

# StopTSD

## Stop Talawanda School District

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Press Release  
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On June 30, 2009, Citizens for Talawanda Schools issued a press release, purporting to be a credible source of information, and attempting to inform their supporters of the facts concerning our (StopTSD) claims. This release is in response to the June 30, 2009 CFTS release and will address their statements contained in that release, and their statements and are best compared side by side. A copy of the CFTS release can be obtained on the web at [http://www.citizensfortalawanda.org/files/CFTS\\_PR\\_6-2009.revised%202.pdf](http://www.citizensfortalawanda.org/files/CFTS_PR_6-2009.revised%202.pdf)

StopTSD is indeed angry that the Talawanda School Board of Education is contesting real estate property values. As many of us saw after the 2008 reassessments by the Butler County Auditor's office, many properties were assessed at values far above what the market value was. Many owners chose to contest those values with the Auditor through a Board of Revision.

We also feel that it is inappropriate for the BOE to ask for the City of Oxford to pay for infrastructure improvements for the new high school. We feel that the BOE should pay for all aspects of the new high school.

The CFTS release states that Talawanda is funded primarily by local property tax. Talawanda has continued this despite 4 Ohio Supreme Court rulings that it is unconstitutional for the state to use property tax as the primary means of educational funding.

CFTS claims that the BOE participation is to monitor and assist in the Board of Revision process. CFTS also claims that this is a regular fiscal practice for many school districts. This is not true. Talawanda began contesting, not monitoring, property assessments in 2005. At that time, BOE challenged about 90 property values, many of which were residential and agricultural. BOE continued this practice in 2009 by contesting about 260 property values, mostly rental and commercial properties.

In 2009, only Talawanda and Lakota School Districts are contesting property values in Butler County.

The CFTS release contained many bullet points and we will address them as needed. CFTS statements are in **bold**.

**The BOR has the final say on all valuation decisions.** This is untrue. BOR decisions can be appealed to a tax court in Columbus, OH.

**Talawanda is seeking BOR review on the reappraisal requests only for rental and commercial property owners. That is consistent with prior years...** This is also untrue. Some of the 2005 claims

by BOE were against residential and agricultural properties. A list of all properties which Talawanda has contested is available on our web site at [http://www.stoptsd.com/files/talawanda\\_cases1.pdf](http://www.stoptsd.com/files/talawanda_cases1.pdf) This list was provided to us by the Butler County Auditor.

**Talawanda will be represented by an attorney at the BOR hearings.** Talawanda MUST be represented by an attorney. The attorney of record for the current counterclaims is Gary T. Stedronsky. Stedronsky is a board member of the Ohio School Boards Association, a private organization offering its services to Ohio local school boards, for a fee. In April and May, 2009, Talawanda has paid \$5893.05 for legal representation in preparation of these cases.

**Talawanda has requested to have representation on all rental/commercial reappraisal requests that we have been alerted to by the Butler County Auditor. The County Auditor is required by law to notify ALL school districts of such requests.** The first sentence is true, meaning Talawanda is willing to pay an attorney to represent them, but the second is not. The Auditor is required to notify a school district if a value goes down by \$50,000 or more. Talawanda has chosen to counterclaim ALL values that decreased, a decided departure from previous actions.

**Talawanda's role in the BOR is to make sure the final BOR decision is truly based on a fair market value as compared to liked properties and that proper supporting paperwork was presented by the property owner.** Again, a full list of counterclaimed properties, is available on our web site at [http://www.stoptsd.com/files/talawanda\\_cases1.pdf](http://www.stoptsd.com/files/talawanda_cases1.pdf). Talawanda's support of property values which increased as much as 182% are neither fair, realistic, nor based on fair market value.

**Some misinformation regarding the annexation of the new high school is being provided by the Stop-TSD PAC. The facts are... that the agreement to annex the new high school into the City of Oxford will result in continued revenues and wage taxes for the city, as they are already receiving these taxes from the current high school located within the city limits. In addition, the new high school property will have access to city water and sewer services. Utilities serve as a revenue source for the city- so the cost of the city's portion may be recouped over time. Everyone can agree that city access to emergency services such as police, fire, and emergency medical teams are extremely important. These reasons have brought city and school officials together to develop opportunities and services to best serve our community and our children.** StopTSD has never made any statement regarding the City of Oxford income tax collection. Our contention concerning the school's attachment to City utilities is that the school district, not the City and the taxpayers of Oxford, should pay for those connections. The revenues from the water and sewage collections may never pay for the improvements due to the increased efficiency plumbing fixtures are required to have in new construction. They probably would not pay for the sidewalks or traffic signals that the City is willing to pay for. Finally, we have never made any statement relative to emergency services. Those services are necessities whether the school is within the City limits, or in the township, such as Bogan and Marshall Elementary schools.

Many of the "facts" supported by CFTS are inaccurate, misleading or just plain wrong. The information we support is available on our web site, <http://www.stoptsd.com> The information we present is obtained by Public Document Requests from the [Butler County Auditor](#), the [Butler County Treasurer](#), the [Butler County Board of Elections](#), the City of Oxford and Talawanda City School District. We encourage all citizens to review the information and reach an informed decision in these matters.