passed 7-0-1 (wisler abstained)
Satterfield left mtg. (recused)

RESOLUTION 10-15

IN SUPPORT OF THE MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION'S FUNDING REFERENDUM

WHEREAS, two years ago, the State of Indiana changed its public school-funding formula to shift schools' reliance from property tax to income and sales tax for general fund revenue; and

WHEREAS, while the State increased the sales tax to offset new limits on property taxes and removed property tax support for school general funds, sales tax is an unstable source of revenue even in the best of economic times and is a regressive measure that disproportionately burdens low-income residents; and

WHEREAS, due to the economic recession, both sales and income tax revenue have declined and become-ever more unreliable, leading the State to cut funding to public school districts' general funds; and

WHEREAS, At the Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC), 91 percent of general fund revenue is used to pay teachers, other certified staff and personnel; and

WHEREAS, the State cut funding to MCCSC by $2.9 million in December 2009; this severe cut came at a time when MCCSC was already suffering a budget shortfall due to reduced enrollments and increased costs in other areas – in all, MCCSC was left with a total budget deficit of $5.8 million; and

WHEREAS, the consequences of such budget cuts have been both devastating and systemic; to compensate for the shortfall and maintain its statutory requirement to have a balanced budget, MCCSC has:

- cut 71 teaching and teaching-related positions; and
- increased class size; and
- closed its only alternative school -- Aurora Alternative High School; and
- discontinued its summer school program; and
- eliminated funding for coordinators of extracurricular activities; while funding for such activities was restored by 90% due to the extraordinary fundraising efforts by the Foundation of Monroe County Community Schools and the generosity of the community, this was a one-time heroic fund-raising effort unlikely to be repeated; and
- made many other educational programming cuts; and

WHEREAS, public education has a direct impact on the quality of life in Bloomington:

- a good public school system provides opportunity for *all* of its students to thrive and excel, these students are more likely to grow up to be residents who are gainfully employed, are engaged in the community and contribute to the common good; and
- a quality school system is an important economic development tool – companies often look to the success of a local school corporation in deciding whether to retain or site their businesses in our community; and
- the quality of our public schools is strongly linked to public safety and the fiscal health of the community – students who are products of struggling schools are more likely to ultimately become dependent on social services for daily survival; similarly, these students are more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system. Both dependency on social services and involvement with the criminal justice system cost the community significant amounts of money; and

WHEREAS, As John Dewey said, "What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children;" nearly all Bloomingtonians are products of a school system that was paid for by a previous generation and it is our turn to take care of our community's children; and

WHEREAS, while the distribution of federal stimulus funds approved by the United States Congress in August 2010 includes $207 million to support public schools in the State of Indiana, these funds have not been distributed by the State government (nor has a distribution formula been released); and

WHEREAS, it is likely that said stimulus funds will supplant, rather than supplement, State funding, and will be a one-time funding increase; and

WHEREAS, MCCSC has sponsored a referendum question, which will appear on the election ballot of all residents of the Corporation in Fall 2010; and

WHEREAS, the referendum question asks for an increase in the property tax rate for all residents within the Corporation limits not to exceed 14.02 cents ($0.1402) on each one hundred dollars ($100) of net assessed valuation for the six calendar years immediately following the referendum's passage; based on the average Monroe County home value of $156,000, and taking into account the standard deductions, the tax increase would translate into less than $100 per year; and

WHEREAS, if passed, the additional property tax assessment requested by MCCSC would not be calculated as part of the taxes that are subject to the "cap" placed on property taxes by the Indiana General Assembly in 2008; and

WHEREAS, if passed, the referendum would raise up to approximately $7.5 million annually for the next six years and will allow the school system to restore vital teaching positions, improve student-teacher ratios and educational services; and

WHEREAS, without the referendum, MCCSC will face further teacher layoffs, even more crowded classrooms and further slashing of educational services; such reduced services will translate into students whose needs are unmet or underserved and a community whose quality of life is compromised;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, MONROE COUNTY, INDIANA, THAT:

SECTION I. The Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Indiana supports the MCCSC funding referendum, in the Fall 2010 election, finding that said referendum fosters the health, welfare and safety of Bloomington residents.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 6th day of OCTOBER, 2010.

Isabel Piedmont-Smith

ISABEL PIEDMONT-SMITH, President
Bloomington Common Council

ATTEST:

Regina Moore

REGINA MOORE, Clerk
City of Bloomington

PRESENTED by me to the Mayor of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 7th day of OCTOBER, 2010.

Regina Moore

REGINA MOORE, Clerk
City of Bloomington

SIGNED and APPROVED by me upon this 7TH day of OCTOBER, 2010.

MARK KRUZAN, Mayor
City of Bloomington

SYNOPSIS

This resolution is sponsored by Councilmembers Piedmont-Smith, Sandberg, Mayer, Sturbaum, Rollo and Ruff and expresses support for the Monroe County School Corporation's funding referendum in the Fall 2010 election. The resolution points out that the well being of the community is closely tied to the quality of our public schools. Quality schools are a key component of economic development, make for safer communities, save residents money in the long run and produce future residents who contribute to the collective community good. Since the State of Indiana shifted its public school funding in 2008 from reliance on property tax to reliance on sales and income tax, the Corporation has suffered significant funding cuts and has had to eliminate teaching positions and vital educational services – cuts that threaten the vibrancy of the Corporation. To restore teachers to the classroom and many critical educational services, the referendum will levy a tax rate increase of approximately 14 cents per $100 of net assessed valuation for the six years immediately following the referendum's passage.

Note: This resolution was revised before its consideration at the Council meeting on October 6, 2010 to include Councilmember Ruff as a sponsor.

Electronically
Legal
MCCSC - Dzink@mccsc.edu
Steering Committee

Paper
CA/CA 2
clerk 2