



BRUCE HEALEY

MORE ON BEAN COUNTERS GONE WILD

I read with wonder the letter published last week under the title “Teachers Pay Too High”.

It seems the author, Mr. Welch, argues that Sycamore teachers are, in fact, the beneficiaries of fabulous wages leading to unparalleled wealth and leisure. Aha! This would explain the countless Ferraris parked in teachers’ parking lots around the district, and the gold Rolexes that are de rigueur in science classrooms and faculty lounges from Montgomery to Blue Ash. It explains, too, Photographs of summer vacations aboard the Queen Mary in the Caribbean are shared each fall among cigar smoking teachers.

I don’t think so.

Indeed, comparing salaries among different professions does show some remarkable disparities. For example, the kid flipping burgers because he flunked out of high school gets \$8.50 an hour. The Harvard MBA who works on Wall Street earns the equivalent of thousands of dollars an hour. These comparisons show us that education pays off - not that teachers are millionaires because the guy flipping burgers earn so little working year round, which seems to be the strange gist of Mr. Welch’s argument.

No one in his or her right mind wants to see our precious tax money wasted. In this, Mr. Welch and I are in full agreement. However, as in any industry, salary should be determined by the results achieved both by the individual and by the collec-

tive. The results at Sycamore have been excellent, mostly as a result of our ability to hire and retain, for the most part, excellent teachers. These men and women, due to the chronic lack of teachers nationwide are in high demand and need to be attracted to our school district and retained within it. You cannot achieve this if you decide that they should not be paid any more than the teachers in lousy school districts, because these, to our shame, produce a large part of the “average”.

Sadly, while Mr. Welch reaps the benefits of living in a school district rated “excellent” (even if he has no children) he and others see the need to reduce our school district to the lowest common denominator. Why don’t these people speed up their desire to live in such a district by moving downtown? I urge you to contact 686-1700 or sycamoreschools.org to let the school district know that while you want them to spend wisely, we also want them to maintain excellence through teaching.