

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Dr. Phil Cagwin, Superintendent of Monroe Local Schools, announces intention to retire at the conclusion of the 2017/18 school year.

Dr. Cagwin announced to faculty and staff on the first staff work day that he would be retiring at the end of the school year.

Dr. Cagwin shared the following reflections. After 36 years of working in public schools, I retired in August of 2011 after completing ten years as superintendent of Talawanda City Schools. I thought it was a great time to retire as we were nearing the completion of a beautiful new high school, and my assistant superintendent was more than ready to step up in my absence. I was excited to be hired as a part-time consultant to the Dean of Education, Health and Society at Miami University. I even found some time to pick up the game of golf once again.

I received a phone call from Dr. Lolli in August of 2012. She and I were in some of the same doctoral courses at Miami University. She asked me to consider coming to Monroe just for that school year, to help with the passage of an operating levy. As it turned out, that phone call was a blessing for me. I have truly enjoyed working with a tremendous school board, caring and dedicated administrators, faculty and staff, an absolutely outstanding student body and a very supportive community that cares deeply about its public schools.

My concerns for the future are not centered on Monroe, but more on the sentiment in our State and Federal governments that the politicians know more about what our children should learn than our local educators and local school boards. There also seems to be the expectation that our teachers should focus more on the common core standards and test results than on our children. Our teachers are not threatened by accountability, but when they are expected to teach to tests that have no value to instruction, and that change constantly, it seems such a waste of valuable time for quality student/teacher interaction, not to mention the millions of taxpayer dollars that funnel to the test making and scoring companies.

I am also disappointed that the funding of public schools in Ohio remains unconstitutional and inadequate. Monroe Schools are a great example of the broken system. This past school year, we received just over 7 million dollars of State Tax dollars, although the State Funding Formula shows we should have received nearly 12 million dollars. (ODE Office of Budget and School Funding). Our local taxpayers and our students would greatly benefit from the State paying their fair share of our school taxes! It is even more frustrating when you see the millions of taxpayer dollars going to online charter schools that have little to no accountability for whether or not their students learn anything or even log onto the computers taxpayers bought for them.

A few wealthy people are getting even richer at the loss of students and taxpayers. I commend the efforts of State auditor, Dave Yost, to recover some of the taxpayer dollars sent to ECOT, and ask our State legislators to support laws that will reduce the waste of money and lack of accountability for online charter schools.

Personally, I have many fond memories of serving as a teacher, coach, special education director, principal, assistant superintendent and superintendent. I know that I entered the teaching profession in 1975 because I believed that teachers could help shape young people into positive, caring and compassionate adults. I know that our teachers at Monroe hold that same conviction, but at times are frustrated by the many State and Federal mandates that simply make teaching harder and harder each year.

I have six grandchildren who are growing up too quickly in St. Louis and Denver. I also have a wonderful wife of 42 years who loves to travel, so I'm planning to find more time for her and my family.

While I will miss my Hornet family, I leave knowing they are focused on kids, and will do everything in their power to help them prepare for a successful and fulfilling life after school. I hope that I have been some help to the students, faculty and staff at Monroe, and wish for them only the best.