



TALON Talk!

PI renewal would not increase taxes

The Madison-Plains School District's Permanent Improvement Levy is set to expire on Dec. 31, 2018. The community will be asked to renew the levy at the ballot on Nov. 7, 2017.

Here is some background information and why the Board of Education is seeking to renew the levy now.

What is a permanent improvement levy and why does our district need the money?

As defined by the Ohio Revised Code, a Permanent Improvement levy is used for the purchase of any property, asset or improvement with an estimated life or usefulness of five years or more. The purchase of buses, computers, books, equipment and furniture are examples of assets which may be purchased with PI dollars. PI funds MAY NOT be used for daily operating expenses, such as salaries and benefits.

The PI levy is on the ballot to be renewed for a period of 5 years.

See Renewal, page 2



MPHS athletes take trip to OSU

Braden Mast (shown above, left to right, front to back), Sam Powell, Addison, Tesi, Cidny Long Gabe Garrison, Kosta Xenikis, Jarrett Vallery and Isaac Puckett attended the 2017 OHSAA Foundation Student Leadership Conference at Ohio State

University in October. They had the opportunity to listen to several national keynote speakers and attend a number of break-out sessions. Read more on our district's Facebook page, facebook.com/MadisonPlainsLSD



AS A PARTNERSHIP OF RURAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES, THE MADISON-PLAINS SCHOOL DISTRICT WILL ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE THROUGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES TO MAXIMIZE STUDENT SUCCESS.



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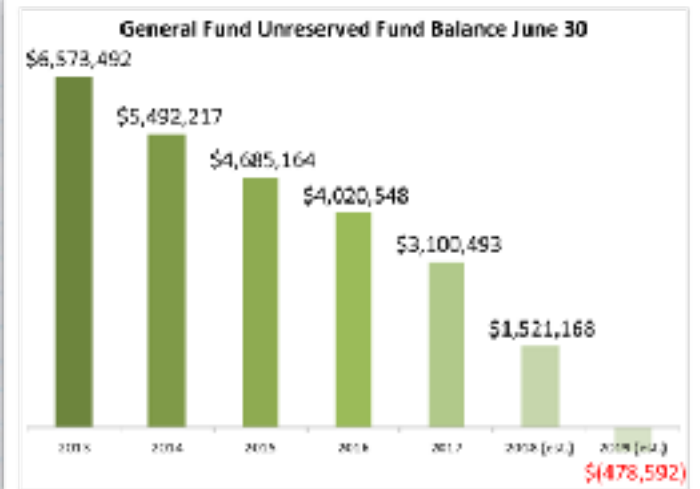
General Fund balance is depleting

The General Fund (001 General Fund) is a set of accounts, according to Ohio law, used to show all ordinary operations of a school system. It is available – and used by – all districts in the state.

Unfortunately, in Madison-Plains, since 2015 the average annual increase of General Fund Revenues has been essentially flat, growing less than 1 percent at +0.4 percent. This is due to reduced state funding and no new local funding initiatives in more than 12 years.

Fortunately, through a lot of hard work, we have held our average annual General Fund Expenditure increase to only 0.8 percent. This has been accomplished through such efforts as attrition/reorganization of personnel, increased efficiencies in operations and health insurance restructuring. We have also utilized more dollars from the 003 Permanent Improvement Fund for capital computer, textbook and facilities expenditures previously purchased through the General Fund.

This financial diligence has allowed the district to maintain a positive General Fund balance (in the black) through 2018, which is at least two years further than originally projected in the original district 10-year Financial Plan. That's the good news! The bad news is that due to expenditures increasing at a greater percentage than revenues – for reasons outside of our control such as



inflation and cost increases from our service vendors – the General Fund is estimated to have a negative balance (in the red) at the end of 2019. This will happen without additional revenue or a drastic cut to current educational programs.

One of these two options MUST occur. The State of Ohio prohibits a district to start a school year with a projected negative General Fund year-end balance without state intervention. A state intervention would include

[See General, page 3](#)

Renewal, continued...

When last approved in November of 2013, the PI renewal was approved by almost 60 percent of the voters. Our community has continuously supported renewal of this PI levy since 1993.

How has the district spent the money?

Since the last renewal, we have purchased six buses and two vans. Sixteen classrooms have new student and teacher furniture and cabinetry. We bought resources and technology for several new curriculum adoptions. The window replacement cycle for the Intermediate building has been paid for with the PI fund.

Special projects – such as the expansion of district parking lots, installation of the band programs' observation tower, renovation of the fieldhouse, building signage and installation of air conditioning in the Intermediate gym – were paid for with PI dollars.

How will the district spend the renewal money?

We have the following ongoing expenses, that only escalate if ignored: roof repairs, walkway repairs, sewage plant repairs, campus lighting, kitchen equipment, bus lot improvements, building door replacements, fire suppression system improvements, HVAC repairs and maintenance, new fencing and entryway security systems.

We plan to purchase up to two buses per year to stay on our current replacement cycle. New curriculum adoptions are planned for each of the next five years. Each adoption requires a significant investment into new resources and technology tools. We will continue to purchase one new classroom set of furniture for each building each year until all district student/teacher furniture is replaced.

Why now?

This levy is set to expire on Dec. 31, 2018. We have historically asked for and received approval from the community of this renewal in the year prior to expiration.

The PI dollars are critical for providing resources to our students, teachers and staff. They enable us to provide a safe environment and protect your investment in the school system. Our community has shown it understands the PI fund is an investment in the facilities in which we house our students, the buses in which we transport our students and the educational resources we provide to our students.

Renewing now allows the district and Board to budget and plan accordingly as opposed to reacting to a financial emergency.

MP'S OHIO REPORT CARD: THE REST OF THE STORY

Ohio released report cards for all public schools in the state on Sept. 27. The Ohio Department of Education is required by the state legislature to publish grades for each school in the following areas:

- Achievement
- GAP Closing
- K-3 Literacy
- Progress
- Graduation Rate
- Prepared for Success

	Madison Plains	Jefferson Local	London City	Jonathan Alder	Westfall	Miami Trace
Achievement	D	D	D	C	D	C
GAP Closing	F	C	F	C	F	C
K-3 Literacy	B	C	C	C	C	C
Progress	B	D	F	B	B	B
Graduation Rate	B	A	A	A	B	A
Prepared for Success	D	D	D	C	D	D
District GPA	1.85	1.75	1.25	2.50	1.70	2.35
Change in overall District Grade over Prior year	0.70	0.00	0.30	0.85	0.10	0.30
State Rank (Out of 608 Districts)	315	346	502	130	368	180

Schools in Ohio have faced many challenges in improving their individual report cards, not the least of which is the state's consistent change to benchmarks upon which the grades are measured. This continued tinkering – an upward ratcheting of required scores – with how grades are earned makes it difficult for schools to put a plan in place to improve. The increased baselines also adds to the confusion among the general public: What do the grades mean and is a school/district providing a quality education?

Imagine how a student enrolled in a class might feel after the instructor made a change midway through the course, altering the way grades could be earned, and, in fact, raised the criteria. What was an A is now sufficient for a C at the highest and a B at the beginning of the year might eek out a D, if the student stayed the course. That's frustration, at its least. This is what happens year in and year out with the state and its requirements and the reason why many schools and communities disregard the reports.

At MP we accept the report card for what it is: a report from the state, based on its criteria. The report does not take into account the factors unique to each school.

For example, while we are proud of the preschool programs we have within our district, our geographical size makes it difficult to provide more offerings while an urban school may have an elite Goddard-type school on every corner.

We did see marked improvement in Madison-Plains in several areas of the report card, such as in the "K-3 Literacy" grade which moved from an F in school year 2016 to a B in 2017. This grade indicates how successful a district is in getting its struggling readers on track to proficiency by the third grade. Improvement was also shown in the "Progress" grade. The district moved from a D to a B. This grade indicates the growth students are making based on their past performance.

So how does MP compare to other local schools? A chart comparing local districts shows MP has improvement to make, as do all area schools. To that end, we have been following our Madison-Plains Improvement Plan. The MPIP details clear goals with specific strategies and defined action steps to help us increase student learning. Progress over time shows we are doing just that. The entire plan can be found at: <http://www.mplsd.org/mpip.aspx>.

General Fund, continued...

mandated cuts in services, potentially resulting in: larger class sizes; reduced curriculum, extracurricular and transportation options; and further deterioration of already aging facilities.

This information has been shared with our community on a regular basis, in updates from the Superintendent in newsletters, his blog on the district's website and regular columns in the local papers. It

has been presented at all of our Board meetings and has been a regular part of discussion with the Madison-Plains Advisory Council that has met once a month for the past five years.

A more detailed forecast of the District's General Fund will be presented at the Oct. 17, 2017 Regular Board Meeting when the October Five-Year Financial Forecast is presented. Please visit the Treasurer's page at

www.mplsd.org for future updates and additional financial information.

Ideally, additional revenue is generated, great financial stewardship is maintained, and the District continues to operate into the future with the same quality educational resources that have to this point allowed Madison-Plains students to excel!



Superintendent note

Tim Dettwiler
Superintendent

We are off to a solid start with 2017-18 and are eager to watch the rest of the school year unfold.

While the operating levy did not pass in August, we are not taking the loss in stride. As detailed in this latest issue of TalonTalk, we have significant financial needs that must be addressed this year.

Next month, a no-increase renewal of our Permanent Improvement levy will appear before voters (page 1). In the spring the Board must consider seeking new revenue for daily operating costs to support the General Fund (page 2).

Both financial issues are vital for the district. The PI levy pays for the maintenance of the district's

buildings and grounds, and the purchase and repair of any equipment with a life-span of more than five years. It does not pay for salaries, benefits or utilities. An operating levy funds the latter and is critical to maintaining current levels of educational programming.

School finance is a cumbersome topic, and the structure of Ohio's laws can make it difficult for communities to understand why districts are on the ballot so frequently.

We are fortunate in MP in that before the Aug. 8 Emergency levy attempt we had not sought new operating money since 2005! We can survive no longer without it and have trimmed costs to the bare bone.

We understand the request impacts your bottom line, but we can do little without making

significant reductions to balance our budget. The Board and I have begun that conversation and will continue the discussion as we approach that election.

We have expanded efforts to share as much information with you as possible. We launched Facebook in early 2017 and I have submitted monthly guest columns to the local newspapers since this past spring.

We now broadcast our monthly MPAC meetings with Facebook Live, and – as we have in past years – we are scheduling meetings in various parts of the community. We met in Mt. Sterling in September.

We appreciate your input and feedback and believe this is what makes our district strong and are eager to build on the momentum to strive toward excellence in all we do.

SAVE THE DATE

Nov. 22	MPAC
Nov. 21	Board of Education
Oct. 20	No School
Oct. 18	MPAC in Midway
Oct. 17	End of First 9 weeks
Oct. 17	Board of Education

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