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Newsletter

Purple Pride

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Published to bring school news
to the residents of
East Knox Local School District

East Knox Local School District Office of the Superintendent

October 2016



Dear Parents, Students and Community Members,

I don't know about you, but I sure am happy to finally see some more fall-like temperatures finally arrive. It's hard to believe that our students have been back to school for over a month. I know there are those who think we should not start school until after Labor Day. The truth of the matter is that we could do it except that it greatly reduces our students' chances of success on their state-mandated tests because they occur so early in the school year. Speaking of successes, you likely have heard that the Ohio Department of Education released the 2015-2016 Local Report Card results on September 15th.

The East Knox Administration and Board examines local results of Knox County schools and our contiguous neighbors of North Fork and River View when viewing grade card results to see how we stack up locally. In sixteen reporting areas, the 2015-2016 report card shows that East Knox Local Schools' students perform well in comparison to our neighbors although I will say, in fairness to our friends, it is a pretty tight comparison. The results also show that East Knox leads or ties for the lead in 6 of 16 areas and is in second place or tied for second place in another 7 of the 16 areas.

Hopefully, knowledge of the good things our students and staff accomplish day in and day out, year after year clearly demonstrate why they deserve our ongoing support in all aspects. It should not be news to anyone that the District continues to prevail admirably despite financial conditions that led us to Fiscal Emergency especially after the Great Recession. I also hope that it is not news that the Administration and Board of Education has balanced the budget in each of the last three years. That is something that had not previously occurred in quite awhile.

Previous program reductions were necessary to balance the budget, however, that does not mean those reductions have necessarily been in the best interests of our students. As you may recall since the time of my arrival four years ago, I refused to make additional reductions that harm our students' education. Elementary students do not receive Art and Music. High school students do not have the option to take advanced placement-type classes. We have students who do not participate in extracurricular activities because of the \$250 fee charged for high school sports, \$150 for junior high sports and \$100 band participants.

Continued on next page.....

Elementary (K-6 grades)

23081 Coshocton Road
Howard OH 43028

Phone: 740-599-7000

Mr. Cody Reese, Principal

Ms. Corby Frere, Director of Student Services/Asst Principal, 1008

Mrs. Donna Buckingham, Secretary, x3002



Jr./Sr. High School (7-12 grades)

23227 Coshocton Road
Howard OH 43028

Phone: 740-599-7000

Mr. Alan Keesee, Principal

Mr. Aaron White, Asst. Principal/A.D.

Mrs. Tracy Beckett, Secretary, x2002

Mrs. Shari Moore, Attendance/Student Services/Athletic Secretary, x2003

Ms. Stephanie Whitesel, Guidance

Counselor, x2008

Mrs. Alicia Simmons, Guidance Secretary, x2004



East Knox Board Office

23201 Coshocton Road
Howard, Ohio 43028

Mr. Steve Larcomb, Superintendent

Mrs. Jessica Busenburg, CPA, Treasurer

Mrs. Kim Grindle, Board Secretary

740-599-7493 x1002

School District Nurse x1011

Transportation Supervisor

Ms. Angela Wells, x1016

East Knox Board Members

Dustin Buckingham-President

Kathy Frere-Vice President

Larry Campbell

Matt Schwartz

Derrick Steinmetz



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The previous noted issues negatively affect our students. The Board recognizes these issues and placed a 4.4 mill property tax on the November 8th ballot to address our students' needs. Why a property tax? The Board sent out surveys in the spring to every home in the East Knox School District. Nearly 60% of the respondents indicated they preferred a property tax over other choices such as an earned income tax or a combination tax. The Board heard you, respected your input and acted accordingly.

Common questions and answers to those questions include: How much will this cost me? The answer is just under \$13 per month for the owner of a \$100,000 home. What if my home is worth more? The answer is you can call the Knox County Auditor's Office for a more exact amount or you can call me for a ballpark estimate. Are you going to use this money to give teachers raises? The short answer is an unqualified "Yes." The longer answer is that we budget for these things and have remained within budget the past three consecutive years of the four years of the current Administration. The staff received zero base salary increases the past seven years. They did receive a modest step increase this year for the first time in six years. Why did they receive a step increase? They received it because it was within our budget. We need to remain competitive within the market place as any competent person in business will tell you. How long will this levy be on the books? The levy request is for a ten-year period. Voters will have the opportunity again at that time to decide whether the financial need continues and whether or not the Administration and Board has done our part to continue to earn your trust.

Trust. That is a really big word for something that has five letters and can be used as a verb or a noun. What are some of the things you can or should trust about East Knox Schools? You should trust that I treat your child as I treat my own. That means you should expect your child to be safe on the school bus and safe at school. It means you should trust we hire the best staff we can afford with the resources you provide us. You should trust that we provide the best education to the best of our abilities. East Knox either led or tied for the lead compared to neighboring school districts in six of 10 areas of the report card in 2014-2015. We were either second or tied for second in the other 4 areas. I submit those results speak highly of the efforts of our students and staff. A natural question should be whether or not that was just a fluke? Well, the 2015-2016 report just came out. How did we do? East Knox again led or tied for the lead in 6 of 16 indicators (the state folks increased the number of indicators). We also placed second or tied for second place in 7 of the 16 indicators.

Have our teachers, support staff, Administration and Board earned your trust that we are meeting the needs of our children, your children? We hope you will give us that answer at the ballot box on November 8th. At a time where there is so little to believe in through our nation's politics, I know of a place where you can believe without equivocation: EAST KNOX LOCAL SCHOOLS!

Sincerely,

Steve Larcomb, Supt.

Submitted by: Mr. Benjamin Douglas-Kenyon College

The Partnership of East Knox and Kenyon College

PEKK or the Partnership of East Knox and Kenyon College is a Kenyon Based volunteer group working in the East Knox School District. The group was formed in the winter of 2014 by Phoebe Roe and has since grown to include fifty-six active in classroom volunteers, forty-seven as needed tutors, and several volunteers helping with the levy campaign. PEKK runs several programs within the schools including one-on-one tutoring, teacher assisting, and as of last semester "study clubs," a program in which students at East Knox are able to form clubs once per week in their study hall. We are very excited to begin work this year and look forward to getting back in classrooms.



Financial Update

Submitted by: Jessica Busenburg, District Treasurer



The Board of Education, Administration, and staff continue to work on **STRENGTHENING TRUST** within the community. Part of this is ensuring community members are **INFORMED** and understand how tax dollars are spent. All financial information including monthly financial reports, district five year forecasts, financial audit reports, financial presentations, and other information is always available on the district website under Board Information and it is updated monthly. Always feel free to contact me if you have any financial questions.

2015-2016 was not only a successful academic year, but it also provided for some financial accomplishments that I would like to take the opportunity to highlight:

- **BALANCED** the budget for the 3rd straight year.
- **REDUCED** salary expenses for the third year in a row (4.7% average reduction).
- **RECEIVED** an accounting method audit from the Auditor of State's office (AOS) with very few recommendations for improvements. Actually, AOS representatives said it was the **fewest** recommendations **ever** made in a report.
- **UTILIZED PERMANENT IMPROVEMENT FUNDS** to replace old, inefficient lighting at the JH/HS, replaced exterior doors in the JH/HS to improve security, upgraded technology infrastructure, purchased equipment and made facility improvements for track and field, and replaced three buses.

What are **permanent improvement funds** you may be asking? The district collects over \$650,000 a year in tax money that voters last approved in 2008. These funds can legally only be used for capital costs of **maintaining or improving the district facilities and equipment**. We **cannot** use these funds for salaries or benefits. During the financial struggles, the district has been **FORTUNATE** to have these funds available to repair and improve the facilities, improve technology, purchase buses and make other long-term investments for the district. The East Knox board and staff are very **GRATEFUL** to the 2008 voters who recognized the importance of permanent improvement funds.





EK Taxes Compared To Neighboring Districts

The below table provides information from the County Auditor and the Department of Taxation. It is not uncommon to hear someone mention they pay higher **SCHOOL TAXES** in East Knox than other districts. The below illustrates that this is **not** true. Of the 8 nearby districts listed, East Knox's school district tax rate is the **LOWEST** at 26.3 mills. If the 4.4 mill levy would pass in November, East Knox would bump up to number 6 on the list and still have the lowest taxes with the exception of Northridge (who is on the November ballot) and Fredericktown. It is clear that the district has **LIMITED FUNDING** compared to the neighboring districts and yet has still been able to **BALANCE** the budget with what is available in the last three years.

<u>School</u>	<u>Total Equivalent Millage</u>	<u>Current Millage (property tax)</u>
Loudonville	40.39	30.63+ 1.25% Income tax (equivalent to 9.76 mills)
Danville	35.19	21.88+ 1.75% Income tax (equivalent to 13.31 mills)
Mount Vernon	33.58	33.58
Centerburg	31.98	24.24+ .75% Income tax (equivalent to 7.74 mills)
North Fork	31.87	24.12+ 1.00% Income tax (equivalent to 7.75 mills)
Northridge	30.23	30.23
Fredericktown	28.62	28.62
East Knox	26.30	26.30





What is **OPEN ENROLLMENT**? It allows students to attend another district other than their resident school district free of charge if that district accepts them. The funding for that student (local and state portions) is **TRANSFERRED** from the resident district to the educating district. Last year this was about \$5,900 per student. The below table illustrates how much money came into the district and left the district and how many students entered and left from open enrollment. In addition, the table also shows how much money was lost to community schools for students taking online classes rather than being enrolled in the district. Last year the district lost **\$1.6 MILLION** to neighboring school districts and lost \$319,000 to online schools. The district gained \$394,000 from students open-enrolling to East Knox. The net total loss was \$1.6 million or about **17%** of our **BUDGET**.

Open Enrollment Comparison

Year	Open Enrollment in \$	Student FTE OE in	Open Enrollment Out (\$)	Student FTE OE Out	Net Open Enrollment	Community School	Total Annual Loss
2015-2016	\$ 394,077	\$68.65	\$ 1,691,203	\$ 300.82	(1,297,126)	(319,560)	(1,616,686)
2014-2015	\$ 418,167	\$73.07	\$ 1,645,918	\$ 286.16	(1,227,751)	(360,861)	(1,588,612)
2013-2014	\$ 422,566	\$74.77	\$ 1,417,047	\$ 249.04	(993,113)	(377,845)	(1,370,958)
2012-2013	\$ 457,828	\$80.26	\$ 1,380,884	\$ 242.08	(923,056)	(401,719)	(1,324,775)



East Knox Local School District

23201 Coshocton Road
Howard OH 43028
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

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43028

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

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HOWARD, OH 43028

Please Vote—November 8, 2016



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES—This publication, a report to the residents of the East Knox Local School District, fulfills the requirements of section 3313.94 of the Ohio Revised Code. Suggestions or questions should be directed to the Board of Education Office, 23201 Coshocton Road, Howard, OH 43028.

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OUR
SCHOOLS
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