

# ADVANTAGES OF LOCAL CONTROL



**HAVE A VOICE IN HOW OUR CHILDREN ARE EDUCATED**

Managing our own budgets will help ensure funding consistently meets the needs of our students to provide a well-rounded educational experience. Local control coincides with local voices being heard. The mountain community for decades has taken responsibility to make sure our children get what they need for an appropriate education by donating millions of dollars to offset the lack of funding with no voice in the matter. It is time to have corresponding authority to go along with that responsibility.

**BUDGET CONTROL**

SMDE would provide local control over all budget dollars to maximize allocations as needed to support the Signal Mountain schools. With local control, the SSVc reports an annual operational budget surplus of \$1.9 million dollars to apply toward currently unfunded expenses ranging from performing arts teacher salaries to student transportation.

**HIRING AND RETAINING FACULTY AND STAFF**

This provides important continuity to culture and standards for our schools. Currently we are on our 4<sup>th</sup> principal at SMMHS in 9 years, a hiring role of the department of education. Today, when there are openings at Signal Mountain Schools, approximately 10 percent of teachers are assigned by HCDE to fill those vacancies, without any input from the principal. Conversely, the district has the ability to reassign high performing faculty and staff to help lower performing school districts. A SMDE will be able to control hiring and retention of all its faculty and staff.

**CURRICULUM**

A smaller school district allows for more nimble decision making. Specifically in the critical area of curriculum today, change is slow and based on the impact to a large and diverse student population. A Signal Mountain School District will allow curriculum decisions to be made by the superintendent and the respective principals. The decision will then be made by leaders who are closer to where the education is actually happening. Whether it is pursuing the teaching of “new math” or using / not using phonics etc. our school leaders can be responsive to the needs of all the children it serves.

**BUILDING MAINTENANCE**

HCDE has an estimated \$350 million in deferred maintenance which includes \$2.24 million at Thrasher Elementary. Currently, the maintenance budget at Signal Schools ranges between \$0.23 and \$0.87 per square foot. It should be commensurate to the industry standard \$1.47 per square foot as reflected in the SSVc budget.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

Our community should have control over the planning of the existing capital budget that is annually available for all the county schools. We would be able to plan, grow appropriately and adequately maintain our facilities. Today HCDE determines what to do with those capital dollars. A SMDE would receive about \$1.5 million each year from HCDE for capital improvements that it doesn't receive today.

**TRANSPORTATION / SAFETY**

Authority for transportation allows appropriate funding resulting in: more reasonable school start times and transportation provided to those participating in extracurricular team activities (sports, band etc.) instead of relying on parents or the students to transport themselves as they do today.

**SUSTAINED FUNDING FOR CURRENT PROGRAMS**

MEF currently pays the salaries for 5% of the current faculty. In addition, they pay for teacher training and classroom equipment among many other things from the \$529,718 they annually raise from the mountain community. In addition, over a half million dollars is paid annually by parents in day one school fees and band/sports fees.

## WHY SIGNAL SCHOOLS ARE GREAT

These don't go away with our own school district. In fact, they can all improve.

### PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT



At school and at home

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT



- ✓ Fund 5% of the Signal Mountain staff positions
- ✓ Technology including iPads, computers, Chromebook carts, Acivpanel Touchscreen Boards, Promethean Boards, 3-D printers, STEM classroom supplies, science printers, robotics supplies and technology for clubs
- ✓ Professional development including advanced certifications, substitute teachers, workshops, conferences and in-house programs
- ✓ ACT testing for 9th and 10th graders College prep workshops Youth in Government and Model UN IB scholarships and support, plus school wide training for IB curriculum. Stipends for technology, robotics, dramatics, etc. Teacher appreciation activities designed to increase staff retention
- ✓ In-house field trips: Tennessee Aquarium, Creative Discovery Museum, EPB, Nature Center, Chattanooga Zoo
- ✓ Art supplies, PE equipment, music supplies, reading lab materials, media center supplies, classroom supplies and materials
- ✓ Rising 6th grade activities, school activities/clubs, senior recognition \$3,700 for LOVE OUR SCHOOLS special projects

### FACULTY AND STAFF

Legal protections for staff in a new SMDE

	Tenured Teachers	Non-Tenured Teachers
Need to Reapply	Possible but not practical	Possible but practical
Deep Position	Yes	At superintendent's discretion
Salary	Maintained at least at the same level	Maintained at least at the same level
Tenure	Maintained	n/a
Pension / Retirement	Maintained	Maintained
Step Increases	Yes, current contract rights maintained until contract expires	Yes, current contract rights maintained until contract expires
Accumulated Sick Leave	Maintained	Maintained