

Recently Billings School District 2 voted unanimously 7-0 to put an initiative on a May ballot to approve a May mill levy for the sole purpose of hiring teachers to address the overcrowding and accreditation issues facing our schools. The Billings Chamber of Commerce/CVB Board of Directors voted unanimously to support that decision as the Chamber Board realized that an accredited school district is imperative to a vibrant and growing community, as Billings is, in order to attract employers, workers, and retain businesses whose livelihood depends on a strong economic business base.

The School Board later chose, by a 4-3 vote, to add an additional mill levy to address the elementary tech issues that are so badly needed and long overdue. The School Board, to the Chamber's delight, then unanimously came to consensus to support this additional initiative.

Because the School Board came to consensus on the tech levy initiative and showed the community that it was willing to work together, as a whole, for the betterment of the schools, the Billings Chamber/CVB Board voted unanimously to support the second levy as well. Though the Chamber Board would have preferred a single ballot issue, it realized that the only way the school district can move forward and begin the process of becoming a 21st century educational entity, it needed the support of the business community and the citizens of Billings.

Billings cannot wait any longer to start addressing the serious issues that are facing its schools. It must begin now with the passage of these two mill levies in May. Whether you have children in the school system or not, our educational system affects all of us one way or another.

Billings Chamber of Commerce/CVB Board of Directors is ready stand with the business community and the citizens of Billings alongside Billings School District 2 as one voice in support of the May mill levies.

It is time we all work together and be proud of our school district just like we work together to be proud of our medical corridor and our hundreds of small businesses that keep our economy vibrant and growing.

Greg Kohn is the Chairman of the Billings Chamber of Commerce/CVB Board of Directors.