Report on the Orange Schools Permanent Levy – Issue 8

Better Ohio PAC is a group of parents and citizens in Orange School District concerned about the future we are providing for our children. We believe every child deserves an excellent public education, and that our community deserves clear answers about how its schools are serving our community's children who need the most help. We wanted to bring our concerns to you and provide the facts and figures for you to review.

Our schools must have the resources children need to succeed, but we need to put those resources to work without taking our eye off the ball. After reviewing the district's finances, staffing, and student outcomes, **we are asking you to vote NO on Issue 8, the new $7.8M permanent levy, on November 3, 2026.** Our concerns are about the priorities being funded, the most at-risk children in our community who are falling behind, and a new tax that would continue without a required renewal vote.

Issue 8 will increase spending to $35,300 per child – the 2nd highest in Ohio

Orange already spends an estimated **$31,400 per student**. If Issue 8 passes, that would rise to **$35,300 — 45% above the average of our six comparison districts.** Three comparison districts already achieve better third-grade math results for economically disadvantaged students while spending significantly less per child than Orange. Before asking families for a permanent tax increase, the district must explain how more money will deliver better results for children still struggling today.

Spending Per Student*

2025-2026

School district	Per student
Orange (With Issue 8)	**$35,300**
Orange (Current)	**$31,400**
Beachwood	$29,800
Shaker Heights	$28,400
Chagrin Falls	$25,700
Rocky River	$21,700
Mayfield	$20,700
Hudson	$19,800
Comparison Districts Average	**$24,400**

A five-star reputation comes with a responsibility to every child

We are proud of Orange's five-star rating. But **four in ten of our economically disadvantaged third graders did not meet the state's math standard in 2025–26.** A significant contributing factor is the above average 24% chronic absenteeism rate. Three of our comparison districts did much better for their most at-risk students without spending excessively. **We are concerned that district leaders have lost sight of the children behind the rating.** Five stars are worth celebrating, but keeping our promise to the children who need us the most must remain the priority.

14% of our teachers were eliminated while administrators were added

A child who struggles with math needs someone to notice, a teacher with time to help, and support that reaches the classroom. Families depend on great teachers with time to focus on our children, yet the district's reports show **14% of teaching positions were eliminated** and 9% more administrative positions were created from 2015 to 2025. Reducing the ratio of students to teachers has a significant impact on educational outcomes. **Eliminating teachers while adding administrators? Our district leaders have taken their eye off the ball.**

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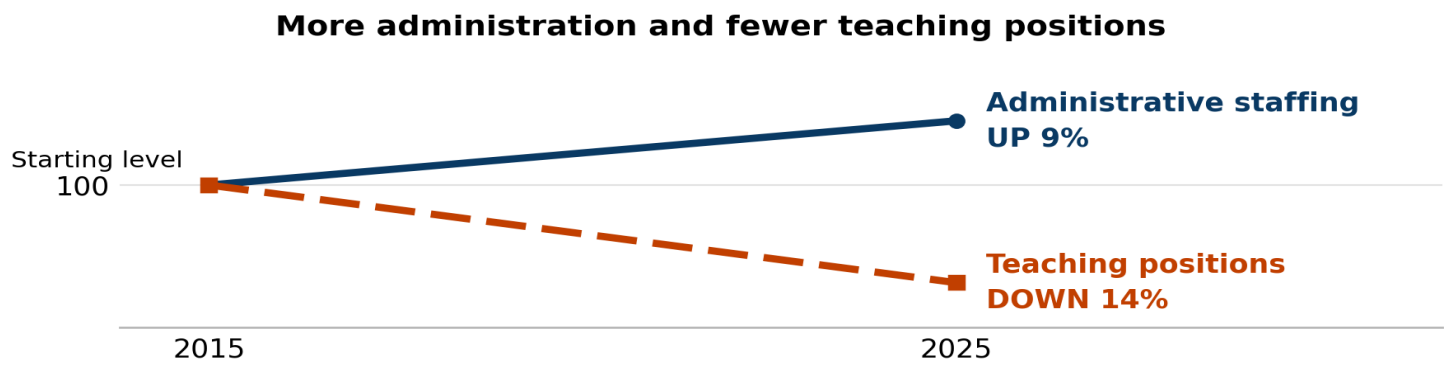

Orange spends 31% more on administration than our comparison districts

In 2024–25, Orange spent 31% more per child on administration than the average of our six comparison districts. We believe spending so much more on administration while children still need individual attention shows that the district has taken its eye off the ball. The district should put our children first when making spending decisions.

Even with excessive administrative costs, $619k went to a scammer

Even with its high administrative spending, Orange failed to follow a basic financial safeguard. When a scammer posing as a vendor requested a bank-account change, district officials skipped a required verification step and **sent $619,984 of taxpayer money to a fraudulent account.** Insurance reimbursed the full amount, but it did not erase the failure. Administrators took their eye off the ball—and before asking families for a permanent tax increase, the district must demonstrate that it can responsibly manage the money already entrusted to it and use that money to achieve the outcomes its peers are achieving.

Our children deserve the same urgency as our facilities

Orange reported nearly $39 million in spending on buildings, equipment, and other capital projects from 2016 through 2025, including academic and athletic spaces. Some work addressed real needs such as roofs, aging equipment, accessibility, and safety. But new entrances, athletic spaces, and renovated buildings are only part of what makes a school excellent. Children who are struggling deserve equally serious attention.

We want a clear plan for early math help, attendance support, and enough teachers to deliver that help. Every child deserves the attention and support needed to succeed. We also want the district to remain accountable to voters.

When Issue 8 is rejected and the district returns with another levy proposal, **it must be a five-year levy that requires voter approval to renew.** That would give residents a regular opportunity to judge the district's priorities and results. Issue 8 would add these new funds permanently, without that scheduled return to voters.

Vote NO on Issue 8, the permanent levy, on November 3

We support our schools and the teachers committed to helping our children every day. We simply want a better plan that protects classroom support and measures success by how children are doing. The district should review its budget choices critically and show the voters how its spending serves vulnerable students. Please vote NO and ask the district to earn our trust through better priorities and results.

We launched OrangeSchoolsLevyFacts.org with the source documents, data, and calculations behind this letter so you can review the facts for yourself.

ORANGE SCHOOLS LEVY FACTS
OrangeSchoolsLevyFacts.org

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