

Lake-Lehman School Board candidates' responses to questions

The Dallas Post asked three questions of each candidate for seats on the Lake-Lehman School Board. Their responses follow.

Harold Cornell Jr., a candidate in Region 2 and Robert Peron, who is running in Region 3, did not respond to requests for interviews.

Do you feel the district does an adequate job managing its budget?

Mark Kornoski/Region 1: "Because I have not been on the board and haven't been privy to that information, I can only say that I think that they've done pretty well ... although more money should be spent toward technology."

Chuck Boytin/Region 2: "Yes, we do our best to balance what is coming in, and what we can afford to do for students, without burdening taxpayers anymore."

Joseph Kapitula/Region 3: "We try to, the more money that comes in, the more they spend though. They never want to cut the fat ... and there is a lot of trimming to do."

Edwin Kern/Region 2: "Excellent job"

Michelle Maher-Coombs/Region 1: "Yes, I think we do. Because of the process, Mrs. Williams keeps a tight rein, which is good."

James Welby/Region 2: "There is always room for improvement."

Jeffrey Pauley/Region 1: "Yeah, but we have a hard budget to manage ... the general reserve is down to almost nothing, which puts us in a tight spot."

Lois Kopcha/Region 1: "There isn't anywhere to cut down as you're looking at the tentative budget, so we are doing the best we can."

Do you feel extra-curricular activities outside of sports receive sufficient funding and recognition?

Mark Kornoski/Region 1: "Yes, definitely sufficient recognition. Although I'm not sure about funding because I haven't seen the information/numbers."

Chuck Boytin/Region 2: "No they don't. A clear example of this is three years ago a group of Lake-Lehman students won National History Competition. We wanted to have their pictures taken and hung with sports photos in the lobby. To this day, I'm unsure of any attempt made to even take the picture. Another example is the band. The school doesn't publicize and recognize these students as well as they should."

Taxes stable in L-L tentative budget

Staff report

LEHMAN TWP. — No millage increase is projected for the 2003-04 Lake-Lehman School District budget year.

Kathleen Williams presented a very introductory budget at Tuesday night's work session. The School Board is expected to approve a tentative budget during its May 21 regular meeting.

The budget as presented includes a "wish list" of items, Williams said. Among the items are "an awful lot" of computers. As it stands, the equipment amount — that encompasses technology requests — will increase 218.52 percent over last

Joseph Kapitula/Region 3: "No. There is more attention paid to sports than anything. Honor roll students' pictures should be in the hallway, instead of sports."

Edwin Kern/Region 2: "Sports get a lot of attention, but other activities do get adequate. They're about even."

Michelle Maher-Coombs/Region 1: "Yes they do."

James Welby/Region 2: "I couldn't say. I don't know the allocation percentages for funding. I'd really need to see to make a fair estimate."

Jeffrey Pauley/Region 1: "They could be more evenly balanced."

Lois Kopcha/Region 1: "We're discussing expanding the band ... should pay more attention to the music program... it's what's giving the school name recognition. Music teaches discipline."

Do you support Gov. Rendell's plan to shift the school tax burden from property to income tax?

Mark Kornoski/Region 1: "Yes."

Chuck Boytin/Region 2: "Rendell's plan hasn't been spelled out yet. We do need to balance the two. We cannot burden the entire tax on just property owners ... but it really needs to be spelled out better."

Joseph Kapitula/Region 3: "Yes, it's the only fair way to do it ... if you're not making money, how can you pay school taxes. It's (the present system) too much of a burden on seniors and young people just starting out."

Edwin Kern/Region 2: "I've been a supporter of a plan like his for along time. It's the only fair way. Legislatures need to get on the stick — it's the only fair way."

Michelle Maher-Coombs/Region 1: "Not sure yet, I don't have a clear understanding. Rendell hasn't even given a final budget ... there have been reports that this could cost more...I need to see the full plan to know if I could support it or not."

James Welby/Region 2: "I'd like to look at other avenues, such as the Homestead Act, before committing. We do need to take all the burden off homeowners and more evenly distribute to all people with school children."

Jeffrey Pauley/Region 1: "I haven't seen it all yet. I'm still waiting to see the state budget, to see what Rendell's budget looks like. For example, slot machines could bring in additional money. We need to wait and see."

Lois Kopcha/Region 1: "It depends on what he comes up with ... we need more definite answers. Homeowners carrying the weight is an outdated way to tax, in the past it was the wealthy that owned homes, it's not that way today. It puts a large burden on the young and senior citizens."

Do you feel the district has a plan to help students succeed in a changing world?

Mark Kornoski/Region 1: "We need to get more into technology, give the students more tools for a better education. Lehman is behind, and we need to give students more technology, purchase new computers and programs — for example, update obsolete computers in elementary schools."

Chuck Boytin/Region 2: "We're doing something right, our students are doing well. It is adequate right now, but we must continue to grow. We need to continue to hire the right people, and keep politics out of hiring."

Joseph Kapitula/Region 3: "Yes, our new principal is going to do a wonderful job, he has big plans. You are going to see big changes out there in the future."

Edwin Kern/Region 2: "Our students are not totally prepared for college, and there are some problems that need to be straightened out. I know what these problems are and how to solve them."

Michelle Maher-Coombs/Region 1: "Yes, we have a plan ... we have a technology plan and Five Year Curriculum Plan. We are not there yet, but we're off to a good start. We need to keep kids one step ahead of others, while complying with all mandates."

James Welby/Region 2: "I think we are on our way. The tools are there, they have to be fine-tuned."

Jeffrey Pauley/Region 1: "We need to focus on the curriculum, to make students want to learn by high school. Technologies give students education for tomorrow's world, not for today."

Lois Kopcha/Region 1: "For the last eight years I've said that the school needs to incorporate technology ... not just computers. Businesses say they need better technological education to bring more jobs into the area ... it's the way that the world is changing ... we need to prepare students for the work force, so that students don't need extra schooling, why can't they learn enough in high school? We need to find out what kids need, they are smart enough to learn it, if we give them the opportunity."

year, bringing the total to \$232,520.

Lake-Lehman is expected to begin the upcoming budget year with a fund balance of just more than \$1.6 million. Williams estimated revenues to total \$19,129,746 and expenditures to reach \$20,622,156, which would drain the district's fund balance to \$108,725.

Major expenditures for the district include an approximate \$284,273 (3.77 percent) increase to the retirement fund and a health insurance increase of \$195,405 (10.6 percent). It is not known how much the state will provide in funding.

Williams said she based her

figures on no tax increase because the board has previously told her it would not support a millage increase as long as there was money in the district fund balance. A mill is a \$1 tax on every \$1,000 of assessed property value.

If the district does not raise its taxes, this will be the sixth consecutive year its Luzerne County taxpayers pay 221 mills. The rate for the Wyoming County municipality of Noxen is 42 mills.

Because of primary elections, Lake-Lehman will hold its regular meeting at 7 p.m. May 21 in the Lehman-Jackson Elementary School music room.

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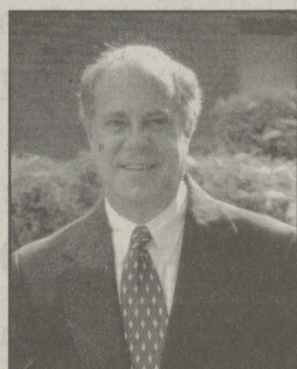
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