

STATEMENT TO THE URBANDALE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Established in 1921, the Polk Des-Moines Taxpayers Association is a private, non-profit research organization that serves as an independent, non-political source of information regarding local government and its policies. Good government is the business of every citizen. The Association promotes efficient and economical local government and works to promote taxpayer awareness.

The Urbandale Community School District has published a maximum tax rate of \$17.64/\$1000 up \$1.37 from the current \$16.26/\$1000. The Association members recognize the fact that the across-the-board cut in State funding lowered anticipated revenues for the current year by \$1.5 million. This levy rate increase will generate an additional \$1.9 million in property tax revenue for the District. In addition, the administration has proposed \$1 million in on-going spending reductions. Based on the shortfall in State revenue which pushed tax increases down to the local level, and the cost-cutting actions proposed by the District, the Polk-Des Moines Taxpayers Association voted to SUPPORT the published budget.

Our analysis of the expenditure numbers brings us to the conclusion that the Urbandale Community School District has historically shown concern for cost containment, prudently asking for only what they need. Since there is little “fat” to trim, reductions in spending unfortunately brings reductions in services and in the number of employees. The silver lining in this dismal cloud is that hopefully school districts all across Iowa change their thinking by finding better, more cost-efficient ways that still result in high achievement by their students.

The Association has found that the Urbandale school district does a good job of finding partners in collaborative efforts, but there are probably even more opportunities out there. The Association urges the administration to redouble their efforts to find and implement additional cooperative measures.

The members also suggest that communication, information-sharing, and stakeholder input always improve. There is concern on the part of the Association that the cuts in revenue from the State may not be a temporary matter. The economy will get better to be sure, but there are many pressing issues for the State, ranging from economic development to replenishing State reserves, in addition to funding K-12 education. While “listening to” and “doing as I ask” are separate actions, the earlier members of the community can be brought into the budget building process, the better. Issues, options, and solutions can be discussed. Misconceptions can be cleared up. The decision-making process can become more transparent.

The modeling done by the District is an important tool, and the Association appreciates the fact that it is done. If the worst-case scenario does come to pass in 2010/11 – and the Association has that same concern - then it is vitally important that this District, and the entire State, make fundamental changes in a large number of areas that affect education, for the way Iowa is doing K-12 financing now is not sustainable. These areas include the negotiation process, funding, compensation, reacting to changing demographics, the use of technology, and the ability to share programs and students across districts.

Finally, we'd like to thank Dr. Robinson for the close working relationship that developed between him and the Association. His energy and obvious concern for the District's students made it a pleasure to interact with him. At the same time, the Association welcomes our future opportunity to work with Dr. Stillwell and we look forward to continuing the same relationship with him.

**URBANDALE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BUDGET SUMMARY**

	ACTUAL FY06/07	ACTUAL FY07/08	% OF CHANGE	ACTUAL FY08/09	% OF CHANGE	RE-EST FY09/10	% OF CHANGE	PROPOSED FY10/11	AMOUNT CHANGE	% OF CHANGE
LEVY RATE	\$13,475,09	\$15,718,97	16.7%	\$16,276,22	3.5%	\$16,267,62	-0.1%	\$17,644,62	\$1,377,00	8.5%
REGULAR TAXABLE VALUATION	\$918,664,109	\$946,397,745	3.0%	\$948,821,052	0.3%	\$1,034,353,094	9.0%	\$1,050,402,180	16,049,086	1.6%
TIF VALUATION	\$72,036,360	\$57,497,760	-20.2%	\$100,874,700	75.4%	\$50,495,810	-49.9%	\$62,117,710	11,621,900	23.0%
PROPERTY TAX REVENUE:	\$11,735,183	\$14,168,764	20.7%	\$14,913,486	5.3%	\$15,974,052	7.1%	\$17,888,917	1,914,865	12.0%
% OF TOTAL REVENUE	18.4%	26.9%	46.6%	19.7%	-26.8%	20.5%	4.0%	35.1%	14.6%	71.1%
UTILITY REPLACEMENT EXCISE TAX	733,813	837,442	14.1%	813,516	-2.9%	886,150	8.9%	917,100	30,950	3.5%
PROP TAX WITH UTILITY EXCISE TAX	\$12,468,996	\$15,006,206	20.3%	\$15,727,002	4.8%	\$16,860,202	7.2%	\$18,806,017	1,945,815	11.5%
ALL STATE AID:	\$11,579,104	\$12,110,021	4.6%	\$12,588,825	4.0%	\$12,858,905	2.1%	\$16,273,255	3,414,350	26.6%
% OF REVENUE	18.1%	23.0%	27.0%	16.7%	-27.7%	16.5%	-0.9%	31.9%	15.4%	93.4%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$63,831,475	\$52,575,343	-17.6%	\$75,571,739	43.7%	\$77,869,304	3.0%	\$50,966,340	(\$26,902,964)	-34.5%
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	\$45,725,627	\$60,132,825	31.5%	\$62,693,187	4.3%	\$89,823,095	43.3%	\$67,309,075	(22,514,020)	-25.1%
NET GAIN (LOSS)	\$18,105,848	(\$7,557,482)	-141.7%	\$12,878,552	-270.4%	(\$11,953,791)	-192.8%	(\$16,342,735)	(4,388,944)	36.7%
TOTAL FUND BALANCE	\$31,061,385	\$23,503,903	-24.3%	\$36,382,455	54.8%	\$24,428,664	-32.9%	\$8,085,929	(16,342,735)	-66.9%
FUND BALANCE	67.9%	39.1%	-42.5%	58.0%	48.5%	27.2%	-53.1%	12.0%	-15.2%	-55.8%
GENERAL FUND REVENUE	\$27,382,876	\$29,490,605	7.7%	\$30,634,099	3.9%	\$35,469,992	15.8%	\$35,621,675	\$151,683	0.4%
GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES	\$28,105,953	\$30,948,758	10.1%	\$32,346,659	4.5%	\$35,139,450	8.6%	\$35,266,709	\$127,259	0.4%
NET GAIN (LOSS)	(\$723,077)	(\$1,458,153)	101.7%	(\$1,712,560)	17.4%	\$330,542	-119.3%	\$354,966	24,424	7.4%
ENDING GENERAL FUND BALANCE	\$3,444,140	\$1,985,987	-42.3%	\$273,427	-86.2%	\$603,969	0.0%	\$958,935	354,966	58.8%
GENERAL FUND BALANCE	12.3%	6.4%	-47.6%	0.8%	-86.8%	1.7%	0.0%	2.7%	1.0%	58.2%
SOLVENCY RATIO	19.0%	6.5%	-65.8%	0.5%	-92.3%		-100.0%		0.0%	#DIV/0!
INSTRUCTION COST:	\$18,708,396	\$20,633,462	10.3%	\$22,049,796	6.9%	\$24,141,969	9.5%	\$24,316,969	\$175,000	0.7%
% OF TOTAL EXPENDITURES	40.9%	34.3%	-16.1%	35.2%	2.5%	26.9%	-23.6%	36.1%	9.3%	34.4%
% OF GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES	66.6%	66.7%	0.2%	68.2%	2.2%	68.7%	0.8%	69.0%	0.2%	0.4%
STUDENT (WEIGHTED) ENROLLMENT	3,554	3,591	1.0%	3,608	0.5%	3,708	2.8%	3,684	(24)	0.0%
STATE AID: Allowable Growth in Cost Per Student	\$5,128	\$5,333	4.0%	\$5,546	4.0%	\$5,768	4.0%	\$5,768	\$0	0.0%
SALARIES & BENEFITS:	\$21,829,651	\$24,128,979	10.5%	\$26,130,256	8.3%	\$27,598,814	5.6%		(\$27,598,814)	-100.0%
% OF EXPENDITURE	77.7%	78.0%	0.4%	80.8%	3.6%	78.5%	-2.8%	0.0%	-78.5%	-100.0%
EMPLOYEES (FTE):										
ADMINISTRATION	18.0	19.0	5.6%	19.0	0.0%	20.0	5.3%		(20.0)	-100.0%
INSTRUCTORS	265.0	284.0	7.2%	275.0	-3.2%	277.0	0.7%		(277.0)	-100.0%
SUPPORT	180.1	181.0	0.5%	195.0	7.7%	206.0	5.6%		(206.0)	-100.0%
TOTAL STAFF	463.1	484.0	4.5%	489.0	1.0%	503.0	2.9%	-	(503.0)	-100.0%
LONG-TERM BONDED DEBT:	\$50,295,000	\$48,945,000	-2.7%	\$47,335,000	-3.3%	\$55,840,000	18.0%	\$42,485,885	(\$13,354,115)	-23.9%