

I've got 3 minutes, so I'm getting to it without nuance.

- **First, the change in the composite index is Richmond's acknowledgment that Highland is not as wealthy on paper as they thought. The change is intended as taxpayer relief—it is most certainly NOT a windfall to be automatically rolled into the school's budget.**
- **I keep hearing that "we have mandates." Do you know what that is? It's bureaucracy complaining about bureaucracy, trying to get you to dig farther into the community's pockets, as if that would fix it somehow. IT WON'T. The local education bill will simply swell some more, and you'll hear the exact same reason next year to get more money.**
- **With that noted, what would you think of a Highland resident who went to their primary employer with a bill in hand—a very large bill from their secondary source of income—saying, "I made a mistake in my checkbook; you have to pay this. I don't know if you'll get it back or not."**
- **Then, a few months later, the very same employee, doing the exact same job, after a year of 2.5% inflation, comes forward and says, "I want a 12% raise because I have an old car and I want air conditioning." What would ANY employer say under those circumstances? This is what you're asking.**

3% across the board, which is better than last year's inflation, will pay for teachers' pay raises. That takes care of 62.4% of the budget. For the remaining 37% of the budget—other expenses—the rest of the 3% across the board will take care of rising costs. 3% is both fair and equitable.

Finally, this "our hands are tied" statement is nonsense. They're only tied if you want them to be. This board has the vote, and just as it was for Richmond's "boys' and girls' bathroom mandate," you can say NO to a 12% increase.

Let me remind you, this board is not unlike a corporate board, where you're representing taxpayers, not what staff may want.

As a part-time board, there is no way you'll ever be able to get into the weeds of a budget, nor should you even try. But you can give the Superintendent a budget that is not swelling every year and tell him to deal with it. He's employed 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, at considerable taxpayer expense, to do just that.

Thanks for your time.