

Leadership Among Variables

Earlier this month, the Dover Board of Education took unprecedented action to remove Issue 3 from the ballot. This decision was based on notification from the County Auditor's office that as a result of the triennial update, Dover City Schools will receive an estimated additional \$800,000 in property tax. These additional funds will certainly impact our students, as it will have a positive impact on our bottom line.

As ballots are already printed and early voting started, voters will still see Issue 3 when they go to the polls. The Board of Elections will post signs at the polling places that Issue 3 has been withdrawn from the ballot and the votes will not be counted.

The question now is how this increase in revenue changes our long-term financial outlook. The emergency operating levy was to generate \$2.6 million annually for the district's general fund. This increase in local tax revenue is significant, but does not cover the entire amount. As this increase was unexpected, Treasurer Andrew Bache will work with the county auditor to get final amounts and then adjust the district's five-year forecast to reflect that amount.

As school leaders, we are tasked with many difficult decisions. When the Board of Education voted in July to place the November 5 levy on the ballot, the forecast showed that it would require an additional 6.9 mill operating levy to achieve financial stability. We do not take asking for additional tax dollars lightly and must make these decisions based on the information available at the time.

As we are pleased to have this additional revenue and will work to continue to operate in a financially efficient manner, we are also thankful for the time this gives us to consider additional options. The educational programs and opportunities that we offer students are designed to develop our children into well-rounded adults. Each is important to the overall mission of our schools.

We certainly welcome this revenue, but the need for additional revenue does not go away, as this will only cover a third of what the district was seeking through the operating levy. We pledge to continue having meaningful conversations with our stakeholders about the future of our schools.

Each day school leaders work to make the best decisions we can with the information we have at the time. Personally, I also live by the words of Maya Angelou, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."