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Wayne Central School District

LETTER to the BOARD

January 23, 2004

"Upon the subject of education, not presuming to dictate any plan or system respecting it, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people may be engaged in. That everyone may receive at least a moderate education appears to be an objective of vital importance." - - Abraham Lincoln

Greetings from Wayne Central School District. Below are some items of interest.

Newsletter:

1. **Letter to the Editor** – Enclosed is a letter to the editor that was in our local paper. Mr. Blankenberg has been working with the wrestlers and the girl scouts on this issue. I have included his letter regarding this.
2. **Clarke Patterson Meeting** – I am meeting with Todd Liebert on Monday regarding the unresolved water problems in the Performing Arts Center. I have reminded Clark-Patterson, that they were employed by Wayne Central as the architectural firm that designed the auditorium and roof. They were also employed for extended services to insure the work was completed properly. Since we continue to have leaks, it is my point of view that either they didn't design it properly or they didn't properly oversee the installation. Either way they are responsible for resolving it. I have held payment for some of the current services until this issue is resolved. It will be an interesting meeting
3. **Le Chase Meeting** - At a separate meeting Greg, Don Davis and I are meeting with Lyle Corey from LeChase Construction regarding the PAC water issues. Since Le Chase is our current construction manager, I want to pick their brain about how to make sure the auditorium water issues are corrected.
4. **Full Day Kindergarten** – The letters to all families affected by the redistricting and all families with kindergarteners starting school in September have been sent. There have been a few calls seeking clarification, and a couple requests for exemptions, but at large, there has been very little response. Interesting, however, is that not one call has been regarding the change from half day to full day. We have invited parents to attend the information

meetings on January 28 at FE or January 29 at OP for a question and answer session. Attached is a copy of the brochure we will be using that evening and will be providing during screening. They will be available at both school offices as well.

5. **Sales Tax Issue** – The Wayne County Superintendents’ are proposing to the County Finance Committee that the issue of who shares in the sales tax revenue be decided by public referendum. I imagine this will not be overly popular with the County, or at least with those that are strong proponents of the sales tax take back. I have spoken with Walworth Town Supervisor, Frank Guielli who has said he would support have such a referendum. I have enclosed a letter that I have sent to the Finance Committee regarding the referendum. Next Thursday, Supervisors and Superintendents will be traveling to Livingston County to find out the effect of losing the sales tax there. I will keep you posted on our progress.
6. **55-65 Diploma requirement:** At our Board meeting you had asked for the number of students who fell in the 55-65 range on the U.S. History and English exam. There are 11 students who did not pass the History exam. There are 24 who did not pass the English exam. All of them are scheduled to retake the exam next week. If we had the 55 exemption, none of them would have had to retake the course and sit for the exam. Under our proposal they would all be retaking the course (school year, summer school, AIS) and would be taking the exam next week. If they still did not pass after this additional effort, then we would allow the local diploma.
7. **Annual Fire Inspection** – The fire inspection was completed Thursday morning by Don Davis and Fire Inspector, Bruce Glaser. I am very pleased to inform you that there were no “non-conformance” issues in this year’s inspection. For the most part, things are in great shape. There are a couple areas we continue to keep watch on and that is typical. Don reports that this has been the smoothest year yet for this inspection and I extend my deepest appreciation for all his efforts. If you remember, last year the certificates of occupancy were about two months late in coming to us. This year, SED has yet to have the fire inspection forms ready for us to download, so we have no forms. As soon as these forms are ready, we will fill in the blanks, get the required signatures, and forward them to the necessary locations.
8. **Wayne Central Fitness Center** – Marc Blankenberg and I are planning on making a presentation to the senior citizen groups inviting them to come in and use the fitness center located at the high school. This is a nice opportunity for residents, especially senior citizens to exercise locally at no cost.
9. **Winter Clothing Drive** – The High School Key Club is sponsoring a “nicely” used winter clothing drive for the Good Samaritan Clothes Closet (which serves our local community). If anyone has winter clothing (jackets, hats, gloves, that you would like to get rid of, they can be dropped at the District Office or at the High School main entrance through the end of January.

10. **Student Absenteeism** – Before the holiday break, we were tracking our building absences, and experiencing above normal rates in a couple of buildings. As a follow up, I have checked with the buildings and find that all are back to normal with low to average absenteeism. The recess is sometimes a much-needed break in more ways than one!

11. **Events** –

Jan. 26 – HS PTSA Mtg – DO – 7:00 p.m.

Jan. 26-29 – NYS Regents Exams

Jan. 29 – Four County Steering Committee Mtg

Jan 30-31 – Jr/Sr Vocal All-County Festival@ Marion

Feb. 5 – FCSBA – Health Insurance: Cost Saving Strategies – Manchester- Shrtsvll HS – 7 pm

Feb. 6-8 – NYSSBA Winter Academy

Feb. 7 – County Solo Festival @ Newark

Feb. 11 – Board of Education Meeting @ DO

Athletics: (Home Games)

1/29 – JV & V Boys' Basketball vs. Pal-Mac – 6:00 & 7:30 p.m.

1/30 – Girls' JV & V Basketball vs. Canandaigua – 6:00 & 7:30 p.m.

2/2 – Girls JV & V Basketball vs. Marcus Whitman – 6:00 & 7:30 p.m.

2/3 – JV & V Boys Basketball vs. Mynderse – 6:00 & 7:30 p.m.

2/4 – JV & V Bowling vs. Penn Yan – 4:15 p.m.

12. **Attachments:**

- a. Editorial Letter – Wayne County Mail
- b. Finance Committee Letter
- c. Wayne's World – January issue
- d. Full Day Kindergarten Brochure
- e. Capital Project Meeting Minutes – 12/17
- f. Directory Update

TO: Michael Havens
FROM: Marc Blankenberg
DATE: 1/23/04
RE: 2003 Wayne Wrestling Booster Club Division Bottle & Can Drive

Att. A

Background Information:

On 11/15/03 there was a phone message left at my home by a community member who informed me that there had been a problem with the Wayne Central Booster Club Wrestling Division Bottle & Can Drive Fundraiser. The community member also informed me that he had already contacted the Superintendent.

On 11/17/03 Mr. Havens and I met with Girl Scout representative to hear their concerns.

The Girls Scout's accusations were as follows:

The Girls Scouts and Wrestling Boosters had a Bottle & Can Drive scheduled for the same day 11/5/03. The Girls Scouts had placed bags and flyers around the community (Bear Creek, Stonehedge, Evergreen & Parini Drive) in advance of the pick up date on 11/15/03. The Girls Scouts believe that the Wrestling Boosters took a majority of the bottles & cans and continued this behavior at the Alpco Recycle Center where the wrestlers took bottles & cans from other bins.

Facts from Investigation:

1. The Wayne Wrestling Booster Club has conducted this fundraiser for the last 11 years without an incident.
2. The Booster Club had submitted the appropriate request to conduct the fundraiser and it was approved through me.
3. The fundraiser was advertised in the local newspaper and on the school signboard.
4. One of the major expectations of the wrestling program is focus on student behavior both inside and outside of school. The expectation for good behavior is reinforced constantly.
5. Before the fundraiser was started the booster club organizers reviewed their expectations for how the students should act when they are collecting bottles and cans from the community.
6. Students were also informed that the girl scouts would be conducting a bottle & can drive at the same time and that no wrestlers were to take bottles & cans earmarked for the Girl Scouts. Expectations on how the wrestlers should act and what they were to say to the homeowners were reviewed. The only reason the booster club organizers knew of the Girl Scouts fundraisers was also occurring was because they had flyers and bags dropped off by the girl scouts at their homes earlier in the week.
7. Booster Club parents supervised the wrestlers as they went door to door to collect the cans.

8. As the wrestlers went door to door there were many situations where the homeowner had bottles & cans ready for the girls scouts but gave them to the wrestlers instead. This explains why it looked like there were bottles & cans for the girl scouts in the wrestling booster's collection bin at the recycle center.
9. When the boosters took their bottles and cans to the Alpco Recycle Center the wrestlers and booster parents and a member of the Wayne Central coaching staff were with the wrestlers while the bottles & cans were being unloaded. No concerns from Alpco were brought to the attention of the booster parents or coach at the recycle center.
10. To follow up on the on the accusations that the wrestlers did take cans & bottles from other storage bins and place in their own bin. I contacted Mr. Brad Cook (Manager at Alpco Recycle Center). He indicated to me that he was told by one of his employees that wrestlers did pick up some bottles & cans and place them in their collection bin. He stated that when the team left the recycle center the cans & bottles that were placed back in their original collection bin. According to the manager it really was not a big deal. I also asked if there had been any problems in previous years and he stated that there has never been a problem before.

Investigation Conclusion:

There was not significant evidence that the wrestlers took cans & bottles directly from the girl scouts. There was truth to bottles & cans being moved and that was addressed.

Follow up with Girl Scout: (Meeting held on 12/5/03)

The investigation took a considerable amount of time to gather the details from the different groups and individuals involved. I know that the amount of time the investigation took was a concern for the girl scouts however; I needed all the facts first. Once the investigation was completed I requested a meeting to present my findings in the matter. It took several days to get all the parties to agree to a meeting time.

The meeting was conducted with two Girl Scout troop representatives. Also, attending the meeting was booster club member and bottle & can drive organizer Kathy Connelly. At the meeting the 10 above details were shared with the girl scouts representatives. I explained that in the future I would be willing to share the district-wide fundraising data-base so there are no duplicate fundraisers at anytime in an attempt to be proactive in planning school and community fundraising activities. I indicated that the booster club would not be willing to donated any of their proceeds from the fundraisers because there was significant evidence that the boosters had taken bottles & cans from the girl scouts. I told them that in the future I would make sure there is better supervision at the recycle center by the booster club and coaches.

I felt confident that all the details of this situation were investigated and the allegation of taking cans & bottles in the community from the girl scouts were untrue. I informed the girls scout representatives that from my standpoint I had addressed what I needed to and the matter was closed. I asked the Girl Scout reps if they agreed with the information I presented. They still felt that our wrestlers took Girl Scout cans. I assured the reps that if I had found that there were

situations where the wrestlers took Girl Scout cans that there would be some disciplinary actions taken. They still felt that disciplinary action needed to be taken with the wrestlers. The Girl Scout reps were unclear what needed to happen from their standpoint to resolve the issue. However, I felt I had looked into the matter and given my response. I informed them that if any other concerns were to come up that they should contact me.

I have a meeting scheduled with Mrs. Holly on 1/27/04 to bring closure to this issue.

Dear Mr. Colvin and Members of the Finance Committee,

Att. B

Thank you for taking the time to meet with Tom Cox, Jamie Rodems and myself regarding the issue of repealing the portion of the sales tax revenue that is reserved for Wayne County school districts. As you saw in our presentation, while Wayne County students are more impoverished and have more learning disabilities, they are more successful on their State assessments, in staying in school and in earning a regents diploma than students in most any comparable County. We are very proud of our students as I am sure you are.

I also thank you for reiterating your committee's commitment to defer any decision regarding the sales tax issue until discussing it with the superintendents. I appreciate your continued effort to work cooperatively with the school districts. While I recognize that you made no promise regarding not making a recommendation about sales tax prior to a completed State budget, I ask that you give this serious consideration. Both districts and the County will be in a better position to assess needs once we see what the state aid to schools and local governments looks like.

Lastly, and most importantly, I want to expand upon the superintendent's proposal that we hold a county-wide referendum on the sales tax issue. I believe it provides an excellent resolution to what has been a four-year controversy. Each year the school districts marshal their support against the loss of sales tax revenue. We bring in business leaders, parents, Board members and supervisors; all of whom oppose the sales tax take-back. You do the same. You fight for what you believe is best for your taxpayers. We fight for what we believe is best for our taxpayers. The irony is that they are the same taxpayers.

In the spirit of democracy let us allow the taxpayers to decide what they want. If they want the County to have the sales tax then the schools can stop wasting their time fighting the issue and build a budget based on the taxpayers' wishes. If the taxpayers want the schools to keep a portion of the sales tax then the county will have the political will of the people to do what they have to do to build their budget. It is the democratic process we teach our children and the fairest method to finally resolve this dilemma. I believe our citizens look to us for leadership. They have high expectations of us to work cooperatively to solve problems. This referendum does all these things.

I suggest you designate two members of your committee to work with two of the superintendents to draw up a plan for how such a referendum would be held. That committee would then make recommendations back to their respective groups for final approval. We will be discussing this proposal with our Superintendents shortly and will contact your committee following that meeting.

We have an historic opportunity to work together for the people of Wayne County. I believe our citizens will be appreciative of our efforts in their behalf.

Sincerely,

Michael Havens
Chairperson, Wayne County Superintendents