

Dear Friend,

I am writing you today as a parent and taxpayer in the Westerville City School District. As I'm sure you are aware, the school district is struggling with their funding and financial situation, as are most school districts across Ohio.

As you are also aware, we are fortunate to be part of the Westerville City School District as it is one of the top school districts in the State of Ohio. It's the 9<sup>th</sup> largest district in the state and continues to develop well-rounded, high achieving students, athletes and teachers. We, as a district, continue to score high on the State of Ohio measures of school districts, while maintaining a cost per student ratio that is in the bottom quarter of the State...talk about value for the dollar!!

Over the past year, the school board has tried to secure the funding needed to maintain excellence in our district, but the levies have been defeated at the ballot box. I chalk up those defeats to a number of causes:

- Misinformed people who have been led to believe the school district builds extravagant buildings, pays inflated salaries and wastes money on the latest program du jour.
- People who are frustrated with the State funding (or lack thereof) of education and somehow want to "send a message" to the State to get their "attention".
- Individuals on fixed incomes, concerned over the continual eroding of their earning power through increases in healthcare, insurance and taxes.

All of these reasons have contributed to the failure of the past two levies and have both some validity and inaccuracy to them. However, I believe the number one reason for the situation we currently find ourselves in is **VOTER APATHY!**

Turnout during past elections, when levies were on the ballot, school board candidates and city council seats were up for election, voter turnout was in the 20-30% range. That, to me, is alarming! There are so many situations in our lives that we have little control over. However, decisions regarding who will run your city, oversee your school district, or educate your or your friend's/neighbor's children, why is it that so few of us make the "effort" to influence those key decisions? Exercising ones right to vote is the single most powerful thing a person can do as a citizen in our country and in our society.

That is why I am introducing a grass roots effort to encourage the vote and have the *majority* of voters in the Westerville City School District decide the future of their schools. The effort is called

## **MINE + 9**

The concept of Mine + 9 asks **you** to be accountable for your "yes" vote on election day (March 2<sup>nd</sup>) plus the vote of nine (9) of your friends, neighbors, relatives or coworkers. Then, each of the nine (9) people are asked to contact an additional nine (9) people and encourage their "yes" vote and give them a reminder call before election day and so on. This develops an information and support network. The goal of **Mine + 9** is to increase voter participation beyond its current level and *pass the levy on March 2<sup>nd</sup>*.

Now is the time to ensure that **you** have a voice over the quality of the education of the children in the Westerville City School District!

If you are interested in more information about the district, its finances or anything else, you can check the following sources:

- Westerville City School District website: [www.westerville.k12.oh.us/index.htm](http://www.westerville.k12.oh.us/index.htm)
- WeVOTE (voter information site): <http://wevote2003.tripod.com>
- Ohio Department of Education website: [www.ode.state.oh.us/](http://www.ode.state.oh.us/)

**Do not miss your opportunity to vote “Yes” for the March 2<sup>nd</sup> levy. Research the facts and exercise your right to vote. Your vote matters!**

**Do not let a minority of voters make all the decisions for this school district.**

I would like to include you on my “List of Nine” and encourage you to contact nine people that you know in the district. Please help continue this campaign by signing my pledge form and passing copies of the letter and pledge form on to nine other people who will in turn sign your pledge form. A print version of the form can be found on the WeVOTE website listed above.

Together, we can make a difference!

Thank you!

Sincerely,

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Mine + Nine Pledge List					
Put your name at the top, then list 9 registered Westerville City School District Voters who will also support the school levy.					
	Name	Address(optional)	Email(optional)	Phone(optional)	Permission to place name on WeVOTE Website
1.					Y / N
2.					Y / N
3.					Y / N
4.					Y / N
5.					Y / N
6.					Y / N
7.					Y / N
8.					Y / N
9.					Y / N
10.					Y / N

Please return Pledge lists to Betsy Binnig, 6014 Pimpernel Place, Westerville, OH 43082 or email Web Names to [bbinnig@yahoo.com](mailto:bbinnig@yahoo.com) by February 21, 2004.