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David Larson  
The Boone County Journal  
419 South State Street  
Belvidere , IL 61008

Dear Mr. Larson:

I was offered the opportunity to write a column for inclusion in the Boone County Journal and I want to thank you and your staff. This is a tough year throughout Illinois for schools and other government bodies. Programs are being cut and unfortunately, there have been some staff layoffs. North Boone CUSD # 200 is still owed several hundred thousand dollars from the 2009-2010 school year and larger districts are owed even more. Throughout all levels of government in Illinois, there is a dramatic need to reduce expenditures as the state of Illinois is simply unable to pay its bills in a timely manner. However, the community support for the schools and the students of North Boone give me reason to remain optimistic.

As the fall activity season comes to an end, most people who watched a North Boone game or event would have noticed little that was different from previous years. Students participated in the same sports and number of contests as they had the previous year. There had been a great deal of conversation during the spring and summer about potential changes to the programs including cutting a number of sports and coaching positions. In fact, several coaching positions were cut and the Board of Education reduced its outlay for athletics along with all other areas of the budget. There are two primary reasons that the average spectator or student hasn't seen a difference-- the large number of volunteers who have stepped in to assist in providing services to students and the Board's movement to look for additional revenue sources.

This fall, the Board has been able to conduct business as usual due to the generous donations of time on the part of many volunteers. NB Golf wouldn't have had a season without Brad Fidler volunteering to continue to coach this year without compensation. Similarly, the Chess team is steered by volunteer coaches, Jeff Corn, Glen Gratz and Tony LaGrassa. A number of bus drivers have volunteered their time to transport the football teams and cheerleaders to

away games so as to reduce the district's cost of the programs. Butch Peters, Bruce Caldwell, and Dennis Jeffers have all donated more than 20 hours of driving time so far this year. Ed Mulholland organized volunteers and collected donations to make improvements to the playing fields this summer.

The North Boone band added a flag team and was able to participate in Rockford's Labor Day parade for the first time. Both of these additions were possible only through the voluntary efforts of Scott Aska, Sandy Kellogg and the band boosters.

Thank you to all of the Jr. Vikes parents who have been helping with tickets, concessions, and the chain gang during football games and to the high school volleyball parents for taking tickets, running the clock, and keeping stats at volleyball games this year. Brandi Johnson coordinated the concession stand for the Jr. Vikes games. Members of the Lions Club and Immanuel Lutheran Church took tickets at NB football games this season.

Parents continue to volunteer at the elementary level to help with activities and special events. The North Boone Education Foundation has managed a bequest from, Bernard Dahlen, a former Poplar Grove graduate that has helped place interactive white boards in nearly every classroom at Poplar Grove School.

Individuals are not the only ones stepping forward to help. Boone County Family Restaurant made a \$4000 donation towards new playground equipment at Poplar Grove School in September. Poplar Grove Bank has agreed to an advertising sponsorship which will pay the district for each touchdown, soccer goal, three-point basket, etc. made by NB student athletes this year. Bel-Rock Paving and Manchester Township have donated the use of their equipment to the district. A number of community organizations have donated school supplies and winter clothing for our neediest children.

The Board and administrative team also worked hard to try to ensure that students would not have reduced opportunities for this year. The Board created a Community Involvement Committee that has worked most of the summer to obtain additional revenue for the district. The committee is chaired by Laura Zwart and also includes board member, Tom Kinser. The committee's goals include establishing programs to obtain funding for the district through advertising and other fundraising events. Please strongly consider participating in these fundraisers and advertising programs when you are approached. The success of these programs will partially determine the scope of student opportunities over the next few years as the Board has to react to the fluid state funding situation. A complete listing of the volunteers and benefactors who have helped North Boone this year is available on the district's website ([www.nbcusd.org](http://www.nbcusd.org)) under press releases. I apologize if we missed any volunteers or donors.

Again, thank you to the community for helping the Board, administration and staff provide opportunities for the students of North Boone. Thanks to the BCJ for the opportunity to use this venue to express appreciation to the people of Boone County.

On behalf of the Board and staff of NBCUSD 200,

*Steve Baule*