

What does mill levy override promise?

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Dear Editor,

As I listen to residents talk and to school members quote figures, it becomes apparent to me that one very important aspect of the entire mill levy debate seems to be missing. If we all agree to vote for the mill levy, what exactly has the school board promised?

As I review the Yes on 3B, I see that they have made cuts in several areas, and I applaud the effort that they have made and achieved. I also see that we need repairs on roofs, need more technology and need to help our teachers with their out-of-pocket expenses, to mention a few.

I then ponder the sports: only a one percent cut in this area? I was a synchronized swimmer from the time I was 8 until I was 18. At that time (in the 1970s) it cost my parents \$400 per month for my pool time to practice. That did not include my suits, my travel (I competed in Hawaii, New Mexico, California and Montana) or anything else. I also spent many weekends collecting cans along the roadsides and selling fertilizer to support my desire to compete.

And now I see many parents of very young athletes traveling to Sterling every Saturday to compete. Those parents do not have a problem paying extra for this or for dance and gymnastics. Why does the sports program get buses and practices practically free when FFA, FBLA, FCCLA, band and others have to find the funds to go to their competitions? Are not they all extracurricular activities? Shouldn't all the programs be treated the same? Maybe we should consider fees that would cover the referees, custodians, buses and electricity for the sporting events.

I am not trying to go after the sports program, but if we are fair, then all aspects should be looked at. My boys enjoyed sports too, but I feel all of the programs that our kids could be a part of will help make very rounded kids, and that if we wish our kids to have the best then we need to be willing to pay the extra amount for that.

The problem I have is...What does the school board promise as to the education of our children??? Where are the kids mentioned? Where is their resolve to bring out the best in our kids, encourage them and make the best students possible?? Oh yea, if I win the lottery my life

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would be different, but would it be better?

I look to the newest graduates of Holyoke High School for an example. The class of 2010 started out with approximately 44 students. Of course, some move, some drop out, etc., but we only graduated 32. What exactly happened to the rest? Some went to Haxtun, some went to home school, some went to alternative school, some got their GED and some dropped out. My question is WHY??? Has anyone ever asked the class members that left, why?

I know for a fact that many of those felt: unimportant, un-encouraged, not cared about, instruction lacked for those not in the gifted area, no student/teacher relationship, not having a NAME, not an athlete, having a learning disability that went ignored by teachers and counselors, not getting that personal relationship with the student to guide him into classes that he/she would excel and learn to better them with their future.

What will the money and technology do to help those kids?

It makes me think that if I get a flat tire on the way to work, I don't have my vehicle towed and ask them to work on the engine. I get my tire fixed!!! That's what we need. A fix to the education for our students, then maybe we can work on the rest!

And let's think about the taxpayers that are paying for the mill levy. At a time when money is tight everywhere, you have to put to a vote to raise taxes. This will only affect the landowner, the home-owner and the business owners. Anyone that is a renter will not be affected. But you put the burden on those of us that have had to deal with higher city costs, electricity costs, fertilizer costs, seed costs and fuel costs.

So now that many of the local businesses have seen a decline in business due to the national economy, you will see Main Street Holyoke die. Because the farmer, rancher and homeowner can no longer afford to buy anything but the mere necessities, because everyone has taxed them to death.

I realize that the school district is losing federal and state money, but so is EVERY school in our

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nation. What can be done? What are others doing? What about creating a charter school? We need a school with new creative ideals that puts ALL students first and has the ability to set new goals. I know that is just a thought. Yes, something needs to be done, but it needs to be done for the kids!

You know, had my school supply list ever had “recommended...laptop computer,” I think I would have worked just as hard to acquire that as I did the #2 pencil. But that never appeared on the supply list. I bet that would have helped in the technology department.

Without hiring school personnel that care for the kids, no amount of money will ever pay for kids that excel and enjoy learning. And the Holyoke School District will never be a winning District again without that KEY ingredient—CARING for ALL.

Thank you,

Julie Dirks