



Points to Ponder After the 2022 FLSD Millage Increase Vote

Description

[PATTY MACDONALD](#), March 10, 2022

Points to Ponder

Current Hot Springs Village property taxes are “shorting” two-thirds of our Village school children. Hot Springs Village lies in two counties, Garland and Saline. School district boundaries do not strictly follow county lines, so approximately 200 Village children go to Fountain Lake School District [FLSD] while almost 400 attend Jessieville School District. Village property taxes from parts of both counties flow into each district, although in vastly different amounts. Let me explain how this situation evolved.

A half-century ago, HSV was in its early development; homes were built primarily near the West Gate in Garland County. The education of Village children has fallen primarily on our two closest school districts, Jessieville and FLSD, both located in Garland. Each county and both school districts have different tax structures and millage rates, but the primary difference is in the underlying values of the real estate that make up their respective tax bases.

Now the path of growth in HSV is clearly toward the East Gate. Local Realtor [Lloyd Sherman](#) wrote that in 2021 the average Village home in Garland County sold for \$235,278 or \$115 per sq. ft. At the same time in Saline County, the average home sale was for \$369,691 or \$145 per sq. ft. The increased size and price of these newer Village homes has been a “cash cow” for FLSD.

Older homes near the West Gate are more affordable and draw young families with children. This area sends 380 Village children to Jessieville. These differences are reflected in the AR Dept. of Education’s “2020-2021 Revenues per student” report: FLSD spent \$11,326 educating each student last year, while Jessieville spent \$10,837. Other reasons may account for some of this difference of \$490/yr. or almost \$6,000 over a student’s 12 school years. This causes an injustice of educational opportunity for our Village students who go to Jessieville. FLSD won’t want to roll back its millage rate, just as Jessieville homeowners won’t want to raise theirs. If we really care about our Village children, please give this untenable situation some constructive thought.

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Date Created

03/10/2022

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