

DATE : JULY 14, 2011 9am

TO: HENRY COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD AND KATHY ROGERS, CHAIR.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you this morning. I am Vincent Puccio and reside in Henry County with my wife. I have recently retired after a 42 year Commercial Banking career.

*Mention for SCORE*

These are the best of times and the worst of times (to quote Charles Dickens) Retirement is good times but the economic conditions for retirees is one of the worst of times full of apprehension. We see the continual changes in economic conditions and indeed the huge changes brought to our community over the last 15 years. We have gone from a vibrant , growing community to one with a very high unemployment rate and a depleted industrial base. Our population as well as student enrollment continues to plummet.

When I moved to Henry county in 1995 the county student enrollment was 9,200...I believe the projected student enrollment for 2015 is 6,900. Even so, we must continue to offer quality educational opportunities to our youth .....they will be the future engines of our recovery.

But now we must conserve and consolidate and operate the schools much more efficiently on a shrinking tax base than in

economic growth times. We all have to do more with less...The school board has a tough job.....It should encourage and look positively to concerned citizens who may offer suggestions for more efficiencies.

That is what Rick and I would like to suggest this morning.

We appeal to you to authorize a study that would privatize school bus operation. The Board already has privatized the custodial staff so this is not a new concept. Many businesses sell off assets and lease back to free up cash.

We feel the bus operation of H

enry County and indeed the City, if they choose to do the same, would contribute to overall efficiency savings. It would provide up front cash by removing the buses from the balance sheet. It could reduce the overall operational costs with those savings going into the education ----of our students. Of course the tantamount concern should be the safety of the bused student .

We can not know what the answers are unless we have a study

That is all we ask.