

Franklin City Schools



Arnol Elam, Superintendent

150 East Sixth Street • Franklin, OH 45005

Telephone 937-746-1699
Fax: 937-743-8620

Governor Misleads Ohio Residents

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To the parents, staff, and friends of Franklin City Schools:

School funding has been in the news this past week. I'd like to share my perspective and what it means to our district.

Governor John Kasich was untruthful last week, and in doing so, finally clarified that kids in poor school districts don't count.

Ohio's school funding model has been declared unconstitutional four times. The Kasich administration promised since his inauguration to develop a new funding system. On Thursday, Jan. 31, 2013, the governor told Ohio's school superintendents, "This is not hard to figure out: If you're poor, you're going to get more. If you are rich, you're going to get less. If you have gifted students, you're going to get more. If you have disabled students, you're going to get more." In his remarks, he promoted \$1.2 B in additional education funding.

The Kasich administration's school funding proposal released this week outlines a distribution nearly opposite to what's stated above, and actually includes only \$564 M in additional funding.

60% of Ohio's school districts are scheduled to receive NO additional funds including the poorest districts in Ohio's Appalachian counties. Neither do the poorest districts in Warren County. Our district, already reeling under an 8.75% reduction in state and federal funding, will receive no additional monies under Kasich's plan.

By every measure, we are the poorest district in Warren County. 44.66% of our students are in poverty. In contrast, Mason's figure is 6.25%. Our district's median household income is \$29,900. The county's highest is Springboro at \$61,271. Franklin has the highest percentage of students with a disability -- 16.1%. Despite this, Kasich's plan gives ADDITIONAL monies to Mason, Springboro and Kings.

In my five years at Franklin, I've seen firsthand how the state's educational policies discriminate against low wealth districts like ours -- from funding to district report cards to everything in between. This is the kind of disparity that exists among Ohio districts, and which the state has repeatedly refused to address.

The governor's funding plan, has taken from the children that attend the Franklin City Schools and gives to the rich, continues that discrimination. Three Warren County districts -- Mason, Springboro, and Kings -- are targeted for funding increases between 2.1 to 25.6%. Frankly, this is both unfair and unbelievable.

The state defends the "fairness" of their funding plan, saying that the money follows students. I spoke to our new State Rep. Ron Maag to see if he could help secure release of the funding proposal's calculations. Conveniently, the details are unavailable.

Unfortunately, the initial positive buzz based on the governor's Jan. 31 statement has created the impression that our unconstitutional school funding model has been "fixed." The state's untruthfulness has done irreparable damage to districts who have May ballot issues; those districts will now have a difficult time convincing voters that they still need additional funds.

On Jan. 28, State Rep Maag attended the Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce meeting. He said the Kasich administration's number one focus is job creation. Next week, I have to determine how to cut jobs to in order to meet the reductions in state funding. I don't know how to reconcile the cuts we must make with the administration's stated goals of creating jobs.

As parents and friends of our district, I hope you will do two things: First, please join me in an active campaign to ensure that Gov. Kasich and any legislator who supports him are not re-elected. Second, I hope you will contact our state officials and urge them to

ask Gov. Kasich to return to the drawing board on his school funding proposal. This is their contact information:

- State Rep. Ron Maag, 77 S. High St, 13th Floor, Columbus, OH 43215 (614) 644-6023
- State Senator Shannon Jones, Senate Building, 1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor, Columbus, OH 43215, (614) 466-9737

As always, I welcome your input, comments, and suggestions. Please contact me at aelam@franklincityschools.com or (937) 746-1699.

Arnol Elam
Superintendent, Franklin City Schools