



Newbury Local Schools Board of Education
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Michelle R. Mrakovich, Superintendent Nancy A. McPeak, Treasurer

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Dear Newbury Residents,

I would like to take an opportunity to thank the community for its continued support of the Newbury Local School District. This district has certainly had its share of challenges over the years. The challenges we face are similar to those faced by many districts across Ohio –finances, declining enrollment, and aging buildings. Even with these challenges, rest assured the Newbury Board of Education, staff and administration are committed to providing the highest quality education for all students, while being mindful of taxpayer dollars. Over the past few years, many positive changes have taken place. Just ask any one of our students and you will hear about how these changes have positively impacted their educational experience in the Newbury Local Schools.

We are dedicated not only to the academic success of our students but to keeping our communities informed as well with accurate and timely information. As you may know, the Newbury Board of Education recently ended the study regarding consolidation with the West Geauga Local School District. As with any difficult decision, oftentimes rumors circulate; this is unfortunate and we hope to dispel some of them through this letter.

Consolidation, merger, territory transfer are difficult, complicated, and time consuming tasks. It requires transparency on both sides and a dedication to a shared message and a shared vision. There were many steps that went into the process and neither the administration nor the Newbury Board of Education took this task lightly. The timeline for the study began in June 2016 and was set to expire in June 2017. The Newbury Board of Education was clear from the inception that a decision would be made in the spring of 2017 to allow Newbury families and staff ample time to plan accordingly for their futures.

During a March 2017 Newbury Board of Education Meeting, with transparency and integrity, information was shared honestly and openly during the public meeting about the potential consolidation. The information discussed came from an audit conducted by Public Finance Resources (PFR), paid for by the West Geauga Local School District. The information from this report did not come directly to the Newbury Local School District from PFR; it was provided by the West Geauga Local School District. We received the preliminary data for revenue; however, the expenditures data had not yet been provided. On several different occasions, we requested the expenditures data – but were not given access to it until approximately six days after the information had been delivered to the West Geauga Local School District.

When the Newbury Board of Education members inquired about the revenue figures, both the treasurer and I stated they were preliminary and did not provide long-term financial stability for the combined district, all the while, understanding the complexities of combining both district's levy dollars was not as simple as adding the two revenue figures together.

We want our families and residents to know, many factors were carefully evaluated and taken into consideration before we ended consolidation discussions with the West Geauga Local School District. It was always the intent of my office and the Newbury Board of Education to act with integrity and transparency throughout this process and that is exactly what we did. We had hoped for a long-term, financially viable school district with programming jointly planned and a shared vision for the future of all students.

As we move forward, we will continue the long-time tradition of excellence in the Newbury Local School District and will share the many great success stories of our students and staff with you. As always, if you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Michelle Mrakovich
Superintendent