



News Release

**Parma Area Community
Leadership Group**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AREA MAYORS JOIN FORCES FOR PARMA
SCHOOL LEVIES APPROVAL**

In an unprecedented move, the mayors of Parma, Parma Heights and Seven Hills have joined forces to urge voters to approve of the two Parma School District levies that will appear on the May 4th ballot. The mayors will hold a joint news conference at 10 a.m. on March 25 at Normandy High School. Issue 9 is a renewal levy costing taxpayers no additional money. Issue 10 is a 10-year, 5.5 mil levy that would cost \$14.00 a month for the owner of a \$100,000 home.

“We are telling the voters in our communities that the time has come to stand up and be counted,” said Parma Mayor Dean DePiero. “Our school district is heading into state control if we don’t pass these levies, and we cannot allow that to happen. The clock is ticking, and we’re running out of time to fix what has quickly become a community-wide crisis.”

The mayors are stressing the need for residents in their three cities to vote “yes” for the school levies in order for families to build their futures on quality education. The message at the news conference will be empowering the stakeholders – families, neighbors, young adults and businesses – to take control of their own destiny. The Ohio Department of Education has placed the district under “fiscal watch” since it cannot provide a balanced five-year budget forecast.

“The bleeding has to stop,” said Parma Heights Mayor Michael Byrne. “Even with the \$15.4 million in cuts already made over the last two years, the passage of both of these levies is needed just to stabilize the district and prevent it from falling into state receivership. Further cost-cutting measures will still be necessary to keep the district solvent but, with passage of the levies, quality education for the children of Parma Heights, Parma, and Seven Hills will be assured. We cannot even consider the alternative.”

The mayors will also discuss the impact of a “no” vote – deteriorating property values, state control of the Parma City School District and a perpetual brain drain as the next generation makes a conscious decision to move out of the area.

“This is a sad state of affairs,” said Seven Hills Mayor David Bentkowski. “Let’s face it – families will decide to live and work somewhere else if we cannot get our act together and demonstrate that we value the tools we were given for attaining a good education. This has a direct impact on the quality of life in our cities. A vote against our school levies is a vote against the sustainability of our communities.”

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