



Blue Ribbon Report

SPRING 2010

Superintendent: Community Support Key to Continued Quality



"The Kettering Schools prepare our kids to thrive in the new economy. Our young people... will develop into creative, innovative, high-level thinkers."

Jim Schönlein, Ed.D.

At its meeting on February 16th, the Kettering Board of Education approved the final resolution to place an operating levy on the May ballot.

On the surface, the math is simple. By law, schools in Ohio cannot collect more money on a levy than what was originally approved by voters, so school revenue does not grow from year-to-year. At the same time, however, the expenses do increase. What this means is that sooner or later, every school district in Ohio has to return to voters for needed operating funds.

The Kettering City School District has some additional issues to deal with – issues that further impact our budget and the funds available to cover the day-to-day costs of running our school district: The state continues to reduce the funding provided to districts like Kettering, and this includes both our per-pupil foundation funding and

categorical funding for things such as the purchase of new school buses.

Our city has lost some critical elements of its tax base, such as Delphi and the General Motors plants. The greatest impact of these closings has been the devastating effects they have had on our families here in our community; at the same time, they have not been able to tell us with certainty how the closings will impact our tax base, although the schools will take major hits on any reductions in those tax payments. In addition, Kettering, like schools all across Ohio, continues to face a steady stream of unfunded federal and state mandates for which we must find the funding.

Despite these fiscal challenges, the Kettering Schools remain committed to the continued, responsible management of taxpayers' dollars, and we have worked

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Fairmont Students Recognized by Governor as Best in State

On February 17th, three students from the Kettering Fairmont High School Career Tech Center traveled to Columbus and were the guests of honor at a news conference where Governor Ted Strickland presented them with the first-place award in the *Ohio Real-World Design Challenge*. The Challenge is a state and nation wide contest aimed at challenging students to find solutions to "real-world" engineering problems.

The students, Brian Catrine, William Timmer and Brandon Wehner, participate in the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Engineering Program at Fairmont High School. The students chose their challenge as their "Senior Capstone Project."

Their challenge consisted of learning a design software program and using it to find a

way to make a business jet more fuel-efficient. The students used the engineering process taught to them by David Lord, the instructor in the PLTW Engineering Program, to find a solution to the problem.



From left: Bill Timmer, David Lord, Brandon Wehner, Gov. Ted Strickland and Brian Catrine at State Awards News Conference.

"Fairmont Students Tops in State" cont. on pg. 2

The first step was to research the aerodynamics of flying and then consult with Jeff Donbar, a research engineer and mentor from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

Using the design software, the students developed and then tested their new tail design and found a solution to the problem.

"This project's aerospace focus allows today's students – Ohio's future workforce – to get a glimpse of one of our state's growing industries," said Gov. Strickland.

As first-place winners in the Ohio Real-World Challenge, the students will travel to

Washington, DC later this month on an all-expenses-paid trip to compete with winners from all across the United States. In the national stage

of the competition, the students will tackle the redesign of the wings of the airplane to enhance the fuel efficiency of the improved tail design.

"Winning the design challenge at the state level and getting the opportunity to compete at the national level will definitely enhance Brian's, William's and Brandon's college resumes and could bring them additional college scholarship opportunities," says Nancy Brown, coordinator of the Fairmont Career Tech Center. All three young men plan to attend Sinclair Community College on scholarships next year, where they will earn their associates degrees before transferring to four-year universities to pursue their bachelor's degrees in engineering, notes Brown.

For additional information about the PLTW Engineering Program and the Ohio Real-World Design Challenge, visit www.pltw.org and www.real-worlddesignchallenge.org.

*"This project's aerospace focus allows today's students – Ohio's future workforce – to get a glimpse of one of our state's growing industries."
-- Gov. Ted Strickland*

hard to maintain quality in our schools, while also reducing costs.

We have **cut more than \$7.6 million from the budget over the past four years**, and this has included the **elimination of 57 positions**, the negotiation of lower utility costs and an ongoing administrative pay freeze.

Only budget items that are deemed absolutely necessary to the continued success of our students have been added, such as the International Baccalaureate program and additional Advanced Placement courses that will enable Kettering students to compete for placement at the nation's top colleges, a specialized teacher to help our young people in English-as-a-second-language and related high-intensity classes and technology that provide vital instructional support for classroom teachers.

Kettering's teachers get excellent results with a diverse student body. The teachers of the Kettering City Schools are experts in both remediation and enrichment. They work many extra hours, go the extra mile and spend their own money in assuring that every single student gets what he/she needs. Kettering teachers meet the specific and individual needs of a vast array of unique students.

According to a recent article which quoted staff members of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce, the economy of our region is transitioning to one of research and development, information technology, advanced manufacturing and aerospace. I believe that I, and the administration and teachers of the Kettering Schools, have a clear picture of the economic future of this community and of the country. The Kettering City School District can and will prepare our kids to thrive in the new economy. Our young people will learn different skills, develop new mindsets, utilize novel approaches, and they will develop into creative, innovative, high-level thinkers.

It is a well-established fact that school systems are tied tightly to property values. In a recent poll, 76 percent of Kettering citizens said that they believe property values will fall if the quality of the schools deteriorates. The Kettering City School District has a great deal to do with the stability of property values in the City of Kettering. There are families that have moved to Kettering for the express purpose of sending their children to Kettering Schools. Cutting personnel, services and programs – that is, compromising the quality of the Kettering Schools – would seriously jeopardize property values in this city.

The citizens of Kettering must view support for the school system as a sound investment. A skilled, educated work force and a quality school system ensure a dynamic and vibrant community with stable property values. Money devoted to education not only benefits families with school-age children, but also produces dividends for all members of the community.

I pledge that I will be a good steward of the taxpayers' money. As superintendent, I will rub the Lincoln head off every penny before I spend it. I ask the citizens of Kettering to please study this levy request and the information about it that you will receive over the next few months and to call us if you have any questions.

For a young lady who one day plans to make a career out of writing poetry, Morgan Cornele was a "woman of few words" when it came to describing how it felt to be a guest on the *Ellen DeGeneres Show*: "Amazing! Exciting! Happy!"

A junior at Fairmont High School, Morgan has faced – and met – more challenges than most of us can conceive of in a lifetime. So, when one of her doctors sent a letter to *A Special Wish Foundation* recommending that Morgan's wish to meet Ellen be granted, the organization's executive director, Ilene Schnabel said they jumped at the chance to help out "one of our special children." A Special Wish Foundation is a non-profit organization that grants wishes to children with life-threatening illnesses. Morgan has Leigh's Disease, a rare disease that affects the body's cells ability to manufacture energy, which in turn affects the central nervous system.

When Morgan, her sisters and her mom, Lori, boarded their flight for Los Angeles, little did they know that they would be helping Ellen celebrate her 52nd birthday as guests on her January 26th show – and that as guests, they'd come home with a new iPod Touch; a set of Calloway Golf Clubs; the newly released Michael Jackson DVD, "This is It," and a year's supply of Nivea bottled water!

The family arrived in California on Saturday and spent a few days sightseeing before heading over on Monday, January 26th to the Warner Bros. studio, where the *Ellen Show* is taped. Morgan, who does much of her communicating via the computer monitor and keyboard, writes, "Monday was the best day ever! We had a special tour of the Warner Bros. Studio and I saw lots of different sets of TV shows. It might have helped that our tour guide was an attractive guy!"

Her "VIP treatment" continued as Morgan and her mom were ushered into the "Riff Raff" room before the taping of *Ellen* began. "I cried here because it was a dream come true," says Morgan. Anyone who has seen the *Ellen Show* knows that



dancing is a staple on the show. As Ellen came dancing on to the set the day that the Corneles were guests, she stopped for a minute and danced with a delighted Morgan. "I was on her birthday show, and she danced with me, and I felt like I was the only person there! During a commercial break, she came and gave me a hug and said, 'Hi. How are you? Are you having fun?' After the show, I got this huge basket of stuff from Ellen, and I cried again because I was so happy! My whole trip was amazing, exciting and happy! Thank you *Special Wish*!"



Tyler Layer, a student in Scott Helms's honors science class at Kettering Middle School, working in the lab on an experiment.

WKET Planning 35th Anniversary Event

Are you a member of the alumni of radio WKET out of Fairmont High School? If so, then WKET is looking for you!

This year marks the 35th anniversary of WKET, the student-run radio station that operates out of the Interactive Media Tech Prep Program in Fairmont High School's Career Tech Center. In celebration of this milestone, an *Open House and Meet-and-Greet* will be held on Saturday, April 10th, and current WKET staff and Interactive Media instructors. Karl Bremer and Laura Hutchens, are hoping to let as many alumni as possible know about the special event.

A Studio Open House will be held on April 10th, beginning at 5:30 p.m. The television and radio station is located in Room 515 in the Fairmont Career Tech Center. The open house will be followed by a "meet-and-greet," beginning at 7 p.m. at Norton's in its new location in Lincoln Park (behind the Kettering Government Center and next to Frazee Pavilion.) Please join in this fun "walk down memory lane!" If you have any questions or would like to RSVP for the event, please do so at wknet@ketteringschools.org.

Manchur, Schuerholz and Trent to Serve as Tri-Chairs of Kettering Schools Levy Campaign

Quality academic offerings and a wide range of extracurricular opportunities have long been the cornerstones of a "Kettering City Schools" education, and consistent community support for the schools and our children is a Kettering tradition.

On February 16th, the Kettering Board of Education approved a final resolution to place a 6.9-mill operating levy on the May 4th ballot. This very important levy will provide the funds needed to operate the district on a day-to-day basis and will help the district maintain quality schools -- something that has become an expectation of Kettering residents.

Three gentlemen with strong ties to the Kettering community have agreed to serve as tri-chairpersons of the Kettering Schools levy campaign. Local business owner and a product himself of the Kettering City Schools, Charley Schuerholz; president of the Kettering Health Network, Fred Manchur; and long-time resident and president of the Kettering Board of Education, Jim Trent; will head up the efforts of a committee of volunteers on behalf of the levy.

"Our young people are our future, and there is no better investment that we can make than to provide them with high-quality educational opportunities that will give them the foundations they need for bright, successful futures," says Manchur. "Kettering Health Network is proud of our partnership with the Kettering Schools, and we understand the importance of maintaining quality schools in the communities we serve."

Notes Schuerholz, "Kettering is a wonderful place to live

and work. I'm proud to be a life-long resident of Kettering and a graduate of the Kettering Schools. The future of our children, our property values and the well-being of our community are strongly connected to the support our community shows for its schools."

Over the next few months, Citizens for Kettering City Schools -- the volunteer entity that oversees the levy campaign -- will work hard to inform residents both of the need for the levy and the work the district has done to cut costs in these challenging economic times.

"People have said to me that we need to make more cuts now and what I tell them is that we have made significant cuts to our budget," says Trent. "We have cut more than \$7½ million and 57 positions from the budget. The next round of cuts will be at a totally different level and will seriously impact the quality of the education that we can provide to our students. When I tell people this, their response is 'Why would you consider cuts at that level when you haven't given us a chance to say that we want to fund our schools at a level that will keep quality alive in our district and our community?'"

"We only get about 22 percent of our revenue from the state. The remainder has to come from other sources, mostly local taxes," says Trent. "This is not fair, and I do not care for this formula. Unfortunately, it is what it is for now, and if we're going to keep quality alive in the Kettering Schools, we're going to have to do it ourselves."

*From left:
Fred Manchur,
President of
Kettering Health
Network; Charley
Schuerholz,
President of
Schuerholz
Printing; and
Jim Trent,
President of the
Kettering Board
of Education; will
serve as "tri-chairs"
of the Citizens
for Kettering City
Schools Levy
Campaign.*



Dan Girvin, the new supervisor of the Kettering Schools Transportation Department, has a fairly succinct motto when it comes to the workings of the department: "It's our job to get the right people to the right place at the right time and always with safety top-of-mind."

Girvin came on board with the Kettering Schools in January, after the retirement of former transportation supervisor, Pam Dolence. He has served for 15 years on the board of the Ohio Association of Pupil Transportation and is the current president-elect. He is on the state Rodeo Committee, which promotes safety among drivers and he is the past chairperson of the Educational Purchasing Consortium for Transportation Purchasing. With this and with more than 25 years working with districts such as Lakota, Miamisburg, Fairborn and Dayton, in everything from driving a bus to doing maintenance work to supervising transportation staff, he brings a wealth of experience to the job here in Kettering.

"I maintain my license to drive a bus, I'm also a certified trainer and I've worked as a mechanic," says Girvin. "I like to think that having this experience will be a benefit when it comes to working effectively with the employees in our transportation department." And while you can coax general information about the department and buses and maintenance out of Girvin, the conversation always seems to come back to his number-one priority: working with his staff to ensure student safety.

"Following proper procedure is all about making student safety top-of-the-list. Our drivers, our aides, our parents, the staff who monitor the loading and unloading of the buses...we can't remind our kids too often: Be at your bus stop five minutes before pick-up. Never run after a bus. Wait for the driver to signal that it's safe to cross the street. Students should never be moving when the bus is moving. These are the kinds of reminders that will keep our kids safe," says Girvin.

And how about those "snow days?" What's the transportation supervisor's role when the decision is made to delay or cancel school? "I'll get in my truck and drive around and check road conditions and things like snow drifts on narrow streets where there is street parking. Can the buses make it to bus stops to pick-up students and get them to school safely? I'll talk with the business director and the superintendent, and if there's any doubt, then that's when the decision is made to call for a snow day."

"When there's three or four inches on the ground and they're calling for more snow, well that's a pretty straight decision. What's tough is when nothing is predicted and you're standing there in the morning brushing your teeth

Dan Girvin, Kettering's new Transportation Supervisor, stands in front of a map that guides him when he sets bus routes for his drivers.



and a colleague calls from another district and asks what we're going to do, and it's like, 'What do you mean, what are we going to do?' and then you look outside and see that the streets are covered with snow and you start scrambling. That's when it's really no fun at all!"

One thing that Girvin says you can predict about life in the transportation field is that "nothing is predictable," and he wouldn't have it any other way. "Every day is different. If it seems like things are quiet, wait an hour or two and things will change. I've been at this a long time, and 27 years later, I'm still here, because every day is an adventure."

Did You Know?

The Kettering Transportation Department...

- Employs 55 drivers, three mechanics and two secretaries.
- Has 60 buses in its fleet
- Transports 4,000 students to 25 public and non-public schools every day, including:
 - ☞ 12 Kettering publics
 - ☞ Oakwood's Kindergarten location (*district is reimbursed*)
 - ☞ Centerville High School Career Tech
 - ☞ Sinclair Community College
 - ☞ Five special education locations
 - ☞ 10 non-public buildings
- Runs 266 routes every day
- Travels 500,000 a year on school routes
- Travels 70,000 miles a year on activity and athletic trips

Kettering's youngest students had the opportunity to explore the field of science recently when their parents and grandparents joined teachers in hosting the week-long *Discovery Days 2010* in the Integrated Preschool classrooms at Greenmont School.



Centered on Ohio's *Early Learning Academic Content Standards* for the subject area of science, *Discovery Days 2010* challenged the students to demonstrate an understanding of motion; to explore objects, organisms and events by using simple equipment such as magnets and magnifiers; and to participate in simple scientific explorations by searching for objects in a sand box and testing whether certain materials will float.

During the week of scientific activities, the students worked in groups and interacted with their parents and grandparents, thereby learning the important lessons of responding to re-direction from a familiar adult and inviting peers to join in play and activities.



About the Integrated Preschool Program...

Kettering's Integrated Preschool Program operates at four locations, including Greenmont, Indian Riffle, Moraine Meadows and Oakview elementary schools. The program offers morning and afternoon sessions, Monday through Thursday, from 8:30-11 a.m. and from 12:15-2:45 p.m.

The Preschool Program is provided through the Kettering City School District. Each class is comprised of no more than 16 children, approximately half of whom are children with disabilities and half of whom are typically developing children. The classrooms are staffed with one certified preschool teacher and one or two teacher

assistant(s), based on enrollment numbers and the needs of the children in the class. The program is play based and is characterized by a language-rich environment and small class sizes.

Registrations are taken at any of the four schools from which the program operates, and registration packets can be picked up and returned to any of the school locations. The fee for typical preschoolers is \$250 per quarter, for a school-year total of \$1,000. For additional information about the program, please contact Deb McCall, coordinator of Integrated Preschool Services, at (937) 499-1474.

Students Bring Schools to Life with New Programming

The students and instructors in the Interactive Media Tech Prep program at Fairmont High School recently took a challenge and turned it into a great big opportunity that is providing the students with real-world experiences and the community with top-notch television programming.

Up until mid-January, the school district's weekly edition of "Kettering Daily" was produced in the council chambers at the Government Center. When the repair and renovation work began on the building, the location of the weekly tapings had to move, as well. This is where the "big opportunity" arose.

Interactive media instructors Karl Bremer and Laura Hutchens began brainstorming with media students, Kayleigh Roenker and Logan DeBorde. As a result, the school district's weekly edition of "Kettering Daily" has now evolved into a traveling production, with the students heading out to the different schools to talk to teachers and principals about everything from student scheduling at the

high school to economics lessons at the elementary schools to the use of emerging technology among middle school students.

Roenker and DeBorde, the producers of the schools' weekly "Kettering Daily"

show, are able to add video, graphics and sound effects to the program, taking it from what was more of a one-dimensional show to what is now more of multi-dimensional production that creatively showcases the many academic and extracurricular activities that are taking place in the Kettering Schools.



Logan DeBorde and Kayleigh Roenker produce the schools' weekly edition of "Kettering Daily."

"Kettering Daily" cont. on pg.7

The Kettering City School District will have an Operating Levy on the May 4th ballot. Below are some of the "frequently asked questions" that we have received -- along with the corresponding answers -- regarding the levy. As always, we want to provide voters with as much information as possible so that you can make an informed decision when you "vote by mail" or go to the polls on Election Day. Please feel free to contact us at any time with any additional questions or comments that you may have regarding this operating levy:

-- Jim Schoenlein, Superintendent • 499-1430 • jim.schoenlein@ketteringschools.org

-- Kari Basson, Community Relations • 499-1458 • kari.basson@ketteringschools.org

Q. What is the amount of the operating levy the Kettering Schools are placing on the ballot?

A. The district is placing a 6.9-mill levy on the ballot.

Q. How much will this levy cost a property owner?

A. The cost of a levy is calculated based on the "assessed value" of the property. For example, the owner of a \$100,000 home in Kettering would pay \$17.58 a month, or \$211 a year if this levy is approved.

Q. Has the district made any efforts to cut costs?

A. Yes. The Kettering City School District has **cut \$7.6 million, including 57 staff positions**, from its budget over the past four years.

Q. How will the funds generated by this levy be used?

A. Operating dollars are used to fund the day-to-day operations of a school district. This includes:

- Putting teachers in classrooms
- Purchasing textbooks and classroom supplies
- Providing students and teachers with up-to-date technology to enhance the curriculum
- Paying the heating and electric bills
- Buying fuel for school buses
- Supporting extracurricular opportunities, such as award-winning music and art programs and a full range of athletic options
- Offering students Advanced Placement courses and the International Baccalaureate Diploma program that prepare them for post-high school success at the finest colleges and universities
- Providing students with access to state- and nationally recognized Career Tech Prep programs
- Offering a strong academic program with an emphasis on reading, math and science to elementary students
- Providing middle school students with a nurturing environment centered on academic

growth and achievement

- Meeting the varied and unique needs of our special education population through a state-recognized program

Q. What will happen if a levy is not approved by voters?

A. The district has worked very hard over the past few years to make cuts to the budget without unduly harming the educational programs and services offered to students. If a levy is not approved, the district will be forced to make significant staffing cuts. Schools are a "people" business, with the majority of any school district's operating funds going toward teachers, aides, bus drivers, custodians and administrative staff. Significant cuts, like those the Kettering Schools would be forced to make, would result in fewer staff members, which would negatively impact class sizes and all of the programs and services listed in the fourth answer above.

"Kettering Daily" cont. from pg. 6

"Kettering Daily" airs Monday through Friday on Miami Valley Communications Council GATV Channel 6. You can catch the Kettering City Schools edition of "Kettering Daily" every Thursday. Air times vary, depending on weekly program schedules; generally the program airs on Thursdays at 11:15 a.m., noon and 6 p.m., in addition to three-to-four additional air times. In addition to programming on GATV (government access TV,) students in Fairmont's Interactive Media class also produce several additional hours of programming on EATV (educational access TV) on MVCC's Channel 21. These programs include "Good Morning Fairmont," "The PAWS Club," "Icons of Kettering Education" and "WKET Live". For a complete list of the dates and times of Fairmont programming, visit www.mvcc.net and click on "TV Schedules" on the home page.

OK. You have spoken and we have listened! We've heard from many of our loyal seniors who are telling us that "60 is senior," and we agree!

The Kettering Schools appreciate the many seniors in our community who support our students by attending the events and activities held across the district each school year to showcase their talents.

As a way of showing our appreciation to our many seniors who show this support, we offer Kettering residents the opportunity to join our "**Seniors are Special Club.**" In the past, members needed to be Kettering residents who are 65 years of age or older. Well...here's where we've listened to you: Effective immediately, we are amending the eligibility age for the *Seniors Are Special Club* to residents who are **60 years of age or older.**

As a member of the *Seniors Are Special Club*, you will receive a membership card that provides you with free admission to any home athletic,

performing or visual arts event or any other activity at any of Kettering's 12 schools.** "Kettering has a proud tradition of providing our students with the opportunity to participate in a number of curricular and extracurricular activities," says Jim Schoenlein, superintendent of the Kettering Schools. "I hope our seniors across the Kettering community will take advantage of this opportunity to see our talented students in action at events and activities throughout the year."

For information on how to get your "Seniors Are Special" Card, contact the Community Relations Office at 499-1458 or at kari.basson@ketteringschools.org.

**** League stipulations state that we are not permitted to provide free admission to tournament games. If you will be attending an event that requires reservations, please make your reservations and inform the box office that you are a "Seniors Are Special" Club member.**

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