

**COMMUNITY MEETING**  
**for**  
**DISCUSSION of TAX REFERENDUM**  
High School Cafeteria  
10320 E. 250 N.  
Charlottesville, IN 46117  
January 26, 2010

**The following is a summary of the Community Meeting on January 26, 2010.**

Board Members present were: Teri Dunlavy, Brad Hancock, Terry Jilg, Scott Petry, Tom Younts. There were approximately 250 community members in attendance.

Mr. Harris, Superintendent, opened the meeting with introductions of the board members. He stated that the purpose of the Community Forum Meeting is to receive input from the community about a possible May 4, 2010 tax referendum being placed on the ballot. He further stated that this meeting is to explain the referendum process, budget situation, what has to be done and to receive questions and comments.

Mr. Harris explained the process to have a general fund referendum placed on the ballot for the May 4, 2010 Primary Election. Those registered voters living in Brown, Jackson and Blue River Townships are eligible to vote in the primary.

The various school funds were explained as to what can be paid from each fund. The tax referendum is to support the General Fund which is the fund that salaries, benefits, utilities, supplies/materials, student services and contracted services are paid from.

Mr. Harris showed the state average for teachers and superintendent salaries in the state of Indiana. Eastern Hancock teachers rank 269 out of 294 and he (superintendent) ranks 44 of 44 in Marion and surrounding counties. He praised our staff for their desire to help students learn everyday.

There has been a reduction in expenditures with the elimination of fourteen (14) staff positions saving \$268,000. This includes secretaries (2), instructional assistants (5), maintenance (2), custodians (5) and (1) eight hour day from a secretary position and a part time position in Central Office.

Other savings of \$128,000 have been cut in non-personnel such as supply and materials, professional development, administrative insurance and utilities.

\$200,000 more needs to be cut from the budget and additional considerations are:

- Reductions in teaching staff
- Cuts to athletics and extracurricular activities
- Charge to play/participate
- Fee for full-day kindergarten
- Student technology fee

Mr. Harris stated that Eastern Hancock is a school making us proud. We are a Chamber of Commerce Best Buy school; we have one of the best Agriculture-FFA programs in the state of Indiana, if not the best. He told of the ISTEP scores being above the state

average in all buildings and the high school having exemplary status for five consecutive years. The 2009 graduation rate is 96.3% - 13<sup>th</sup> in the state.

He presented the tax impact of a referendum levy of \$400,000 and what the rate would be on a residential homestead with an assessed value of \$100,000, \$200,000 or \$300,000. He also presented rate and impact on farm land/per acre.

At this time Mr. Harris opened the floor for question and comments.

1. Since we have all these funds – does this referendum assure that this money goes into the general fund?

Answer -Yes.

2. \$400,000 what does this allow us to do, will this bring back some of the people we have let go?

Answer – It may allow us to bring back some of the people we have lost or save teaching positions.

3. You are asking for more money when people are laid off and/or not getting any raises. Why can you not cut out where the state shows to cut? All I see is more expenses. I would need to find a second job to increase the dollar you are asking citizens to make. Teri Dunlavy answered – that is why we as a board felt that we need your (the community) input.

4. Since the biggest expense is salary – have you asked if the teachers and administrators are willing to take a pay cut?

Answer – The teacher salaries are bargained and that would have to come from the teachers union through the bargaining process.

5. If the state is paying why is there a difference in the teacher's salaries?

Answer – Every school district is required by law to collectively bargain at the local district level and not from the state level. Collective bargaining began before the state controlled the entire general fund.

6. Is the CPF fund maxed out?

Answer – yes.

7. It was stated that about 66-76% of the property tax goes to Eastern Hancock schools.

8. If this goes through when would we get the money?

Answer – June 2011.

9. How are we today – until 2011 – do we have a cash balance that can be maintained until 2011?

Answer – Yes we have cash balance, without other unforeseen financial cuts this year from the state, we will be able to maintain an adequate cash balance.

10. How can we be assured that if this passes that the state won't capture this money?

Answer – By law the money must come to the school district.

11. If this doesn't pass at what point will our class sizes increase? How many 30-35 students can we handle in a class room? At what point would the school have to close?  
Answer – We are in this for the long haul for students and parents. At this time our class ratio is 16-1 on average.

12. What about consolidation – is this still coming from the Statehouse?

Answer – I don't foresee that day – we are ahead of the curve by not waiting and we are financially sound.

13. \$400,000 – is this seven year pay back and is this going to get us through the worst time?

Answer – This amount isn't set in stone the board could ask for more, the projection is difficult to make. Whatever the board does we ask for the maximum levy and if three years from now we don't need as much they could back off and lower it if the economy does pick up.

14. Can we get Grants that would go into the General Fund or some other way to get money into the General Fund?

Answer – There are a few possibilities but not many.

15. If other funds have excess revenue can that be transferred to General Fund?

Answer – No. The only fund that we can transfer from would be the CPF fund for some insurance, utilities and technology.

16. Can we transfer from the Transportation Fund?

Answer – No.

17. Have we looked into a four day school week?

Answer – No, the law states that the K-5 student must have a 5 hour school day and the high school/middle school student must have a 6 hour minimum school day and be in school 180 days. The legislature is looking into the school day.

Mr. Harris stated that we are looking into a 4 day work week over the summer. It would be a Friday, Saturday, Sunday campus shut down. This would save in utility cost.

18. Do we have a Rainy Day Fund?

Yes - \$100,000.

19. I question the budget revenue. The numbers on the graph you have presented tonight do not add up and are misleading. You need to be honest with us.

Answer – \$300,000 was over spent last year which is not shown on that graph.

20. Is the district close to paying off any bonds?

Answer – The middle school bond was refinanced last year to be paid off 2020-2021.

21. How would retirement affect the General Fund?

Answer – If teachers retire it is hard to predict how it would affect the fund. It depends somewhat on how many retire and how we replace those teachers.

22. More cuts coming and what have you done, if anything so far, besides cutting staff?  
Answer – Cuts have been made to supplies, materials and we hope utilities. We did not fill the high school/middle school PE teacher position or the elementary instructional assistant position from last year. This year we have 74-75 tuition paying students enrolled.

23. Total expenditures – how is your budget last year versus this year?  
Answer – 6.7 million for 2009 and 6 million for 2010.

24. What about the tax caps?  
Answer – The tax caps currently apply to some residents in Shirley. The tax caps do not mean that your local property tax will never increase.

25. A clarification of the student ratio with the 1-16 average number being misleading.  
The number in the classroom is 22-25 students.

26. Have there been any studies done on those people living in our district that are renting their places of residence and not having to pay taxes?  
Answer – No, but the home owner has to pay those taxes.

27. I sub in the school – I am amazed at the staff they are awesome. What good stewards of their school – I saw teachers sweeping last time I was here.

Additional considerations:

All day kindergarten – to charge at least part of the cost to the parent  
This year there are 50 full day students and 25 half day students.

Looking at field trips.

An email address – [forum@easternhancock.org](mailto:forum@easternhancock.org) has been set up for you to email any questions or comments you might have concerning the referendum.

Mrs. Dunlavy explained that the meeting tonight is for the board to know your feelings as a community before they decide yes or no to a tax referendum. She thanked those in attendance for their input prior to tomorrow's meeting. The board will meet tomorrow night, Wednesday May 27, 2010 in the High School Cafeteria at 7:00 P.M. She stated that there would be multiple meetings to come if the board decides to proceed with the tax referendum.

Mr. Harris thanked the community and the staff for their participation.