The Board of Trustees would like to address some inaccurate or incomplete information regarding employees and budget requests that have been made in public forums.

In a recent comments made by a county supervisor published in the Natchez Democrat, a county supervisor stated that the District employs over 700 employees despite guidance from external auditors to decrease the number of employees. Natchez-Adams School District currently has 554 employees, both full and part-time, on its payroll. 442 employees are paid from district maintenance funds which come from state and county funds. 115 of the 554 employees are paid through federal or state funds for federal programs, child nutrition and special education. That number includes six employees at ACCS and Cathedral paid through federal programs. For the 2020-2021 school year, there were only 579 employees on district payroll, a 4% decrease.

An additional statement was made that per pupil expenditures for our district were approximately $16,000 per student per year “from county taxpayer funds.” For 2020-2021, the Mississippi Department of Education calculated the per pupil expenditure for Natchez-Adams School District at $13,018.48 which includes expenses for students in Natchez-Adams School District and special populations of students at ACCS and Cathedral. This per pupil expenditure slightly increased due to the increased expenditures in response to the pandemic and higher per pupil expenditures required for approximately 500 students served by special education. In 2018-2019 prior to the pandemic, the per pupil expenditure was $11,647.45.

The board working in conjunction with district leadership continues to monitor school enrollment and adjust the number of personnel employed in the district without sacrificing the quality of services provided to our students or negatively impacting student performance. We work to ensure that our students have access to the professional staff they need to meet their academic and behavior needs.

The board has taken a number of proactive measures to ensure that all classrooms are staffed by highly qualified teachers. The recent consolidation of our two middle schools into one middle school and the consolidation of Natchez Freshmen Academy and Natchez High School into one high school has resulted in every classroom being staff by certified teachers and a decrease in the number of teacher vacancies.

The Adams County Board of Supervisors published an advertisement of the county’s annual budget that stated “the increase of tax levy of 1.93 mills is necessary only because of the increased funding request of the Natchez-Adams School District which by law Adams County must fund.”

In 2021, The Natchez-Adams School District ad valorem tax request was $14,237,156.  The 2023 tax levy request is $14,246,155.

The tax levy request amount for 2022 was $13,955,634. This decreased request was due to an accounting error by the county on mobile home properties.  The tax levy request formula is based on the amount of ad valorem taxes collected the previous year from October through March. Because of the county’s error of approximately $340,000, the ad valorem taxes collected were decreased. Therefore, the district request was $13,955,634. Legally, the district could have made a request for up to an additional 7% in funding. However, there was no additional funding requests made by the board of trustees. So, if we would look at the last three years without any distortions in the taxes due to county error, the tax levies would have been very comparable.

The state funding formula allows school districts to legally request up to a 7% annual increase.  For the Natchez-Adams School District, that 7% equates to an additional tax request of approximately $2.8 million over the last three years.  However, over the course of the last three years, the District has not requested the additional increase allowed by state law.

The 3-mil request to fund the renovations for Natchez Middle School has been included in the levy request for all three years.  Therefore, the District has been able to cut operating costs and pay for the construction of the new Natchez High School using its existing budget.

The Natchez –Adams School District Board of Trustees does not establish millage rates. The millage rate is set by the Adams County Board of Supervisors.

The Natchez-Adams School District Board of Trustees remains committed to being good financial stewards for the students served throughout Adams County. The board has been diligent in working within the tight financial constraints caused by the pandemic and national inflation that has affected everyone’s budget, individuals and families, county and city government, and businesses. We welcome the opportunity to speak with any concerned citizens or our city and county government partners regarding the financial health of the district, factual district data or demographics, and the strategic plans that we have for the growth and progress of Natchez-Adams School District.