

# Ross Local School District

**SUPERINTENDENT** (513) 863-1253

**TREASURER** (513) 863-1250

3371 Hamilton-Cleves Road • Hamilton, OH 45013

<b>ROSS HIGH SCHOOL</b> 3601 Hamilton-Cleves Rd. Hamilton, Ohio 45013 (513) 863-1252	<b>ROSS MIDDLE SCHOOL</b> 3425 Hamilton-Cleves Rd. Hamilton, Ohio 45013 (513) 863-1251	<b>ROSS INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL</b> 3371 Hamilton-Cleves Rd. Hamilton, Ohio 45013 (513) 868-4550	<b>ELDA ELEMENTARY</b> 3980 Hamilton-Cleves Rd. Hamilton, Ohio 45013 (513) 738-1972	<b>MORGAN ELEMENTARY</b> 3427 Chapel Rd. Hamilton, Ohio 45013 (513) 738-1986
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March 15, 2022

Dear Ross Community Members and Parents,

We hope this letter finds you well. Over the past several months, we have been very open and transparent about our current financial situation. We opened our books to the community, using a variety of formats for clear communication. These formats have included focus groups, podcasts, winter newsletter, updates via our District website, and a series of FAQ's through both social media and email.

Our current financial situation is a revenue problem, not a spending problem. During the last two years, we have cut costs by \$600,000 and \$700,00 each year. To be clear, we cannot cut our way financially out of this problem. The State of Ohio views the Ross community as a wealthy community. Therefore, State financial contributions to our District have diminished and our community is left with the task of funding our schools. We have done so to the best of our ability and with the resources that we have. Our last property tax levy was passed in 1999. We have managed to provide a stellar education for our students for the past 23 years with zero increase to your property taxes.

A precautionary fiscal emergency letter from the Ohio Department of Education was received in December 2021; this dramatically changed our financial landscape. Now, our task is to solve this revenue problem; if we are unable to do so, the State will declare our District to be in fiscal emergency. School Districts that are determined to be in fiscal emergency have an external governing body that takes control of the District. This governing body will cut both staff and programs to a minimally required level and, ultimately, ask for a monumental levy. It would be far more beneficial for the Ross Community to control our own financial destiny, and therefore control our schools, educators, students, and programs.

The School Board approved a 5-year Emergency Property Tax Levy for the August 2022 ballot. This is a 7.99 Mill Levy. The cost to a homeowner of a \$100,000 house is \$279.65 per year or \$23.30 per month. This additional revenue will be used for daily operating costs and is aimed at maintaining the educational quality of our District.

If the levy does not pass in August 2022, the District will face immediate and difficult decisions. These decisions will affect every building in our District. Due to the urgent need for these funds, should the August 2022 levy not pass at the ballot, it will continue to reappear on future ballots; unfortunately, however, the millage will increase on the future requests to make up for the timing of lost revenue. These are certainly challenging times for us as a District.

We will continue our conversations around school finances and pledge to remain 100% transparent with all community members. If you need more information or would like for us to speak to you or your organization, please contact us at 513-863-1253.

We continue to believe in our Ross Community, our families, and, most importantly, our students. Together, we can keep our community and our students on the leading edge of success.

Sincerely,



Chad Konkle  
Superintendent



Jeremy Frazier  
Treasurer