

Good evening,

My name is Jason Haynes and I have been a resident of Jacksonville since I came as student to Illinois College in 2005 (save for a few years while I was away getting my master's degree).

I'd like to begin by saying that I appreciate the transparency that has been shown by Superintendent Ptacek regarding the processes behind the tax levies. That being said, while I can appreciate the that the proposed 10% increase in the district's levy will not increase individual property owner's taxes by 10%, what I have yet to see is a reason why the levy must increase by 10%. The superintendent has explained that the board must vote in such a way to capture as much revenue as possible from new properties, but that does not adequately explain the why. Why does the district need to extend the maximum tax levy that is allowable under the law? Will teachers be receiving pay increases? Will more paraprofessionals be hired? Are there investments being made to enhance curriculums? The only legitimate reason I have heard is that there will be an increased need for special education in the district in the coming years, but in an environment where population is declining in a district that has also closed multiple schools in the past 25 years, it seems to be that more time should be spent finding efficiencies, rather than continually increasing the tax burden on a shrinking community.

At a time when at both the state and federal levels, the answer has been consistently to just collect more taxes, rather than fulfilling the fiduciary responsibilities of public servants, I would encourage the superintendent and the board to engage in the admittedly difficult process of determining what is budgetarily necessary, rather than what is permissible under the law.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Haynes