

November 04, 2024

Saint Maries School Levy 2024

The elected Benewah County Republican Central Committee (BCRCC) has recommended a vote NO on the St. Maries School district (SMSD 41) proposed levy 2024.

Article IX, **SECTION 1. LEGISLATURE TO ESTABLISH SYSTEM OF FREE SCHOOLS.** The stability of a republican form of government depending mainly upon the intelligence of the people, it shall be the duty of the legislature of Idaho, to establish and maintain a general, uniform and thorough system of public, free common schools.

BCRCC believes that SMSD 41 has not demonstrated that more funding has given us better outcomes as it relates to Article IX, Section 1 of our State constitution.

Families in Benewah County continue to move their children from SMSD to home/private schooling options, further reducing attendance and therefore funding as well. This should serve as a red flag.

BCRCC believes that it is an appropriate assumption that the large amounts of grant funding (we all fund those grants as well out of tax dollars) received this past year should go a long way towards funding capital building projects, as well as needed building upgrades and renovations. The natural assumption should be more funds available for other educational needs from the general fund.

BCRCC believes SMSD 41 should tighten its regular budget expenditures to reflect what most tax payers in this county have done in their own homes and businesses. Some property owners, such as the Agricultural sector, have experienced an estimated 25% reduction in net income in this year alone.

Maintaining school buses (most of which don't have the mileage our own private vehicles do) rather than purchasing new ones at approximately \$145 K and ending dues to IBSA would be great places to start the budget reductions.

We believe the SMSD 41 board and administration need to take very seriously the precarious position public schools are in.

Some unpleasant and perhaps unpopular spending cuts need to take place so that the SMSD can balance their budget without running perpetual levy's.

We feel the current board has taken some positive steps toward school safety, to improve contract language and to improve the learning environment, we feel much more needs to take place to fulfill the mandate in Article IX, Section 1 of our State Constitution.

Respectfully,

Mike Stoltey BCRCC Chair