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Community Forum Gives Everyone A Chance To Participate In Process

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SPRINGBORO, Ohio – With the completion on November’s general election, Springboro Community Schools went two full years or eight voting opportunities without being on the ballot.

I say that with pride because in the eight years I have been here, that certainly has never been the situation. In fact, I cannot remember a year when we were not on the ballot at least twice. I understand the frustration voters felt with the number of times you were asked to support Springboro Community Schools with your checkbook. As a Clearcreek Township resident – to steal a line from former President Bill Clinton – I feel your pain.

But I think it also is important to recognize the fact that Springboro’s Board of Education and Administration has kept its promises. We said during the 2005 operating levy campaign that if voters supported the levy, they would not see Springboro Community Schools on the ballot again until 2008. At that time the 2005 levy would need to be renewed. Remember, it was for only three years. At the end of three years (December 2008), that money will no longer be collected.

We have kept that promise.

Back in 2005, the year 2008 seemed so far away. In less than 40 days, 2008 will be upon us, and as promised, Springboro Community Schools will be on the March ballot. We need to renew the levy that voters approved in November 2005. At the same time, a five-year emergency levy is also coming off the books.

Did we know both levies would need to be renewed at the same time? Absolutely! Voters told us over and over that they didn’t want to be “nickel and dime’d,” nor did they want to have to vote for so many levies. This is our attempt to listen and comply with our constituents. We will combine these two levies into one so that you do not see Springboro Community Schools on the ballot so often.

Between the two levies, \$9.2 million per year will be lost if the levies are not renewed. Folks, that’s almost 25-percent of Springboro Community Schools’ budget. To say the renewal levy is desperately needed would be a huge understatement.

You will be hearing lots more about this levy in the coming weeks, but as in the common practice with Springboro Community Schools, before any decisions are made by our School Board or Administration, we want to hear what you think.

To that end, we will be hosting a Community Forum at 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 29 at Springboro High School's LGI (large group instruction) room. This is where we also hold board meetings. The purpose of this meeting is to share the information we have gleaned over the past several months, and to show you options.

Then, we will give you the opportunity to vote for the operating levy option that you think is most appropriate for you, your family and our community. For those of you who participated in our community forum to decide how the new schools should look, this is very similar. Participants will be given "clickers" where they can register their preferences anonymously.

Please let me be very clear on something – our School Board and Administration takes what our community says very seriously. No decisions have been made about what kind of levy or how much money should be asked for at this time. Why? We don't know what you think yet.

We have surveyed 400 residents, asked and received plenty of opinions from our business community, and others throughout Springboro and Clearcreek Township. But we need to know what you think.

Please take the time to join us Nov. 29. The meeting will last less than 90 minutes, and your input could help decide the future of Springboro Community Schools.

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