

The Lancaster City School District is moving forward to plan for the 2003-2004 school year. The District did make 2.2 million dollars in budget cuts this past June. At their budget preparation meeting the School Board examined a number of background pieces of information (fiscal projections, enrollment estimates,) and then drew some conclusions directing the administration to move forward with staffing plans for next year as well as to prepare some budget reducing recommendations for consideration. 2003-04 staffing for the elementary schools is tentatively expected to be comparable to the 02-03 staffing. High School staffing is expected to be adjusted to some degree with a modest, overall gain to accommodate the projected increase in the number of students in grades 7-12.

The biggest issue and challenge currently, is the need for the passage of a new operating levy. This need is due at this time for a couple of reasons. First, the State has reduced the amount of increased funding to schools for the next 2 years, but the need for additional dollars (2 to 3 million dollars) still is needed to continue to be financially stable over the next 5 years. Second, the buildings in the district need attention even more with the failure of the last 4 attempts to pass a bond issue. North Elementary is one of the school district's oldest buildings and needs to be renovated, rebuilt or replaced. The bond issue will also help provide a much needed addition to Tarhe Elementary to handle the increase in students due to growth in Lancaster's West side.

The Lancaster City School District estimated revenues and expenditures 2003-2004 are presently operating on a 45 million dollar budget, showing a nearly break even relationship. If expenditures rose, then the district would have to balance the budget or reduce expenditures in order to make ends meet in 2003-2004. The School Board determined that it would plan ahead for this tight situation by putting a levy on the March 2004 ballot in order to deal with expenditure increases over the next couple of years.

In conclusion, the Board of Education will be making a decision within the next couple of months about what kind of operating levy will be on the March 2004 ballot whether it is a income tax, property tax, or a combination of income/property coupled with a PI or Bond. No final decision has yet been made as to the exact amount of the reduction and no specific items have been determined to be cut at this time (e.g. - jobs, after school programs, etc.).

If you have any questions about this or any other press release please feel free to contact:

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