Hello Everyone,

Although I’m hesitant to use such a well-worn cliché, it truly is remarkable how time seems to fly. More than six weeks have passed since the school year began, yet it feels like only yesterday we were enthusiastically welcoming our students back from summer break. On that sunny day back in September, I was fortunate enough to watch the kindergartners walk wide-eyed down our halls as they struggled beneath the weight of their backpacks and took the first steps toward becoming what it is they want to be when they grow up. Indeed, some three decades ago, I took those same steps within these very hallways. Then as now, I was blessed both with a staff that works tirelessly to ensure Carney students succeed and a surrounding community that takes great pride in supporting and assisting its school in achieving these ends. In turn, I’m writing you today not only to provide information concerning our school’s upcoming ballot proposal, but to sincerely thank you all for helping me attain a position where I’m able to do so. It may very well take the rest of my career to properly repay our community for all I’ve been given, but it’s a span of time I foresee as passing rather quickly.

Currently, one of my most pressing duties as Superintendent is to inform the public of the specifics regarding the operating fund initiative that Carney school has placed upon the ballot for the November 5th election. Back in 1994, our school successfully passed a 20-year operating-fund proposal. This proposal, which is set to expire at the end of this, the 2013-14 school year, allowed us to levy an 18-mill tax—the maximum allowable amount—on non-homestead property owners. Each year, when the state awards our school its per-pupil funding, it essentially assumes that we are in fact collecting this 18-mill levy—even if our authority to do so has expired. In other words, our state funding is assumed to be supplemental to this 18-mill levy, even if these monies haven’t been collected. If the school loses the authority to assess this levy, the state will not make up the difference and we suffer a significant decrease—approximately $33,000 annually--in overall funding. This is money the school relies upon to conduct its day-to-day operations.

To complicate matters, there is what is known as a Headlee Reduction, which slowly erodes the number of mills we collect from non-homestead property owners. For instance, whereas in 1994 we were collecting an 18 mill levy, this year we are only levying 17.429 mills due to the Headlee Reduction. This November, in seeking to renew its operating fund for an additional 20 years, Carney School **is not** asking voters to reinstate the 18 mill levy; rather, we only seek to renew our authority to levy the present rate of 17.429 mills. This is, we feel, the most fiscally conservative route we can take, and it’s one that will help us continue to serve our students without putting any additional financial burden on the local community.

Please bear in mind, **this levy is only assessed on non-homestead properties, which means that all properties connected to a primary residence (including the primary residence itself) are completely exempted from this collection.** In other words, those of you with property attached to your primary residence are exempted from paying this levy on those properties. Rather, it exclusively applies to businesses and properties that are separate from a primary residence. Anyone with questions regarding whether or not a property qualifies for an exemption—as nearly 62% of properties within our township do—is kindly urged to call Peggy Shroud at the Menominee County Equalization Department at 906-863-2683.

The complexities of school finance don’t often translate well to printed words, so I heartily thank you all for taking the time to read this letter. If any part of this proposal remains unclear, please don’t hesitate to contact me here in the office, either in person (6 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday) by phone (906-639-2171) or via email (acocco@cnps.k12.mi.us). I would be more than happy to address any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Adam Cocco

Interim Superintendent

Carney-Nadeau Public School