

Letter to the Editor  
March 21, 2010

Tuesday, March 23, will be a defining moment for Baldwin County.

We can prove we merit our reputation for being a community that values education.

Or, we can allow the state's out-of-control funding crisis to diminish our own schools to a point that will make them unrecognizable to most Baldwin citizens.

No one would disagree that the timing of this question and the proposed, short-term solution are regrettable. If we could drill down to the real source of frustrations we have heard so often during this campaign, we would be talking about larger governance issues like constitutional reform and state budgetary practices. But those are separate discussions that cannot distract us from making a prudent decision regarding the current emergency.

We can feel good about the level of public discourse that has emerged around Tuesday's referendum. Never before has our community been so focused on weighing the personal benefits of living around the corner from a good school.

The Baldwin County Education Coalition wants to keep that conversation going. We invite every concerned citizen to join your local education foundation and take part in the community engagement work we plan to pursue over the coming months.

We also want to thank the hundreds of school advocates who have helped spread the word about what's at stake on Tuesday. This county-wide effort has been as thorough and inclusive as our limited time and resources would allow. In addition, the school district has been forthright and responsive in providing the facts and figures people needed to make an informed choice.

However, all this hard work will be for naught if those who care don't make it to the polls. The 10-15 minutes it might take to cast your ballot could be the best long-term investment you make all year. Please vote Yes on Tuesday, March 23, to protect our children's future, our local economy and our quality of life.

Denise D'Oliveira  
Baldwin County Education Coalition

*(The Baldwin County Education Coalition is a newly formed partnership of seven local education foundations including Alabama Gulf Coast Area Educational Foundation, Central Baldwin Education Foundation, Fairhope Educational Enrichment Foundation, North Baldwin Coalition for Excellence in Education, South Baldwin Chamber Foundation, Spanish Fort Educational Enrichment Foundation and Supporting Educational Enrichment in Daphne's Schools.)*

