

Avenue  
Lakewood OH 44107  
April 2010

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ Avenue Neighbor,

I write today to urge you to vote **FOR the Lakewood City Schools operating levy (Issue 6) on May 4.**

The Board and administration of the Lakewood Schools have made stretching our tax dollars the highest priority, and have achieved the incredible feat of going **eight years** without an operating levy, five years longer than originally promised. (Ohio's school funding formula normally forces districts to add levies every two-three years.) Meanwhile the Lakewood Schools have consistently scored well against increasingly difficult state standards and are now rated "Excellent." This has happened despite the challenges that come with an especially varied demographic mix of students.

*Business Week* magazine recently gave Lakewood the top spot in Ohio in its 2010 "Best Places to Raise Your Kids"; "great schools" was a major reason. For years Lakewood has produced a disproportionately high number of National Merit Finalist and Semifinalists, Advanced Placement Scholars, and students eligible to take college coursework before even leaving high school! Simultaneously, the Lakewood Schools offer a wide range of high-caliber music and athletic programs that we know are so critical in developing the kinds of future neighbors we want in our city.

The recession, despite the district's great effort to stretch its dollars, has put the Lakewood City Schools in a critical situation. The 6.9 mill operating levy is not enough to prevent significant staffing and budget cuts already in progress. If this levy fails, programming and staffing cuts will be huge, classroom size will suffer and the Lakewood Schools will be set back for many, many years. Even children who are newborns today would pay a huge price in lost educational opportunity and quality.

This levy is not just about the Lakewood Schools, but about the quality of life for all of us who live here in Lakewood. The health of our schools directly determines who chooses to live here and who chooses to leave. It affects our sense of community and directly affects our property values. The fact that Mayor Ed FitzGerald and Councilman Mike Summers are co-chairing the levy campaign underscores that this levy is about life in Lakewood, not just its schools.

I encourage you to go to [www.lakewoodchildren.org](http://www.lakewoodchildren.org) where you can find a short video presentation and a list of frequently asked questions about the district and levy. Regardless of your decision, I thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

(Please note that we are personally paying for all expenses incurred for this mailing.)