise of 10 percent which gave him an increase of 18 percent in a two year

period. Most other employees received 2 percent increases. In my opinion none of these raises will improve the education of our children.

The added cost has to come from other funds. If the proposed budget is a zero growth budget the funds have to come from somewhere and most likely it will come from educational programs. While people outside of government agencies continue to take wage cuts, wage freezes, loss of benefits, and sometimes loss of jobs, our schools continue to take more and more of our tax money.

If we vote "no" and the levies fail we are threatened with school closures and our children are used as political pawns so the school systems can get what they want. It is time for us to tell our school boards and administrators that we expect a good education for our children but we want it for less money. There needs to be cuts or freezes in benefits and wages until the economy warrants higher costs.

The business manager of Sandy High School stated in a recent school board meeting that the year end cash carryover exceeded expectations by several hundred thousand dollars. Why are these funds not being deducted from the proposed levy?

I urge you all as taxpayers to vote "no" on the proposed levy and ask the school board to be accountable for the cost of our school.

Roland A. Cartisser
Sandy

Schools didn't reduce levies

In the next few weeks, taxpayers will receive mail ballots to vote on the 1986-87 levies. Unfortunately, the tax levies will be at or near the same amount voted down May 20, 1986.

I thought the purpose of a levy vote was to get direction from the voters on school costs. If the levy passed, voters accepted the amount and if the levy failed, voters want a reduction.

Because the school boards re-run the same levies, I conclude they fail to review the vote results or they don't care. It is no wonder the grade school survey indicated voters have little confidence in the school boards and administration.

Based on 1985-86 attendance figures, the grade school had an average of 1,434 students and proposed a budget, including the levy, of \$6.4 million. This results in an average cost per student of \$4,400 (number of students divided by amount of the budget). On the other hand, the high school had an average of 1,104 students and proposed a budget, including the levy, of \$5.6 million. This results in an average cost per student of \$5,000.

In my view, our school boards should stop levy re-runs and find out why our cost per student is more than \$1,000 above the national average.

For example, Sandy grade and high schools are \$4,500 and \$5,000 per student whereas the state of Oregon average is \$3,963; Washington, \$3,437; California, \$3,291; and U.S. average, \$3,000. Figures are from the Foundation for Oregon Research and Education.

The climate at most board meetings I attend is to maintain or increase the present program and continue to give percentage increases wherever possible. As you will recall, last year after the grade school levy passed, personnel at the high school received a 2 percent across the board increase.

I, for one, fail to understand what motivates our school board members. They know we want the school budgets reduced to reflect a reduction in the school levies, yet they continue to ask for the same or additional money.

Because our school boards are unable or unwilling to work with the taxpayers, I believe the taxpayers have no alternative but to vote no on all levies and force school budgets back to pre-levy periods when schools operated on revenue received from the state and federal governments. If this were to take place, the grade school would receive \$4.1 million and the high school \$2.3 million for 1986-87.

You can expect to hear a loud scream over this suggestion and probably a threat of school closure but I remind you that Oregon Statute 326.051 (1) sets the standards for minimum course of study and OAR 581-11-420 requires each student to receive the minimum course of study. Therefore, I believe any school closure had better be short-lived or the school board and State Board of Education will be in violation of Oregon state law.

John King
Sandy

School budgets should be cut

We in the Sandy school district will soon be hit again with the tax levy vote that has been defeated twice, and then another threat of a school closure. Why do we have this repeat cycle of unpleasant events which split our community and creates animosities? Let's consider some pertinent facts.

First, who is really in command? You may think because you have voted for a school board member, he or she represents you in the administration, education, and financial process of our school system, but this is far from the fact in the matter. There is the powerful O.E.A. and N.E.A. — to which teachers tell us they are required to join, pay dues and assessments — and their aggregate financial power is massive, with which their lobbyist can influence our legislators. Our two cur-

rent representatives in Salem informed me they do receive O.E.A. election funds for which, in my opinion, they in turn support union-sponsored legislation.

Each elected board member takes an oath to support these laws by and for educators, and then in turn each is provided with a voluminous publication entitled "Becoming a Better Board Member," which is published by an arm of the teacher's union known as the National School Boards Association. This publication is, in my opinion, used as a constant brain washing tool to promote conformity with the O.E.A. and N.E.A. policies. This information is based on, and documented, in a well-circulated publication, "N.E.A. — The Propaganda Front of the Radical Left," by Sally D. Reed. There are no less than 19 educational and teacher-related associations that educators are expected to, and do, support. The purpose of these organizations is, in my opinion, to provide a perpetual stream of organized policies and philosophies that are directed to control the thinking of the teaching profession and keep their minds in line with N.E.A. conspiracies.

School boards have gone to fair lengths to encourage citizen participation in decision making, but it does not work that way. After having attended 20 board and budget meetings in two years' time, it is evident to me the public has practically zero impact. Board rooms are stacked with faculty members, employees, a few students and in most cases no concerned citizens. Patrons who have something to say have been limited to three minutes by the chairman and then what input there is is completely ignored.

Secondly, who are, for the most part, the people who serve on school boards and budget committees?

There are nine schools in the total Sandy system with a total of 453 employees in all classifications. This requires about 72 board and budget members who are usually nominated by friends and families of those employed in the system. This becomes a game of musical chairs with an interwoven body of personnel holding conflicts of interest in money matters and other areas. It is easy for this coherent group of employees and board members to cancel out any candidate who would try to fill a vacancy and dare depart from established policy.

Third, a few statistics on economics of Oregon education.

Clackamas County has about a 9 percent unemployment rate. County tax records show the following:

Elementary and high school tax accounts total 19,845. Minus accounts qualified for tax relief, 6,375. Equals 13,470. Minus delinquency rate of 9 percent that are uncollected. The approximate total number of homes paying school tax equals 12,258.

Fourth, some meaningful figures produced by Foundation for Oregon Research and Education, a Portland citizens group devoted to better understanding of Oregon's educational economics.

1. Our statewide education system employs over 92,111 persons, or about 60 percent more than the forest products industry, Oregon's next largest employer with 57,000 workers.

2. Oregon's average cost per student is about \$3,963, which is higher than five other western states. Sandy Elementary School District No. 46's cost per student is about \$4,363. Sandy High School's cost per student is about \$4,653.

3. Statewide (kindergarten through 12th grade) spending per student has exceeded inflation throughout the past 15 years.

4. Full-time student enrollment of K-12 is down by 23,303 from 1968 to 1982.

5. K-12 real spending and employment grows while enrollment declines.

6. The real expenditures — the amount of spending above inflation — grew 2.6 percent annually over the past 15 years.

Conclusions:

1. Recent spending trends for elementary and secondary education do not appear to be sustainable.

2. Timing for change in Oregon's education finance system is now overdue.

3. Despite the greatly increased level of public investment in Oregon education during the past two decades, the quality of education in Oregon has declined in the opinion of close observers.

4. We, the taxpayers, are being fleeced like a flock of ignorant sheep.

5. Vote no on the upcoming tax levy elections and send Vern Duncan a message that he should issue an order not allowing any closed schools.

6. There is no legal authority for closing schools.

Cliff Koenig
Affordable Education Association
Sandy

Policy on letters

Letters to the editor should be typed, double-spaced and signed. An address and telephone number should also be provided, although only the name of the letter writer and the city or area he is from will be published.

Letter writers may also wish to include a title or office held if it is appropriate considering the subject matter of the letter.

The news deadline of noon, Tuesday is also the deadline for letters to the editor.

We reserve the right to edit letters to conform to style guidelines or for length. A preferred maximum length is 300 words.