

## Most disagree with NA-FC school closings

Written by Administrator

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A crowd of more than 800 parents filed into the New Albany High School auditorium Monday, most wishing to express concern over the school corporation's attempt at erasing a \$6.6 million budget shortfall.

The proposal, released late last week, includes closing four elementary schools, Children's Academy of New Albany, Pine View, Silver Street and Galena Elementary schools.

Other cuts in the plan include 78 non-teaching jobs and assigning fifth graders from elementary to middle schools.

School Superintendent Bruce Hibbard assured those in attendance that the changes would not affect academics in the school corporation.

"We will still have a rich academic (environment)," he said.

A Galena parent, Mindy Johnson, didn't agree.

"I'm afraid it sends a message that hard work, commitment to excellence does not matter," she said.

In addition to their disapproval of the school closings and eliminating of positions, those in attendance also voiced their displeasure that the decision already seems to be made.

Hibbard has rejected several other options. The first option would be to, eliminate 62 teaching positions; eliminate five administrative positions and eliminate 45 Classified Positions.

Another option Hibbard rejected was to ask the public to raise their taxes.

The proposal that seems to fit best is the one that is currently on the table.

In a report released by the superintendent's office, Hibbard said that there is currently the capacity in Highland Hills, Scribner and Hazelwood to house the fifth grade, with those students essentially having their own wing or hallway in each building.

Students would also be on a different bell schedule. The school corporation lists several other school systems who have their fifth grade in the same building as their junior high.

Under the proposed plan, the New Albany Floyd County teaching force is simultaneously largely unaffected.

The proposed reductions will impact many working adults in the community, however, the core student programming will remain in-tact, according to a statement on the school corporation's Web site.

Within the school closing proposal, NAFCS will eliminate all elementary split classrooms while simultaneously reducing the elementary pupil-teacher classroom ratios.

An official decision will not be made until Thursday when the school board is expected to vote on the proposal and another capacity crowd is expected at New Albany High School.