

City of Akron, Ohio  
Donald L. Plusquellic, Mayor  
An Open Letter to the Community  
November 7, Issue 6 is the Only Viable Option for Akron

In talking to citizens throughout our city about Issue 6, I've learned there are many misconceptions and misdirected anger at our public schools.

The time has come for us to stop making our children pay for the mistakes of grownups. Nowhere does this hit closer to home than here in Ohio where state lawmakers have made inept decisions, shown incompetent leadership and demonstrated a complete lack of interest for more than a decade. State lawmakers have put our public school system on life support.

If you're angry about it, I'm with you. But don't make our children pay for it.

Next Tuesday, you have a decision to make for our children. Issue 6 is about children and their future. Issue 6 is about Akron's workforce and economy. Issue 6 is about Akron's future.

When school budgets are slashed, children are the ones who have to be jammed into classrooms and the ones who lose precious opportunities because programs that could enrich their lives are eliminated. That hurts our community going forward. Voting against Issue 6 is voting against children, not voting against teachers, administrators or other adults whose lives will go on.

I have spent the last two years with other Ohio mayors and education leaders trying to accomplish what some of our elected state legislators have refused to do. I pledge to do everything in my power to bring before voters a new funding method for our schools that helps provide relief for property-tax payers.

Change in school funding is coming in the future, but today our children need Issue 6 to have a chance in life. For now, Issue 6 is the only viable option for Akron Public Schools.

I want to share with the community at large some critical facts that respond to questions I have heard as I work for Issue 6 and Akron's ability to compete in the future. Think about them before you vote:

Public auditors have proven that all Ohio Lottery profits do go to our schools. The problem is they cover only 4% of the total cost of educating Ohio's children.

Schools must come back to voters every four or five years repeatedly because of the antiquated state funding system. State lawmakers set it up. We are working to change it. It is neither the city's nor the schools' fault and certainly not the children's. In fact, Akron schools have done a very good job managing money.

Of all major school districts in Ohio, the Akron Public Schools system spends the lowest percentage of its budget on administrative costs. That means more of our dollars actually go into the classroom.

Our schools have made significant progress in improving test scores, while dealing with challenging societal problems.

For this city to have any hope of attracting and retaining companies with good jobs in the future, we must have a well educated, well-trained work force.

I have met personally with many of you over the past months, listening to your concerns, your questions. I understand that some of our residents living on a fixed income are having a difficult time. That is why I have spent so much of my time trying to fix this problem.

In the meantime, if you're angry with the state of Ohio's public education system, vote against those in Columbus who are responsible for the mess we're in. Please don't direct it at the children. They need Issue 6 for their future, and so does Akron. Please vote for Issue 6.