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### LETTERS TO CHAGRIN SOLON SUN

## Solon Schools play key role in community, deserve levy passage

When considering the upcoming Solon School levy, we ask that you consider the broader, significant impact that the schools have on our community and future.

By now, we hope that everyone in the community is aware of the academic excellence achieved by our students and schools. In fact, Money Magazine recognized Solon as one of the "Top 25 Best Places to Live" in its 2009 annual rankings. To determine its rankings, Money Magazine included, among other things, home values and tax rates. Solon's schools, however, received special recognition. According to the magazine, "Solon's biggest draw by far is its exceptional school system" (Money Magazine, August 2009).

What many people in the community don't realize is

that the school district excels in more than the traditional "three R's". What sets Solon apart from other school districts are the wide range of opportunities the schools provide to help our children grow and learn valuable lessons outside the classroom. These experiences provide opportunities for our children to "find" themselves and build the confidence that prove invaluable after graduation as they embark to become productive members of society.

I suggest you attend one of the many outstanding school programs such as an orchestra concert, a school play, a Music in Motion or Science Olympiad competition, a Future Problem Solvers' event (the list is too long to continue). You will observe firsthand the skills, confidence, effort, dedication and talent that

sets the students of Solon Schools apart from students of other school districts. While many of these students may not make a career in these endeavors, the lessons and experiences instilled through participation in these programs provide a valuable foundation for future success.

While the efforts displayed by the students are impressive, we are equally impressed by the dedication and commitment of Solon teachers to our students and the community. Many of the teachers attend, support and participate in programs outside their formal teaching responsibilities. We can testify Solon teachers have been valuable role models and mentors to our three children, helping them achieve both inside and outside the classroom.

Unfortunately, changes by the Ohio State Legislature

have reduced the amount of funding each Ohio school district receives. Despite the Solon School's recent budget cuts and cost reductions, additional funding is necessary to maintain the current level of services and activities. As a result, Solon residents must step in to replace the loss in school funding in order to maintain the high level of standards and excellence our schools have achieved.

The significance of our schools to our children and our community's future is too important not to support through passage of the levy. Our schools set Solon apart from other communities and are the reason why people move to our city. Please cast your vote in support of the Solon School levy on May 4.

**Michael and Anne Port**  
Solon

### LETTERS TO CHAGRIN SOLON SUN

## No more bucks for Solon school levy means the buck stops here

The buck stops here at my wallet because there are no more bucks.

I see the Solon school board has put a 6.9 mill tax levy on the ballot in the May election. Why is the school system going broke? Poor state planning is a good guess along with a fiscal policy that is doomed to failure.

First of all, the state is contributing less money to our schools because they, too, are going broke. Unfortunately a few years ago, in their suspect wisdom, the Legislature voted to phase out the Tangible Personal Property Tax on business. When the proceeds of that tax are gone, who does that leave to supply the difference? You guessed it, we the long suffering local taxpayers.

Second, a great many years ago, the Legislature passed a law giving all Ohio teachers an automatic pay increase for each additional year of their service and for advancement toward high degrees. This has always been an increase in salaries without the benefit of input from the local voters.

And even though the Solon school board will be laying off teachers whether the levy passes or fails, those remaining will be getting pay raises. That doesn't seem fair.

Third, back in the late 1990s the Ohio Supreme Court rules that using property tax to pay for schools was unconstitutional. In all that time the Ohio Legislature has not seriously addressed the issue and we still use property tax to pay for schools.

Fourth, and this comes as no surprise to anyone, the economy has tanked and most people's net worth has gone down while the cost of just about everything else has gone up.

Frankly, unlike governmental entities, I have to live within my means and cannot pass along my expenses to my neighbors. Therefore, as there are no more bucks for this school levy, the buck definitely stops here.

**Joseph Artale**  
Solon