

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Taxpayers should say no to increased spending

To the editor:

I have read with interest recent citizen comments against the school tax increase and agree completely.

How is it that the entire county government can continue to operate at \$.09/\$100 while the schools increase their tax rate by 3 percent, actually generating a reported \$2.3 million of additional revenue (6% above last year) to a new rate of \$.69/\$100.

This is 7 ½ times the amount for all county government services combined?

Here are some other facts Oldham County taxpayers may want to know:

– During the last school year, general fund revenues (those used for day to day school expenses including teacher salaries) exceeded expenditures by over \$1 million.

– The balance in the General Fund at end of last year was \$8.5 million which is four times the additional revenue expected to be generated by the tax increase. Why couldn't we use some of that in these hard economic times?

– The building fund has a very small balance, now, thanks mostly to excessive and unneeded expenditures to acquire 169 acres at a cost of \$5.2 million (over \$30,000 per acre) none of which has been used thus far. Over the last 12 years, I believe only 10 percent of the 363 acres acquired by the Board of Education has been put into use. Further, this low balance comes after a \$.05 (growth nickel) increase in the building fund passed six years ago.

– Over the last three years total enrollment in the Oldham County schools has grown by only 1.1 percent (120 students). From last year to this, the increase was

only 14 students (out of almost 12,000 total). Plans are underway to build a new elementary school in Brownsboro but these grades are at only 86 percent of capacity.

– This equates to available capacity of 800 students, more than the largest elementary school in the system. The entire school system is at 90 percent capacity which means space for 1,200 more students. At the current growth rate it will be 30 years before more capacity is needed. And yet they just keep spending more taxpayer dollars for a Brownsboro school master plan.

– Do you realize that over 2/3 of your local tax dollars, and much more at the state level, is controlled by a superintendent and five member school board, while less than 1/10 is overseen by two county judges, a county attorney and eight magistrates?

– While all this additional spending is going on, ACT scores of the most recent graduates dropped in all four categories and by 4 percent on the composite score and the district failed to meet five of 19 criteria in the state's recent "No Child

Letters policy

Letters to the editor are welcome and should be 400 words or less, and must include your signature, address and phone number (for verification). Letters on local issues will take top priority; all others will be published on a first-come basis as space allows. Letters listing specific businesses for sponsorship of local events and causes are best suited as paid advertisements. Letters considered to be libelous will not be printed. The Era reserves the right to limit frequent writers to one per month. The Era also reserves the right to edit letters for length and accuracy. Deadline for letters is 5 p.m. Thursday. Send to: Viewpoints, The Oldham Era, P.O. Box 5, La Grange, Ky. 40031, or e-mail to news@oldhamera.com.

Left Behind" findings.

Looks like we are spending way too much on real estate and buildings and not enough on instruction.

The bottom line is that we, as taxpayers, need to stand up and say no to increased spending at all levels of government, and become involved in the process. It is a sad commentary that both of the current school board members up for reelection in November are running unopposed.

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