The rest of the story? Ok, Let’s look at the rest of the story.

Anywhere you go in Nebraska, the “cost per pupil” figure is calculated the same…by the State of Nebraska. You can look those costs up for any school district in the State. When you do, you will see that only eight have a lower cost per pupil than does Gothenburg. In Dawson County, Gothenburg has the lowest cost per pupil of any public school…$688/year lower than Cozad and $828/year lower than Lexington. In fact, Gothenburg is $1,488/year lower than the state-wide average. When Mr. Teahon said we have one of the lowest “costs per pupil” in Nebraska, he was stating a demonstrable fact; he wasn’t hiding some secret relating to your tax bill and he darn sure wasn’t lying to you.

No, those costs don’t include the cost of bond repayment, and there is reason. Bonds pay for buildings over a 20- to 25-year period. The buildings last for 75-100 years. Eight hundred students a year use this building so over the next 80 or so years, that means 64,000 students will benefit from this school. Did you figure that in when you looked at your tax bill?

Also, while the State Constitution mandates we provide an education for the children of Gothenburg (which is what the cost-per-pupil is measuring), it does not mandate the age or size our school buildings must be. The residents of District 20—let me emphasize that—the residents, the people who live, work, shop and worship here, chose by way of an election to increase their taxes above and beyond the annual cost-per-pupil to provide for the school buildings we now have. If you lived here, you would have been able to express your opinion through your vote…but you don’t live here.

I have read your letters telling the Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District how to run its system, your letter complaining that somehow it wasn’t “fair” that you didn’t get to vote for a new school in a district in which you don’t live, your letter to me when I was on the board of education for District 20 telling me I should “investigate” one of our teachers because she came from South America, the Chamber of Commerce on how to run the fall Harvest Festival, the city council on how to run the city, the county on how they should clean out road ditches and now basically calling the superintendent of our school system a liar.

Mr. Klein, as I said, you don’t live here. You inherited some land here, but by your own choice you are not a member of this community. You are a member of a community in Colorado. You

talk about the family farm, but truthfully, yours isn’t a family farm it is a farm owned by your family. A significant difference.

If you want us to listen to your advice, move back. Instead of being an absentee landlord with no interest in the area except how much money you can make from your property, farm the ground yourself. Buy your pickup here. Buy your food here. Go to church here, get on the city council or school board…in other words, join THIS community.

Your feelings and beliefs may not change, but your voice would have more relevance if you lived here and participated in the decision making entities. If nothing else you might actually learn what an effective superintendent of schools Mr. Teahon is and the fact that, without his excellent budgeting and financial management of our district, your taxes would be even higher.

Mark Peyton, Gothenburg