

The Trail Blazer

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National Trail Local Schools

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Superintendent's Message:

Dear Parents, Students, and Community Members,

Hopefully this issue of our district newsletter finds you and your family getting off to a great start to the New Year! In this edition, we have provided you with important information we feel every district resident should be aware of for the coming year. We have outlined the district's need for the future renewal of the 2.2 mill five year emergency operating levy, supplied background information on property tax reappraisal, and updated you on the strategic planning process for each of our schools. It is only through a continuous flow of information that good school/community relations can be fostered. *Please remember to mark your calendar for the February 7, Community Council meeting at 6:30 p.m., when more information will be given and planning for the upcoming renewal levy will take place.* As always, if you have any questions regarding the operations of the school district, please feel free to personally contact me: Phone: 937-437-3333, X1101 or Email: ntsu_cm@swoca.net

Sincerely,
Clint Moore, Superintendent

Did You Know:

- The FFA Parliamentary Procedure Team qualified to compete in the state competition, and finished 11th in the state.
 - At our October Family Reading Night, we hosted 144 children, 101 adults, which represented 80 families
 - Our talented and gifted program has started a support group of parents and community members called SOAR (Supporting Our Academic Resources)
 - 2005 NT graduate, Jessica Slone, took a silver medal in the National FFA Extemporaneous Public Speaking Contest
- Starting in the 2006—2007 school year:
- High school aged home schooled students will be able to access National Trail High School curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular programs, and
 - NTHS will be piloting on-line classes such as: Advanced Placement Literature, computer technology and business.

District Financial Update:

Our latest 5-year forecast is providing information that every taxpayer needs to understand. Below is a summary of the **5-year forecast budgetary balances** without and with the 2.2 mill 5-year emergency operating levy tax dollars, which equates to \$225,000.00 annually. It should be noted that the total general fund revenue for NT runs between 8.6 and 9.1 million dollars for this same 5-year time period. It will be apparent to you why the renewal in 2006 of this five year operating levy is so crucial to the financial stability of the National Trail Local S.D.

WITHOUT

FY 2006	FY 2010
-\$(17,863.00)	-\$(568,341.00)

WITH

FY 2006	FY 2010
-\$(17,863.00)	\$219,159.00

The complete 5-year forecast can be found on the Ohio Department of Education website using the following content choices: www.ode.state.oh.us; Data tab; School Finance; Simulation, Foundation and Analysis; Related Links—Five Year Forecast by District; Enter “National Trail” as district name; choose report format; close username and password link—not necessary. If you have any questions after reviewing the information, please call either the district treasurer, Mr. Steve Dearth or superintendent, Dr. Clint Moore.

Property Tax and the 2005 Reappraisal:

As many of you are aware, Preble County residents will be receiving their property tax bills in February and escrow account notices in March. It is important for all taxpayers to realize that this past year (2005) was a year for property tax reappraisal by the Preble County Auditor’s office, and that residential property owners will most likely see an increase in their property taxes. On the other hand, agricultural property owners are likely to see a decrease in their property taxes due to a decrease in the value of farmland in Preble County.

You may be asking yourself, why would a local school district care that its taxpayers understand these changes in their property tax bills? It is very simple, school districts depend on their supporters to go to the ballot and fund schools based on local property taxes. The district leadership wants all of the National Trail taxpayers to be prepared and truly understand the impact of a property tax reappraisal on their school district’s annual operating budget. The better our taxpayers understand how the reappraisal process works, the more likely they will be able to understand why school districts are returning to the ballot so frequently.

The following is meant to provide a brief but informative summary of the impact the Preble County property tax reappraisal has on the operating budget of the National Trail Local S.D. Currently, the district is at the 20 mill floor (the lowest level of taxation the state will allow) with respect to voted local property tax. Additionally, in 1996, the voters approved a 5 mill five year emergency operating levy, which due to subsequent property tax reappraisals and House Bill 920 has been decreased currently to 2.2 effective mills. When the five year emergency levy was first passed in 1996, it was calculated to raise \$225,000.00, and state law (H.B. 920) requires that it be frozen at that amount. In essence, as property value increases the millage decreases, so the net change in taxes collected is \$0.00 (zero dollars). Therefore, the millage from the original 1996, 5 mill levy has been adjusted downward to its present 2.2 mill level. Another way of stating this school funding formula process is to simply, but emphatically, say that *the 2005 reappraisal will NOT increase the revenue being raised by the five year emergency levy for National Trail L.S.D.!*

Property Tax and the 2005 Reappraisal (cont.):

As the reader can see from the NTLS 5-year budget forecast, the 2.2 mills of operating funds are crucial to the district's fiscal health. At some point in 2006 we will be asking the taxpayers to vote to support the *renewal* of the five year emergency operating levy. It is important that the taxpayers understand that by renewing the 2.2 mill five year emergency operating levy they will NOT change the level at which they are currently being taxed with respect to their property. *Any increase in your 2006 property tax bill is directly attributable to the 2005 reappraisal process, and not any National Trail Local S.D. tax levy.*

In addition, we want our taxpayers to understand that in February, 2005 the voters approved a .75% increase in income tax to support the general operating fund budget. This *new* income tax will start being collected January, 2006. The school district will begin to receive this new revenue in the second half of this year and realize its total economic benefit by the second half of 2007. The 5-year forecast budgetary balance information shared earlier does reflect the new tax dollars to be collected from the .75% income tax. It has been the general consensus of the NT taxpayers that income tax is a more equitable or "fairer" form of taxation due to the large proportion of agricultural farmland in the district. Taxpayers feel income tax is a more realistic and accurate determination of a person's ability to pay taxes. The NT district leadership applauds the local support our taxpayers are giving to our educational process. We will continue to be good fiscal stewards of these funds, and seek to find ways to better manage district affairs in an attempt to improve teaching and learning for all of our students.

If you would like to schedule a personal appointment with the superintendent and treasurer to further discuss the issues surrounding taxation and school funding please call: 937-437-3333, X1101

High Schools That Work/Making Middle Grades Work:

National Trail High School is in its third year of participating in the High Schools That Work (HSTW) strategic planning process. The goal of the process is to provide a rigorous academic and career/technical studies for students so they can achieve at high levels. It is important that every student that graduates from National Trail High School is prepared for further study and has the credentials needed to get a good job.

National Trail Middle School is in its first year of participating in the Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW) strategic planning process. The mission of the process is to prepare all students for success in a rigorous high school curriculum, followed by graduation. The staff of the middle school will be evaluating the current program and setting goals so all middle school students will achieve at a higher level.

Below are the 10 guiding principles of HSTW/MMGW:

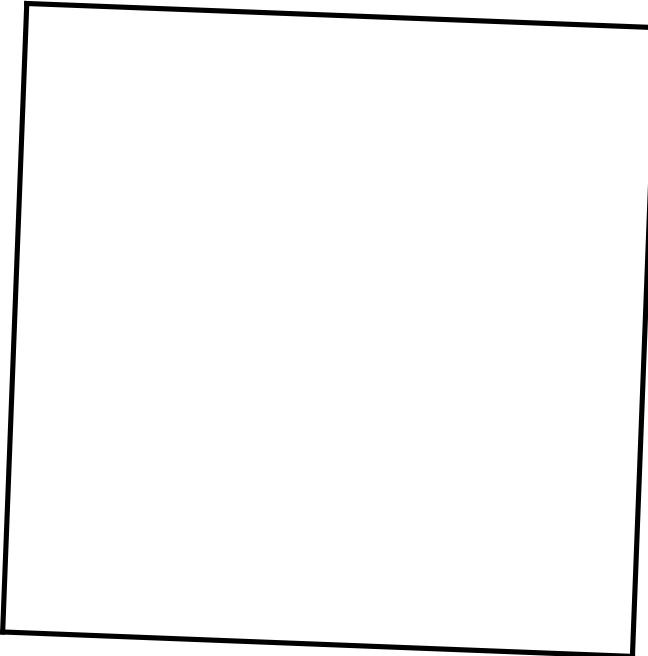
- High expectations for all
 - Challenging program of study
 - Rigorous career-technical studies
 - Rigorous academic studies
 - Relevant work-based learning
 - Students actively engaged
 - Teachers working together
 - Extra time and extra help
 - Comprehensive guidance and advisement
 - Keeping score with data
-

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21st Century**

**Come visit us on the
web: www.nationaltrail.k12.oh.us**



Elementary Continuous Improvement Plan:

A Continuous Improvement Leadership Team, CILT, consisting of nine teachers, one guidance counselor, one speech-language pathologist, one ESC Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development, and one principal was formed after attending Ohio Department of Education's Leadership for Results workshop in January 2005. The CILT has collaborated with the entire building faculty to reach consensus for developing a Continuous Improvement Plan focused on improving student achievement in reading, kindergarten through fourth grade. Using research based group processes and local district data, the entire staff participated in joint decision making activities to develop a continuous improvement plan that is reflective of the building's needs. The elementary staff determined that improved achievement in reading and language arts through collectively learning about research-based best practices and cross grade level collaboration was a common goal. Several programs have resulted from the faculty's work in implementing the Elementary CIP. They include the implementation of the **Blazer Learning Block** to provide a school wide intervention program. Restructuring the Intervention Assistance Team process to the **Blazer Achievement Team** to provide a structured method of addressing the needs of at-risk learners. It provides documentation of efforts to meet individual learner needs and promotes collaboration among all stakeholders (student, parents, & teachers). The process involves parents when the teacher begins to note concerns. Currently the faculty is developing a **school wide vocabulary list** of grade-level specific vocabulary terms derived from Ohio's Academic Content Standards in each core content area that provides consistency from teacher to teacher, from subject to subject, and grade level to grade level. The Continuous Improvement Plan has been a positive experience and has provided the Elementary Faculty with direction to improve the instruction that they provide their students!