

An Important Message from District #20 Superintendent, Dr. Carol J. Auer

With every passing day that the Illinois General Assembly delays addressing its budget woes, the woes of Illinois school districts become more pronounced. Our state has now achieved the dubious distinction of ranking 50th in terms of indebtedness, surpassing even California.

The situation is compounded by the creation of new programs by the General Assembly without adequate funding. We now have 105 unfunded or under funded mandates that have been imposed on districts by the General Assembly. In addition, those in power have compounded the problem by borrowing money from one budget area, such as pension funds, and not repaying it later.

The net effect for District 20 is as follows:

Fiscal Year 2009

Average # of days delayed in receiving funding - 60

Average amount in arrears - \$600,000

Fiscal Year 2010

Average # of days delayed in receiving funding - 180

Average amount in arrears - \$1,459,420

For FY 2011, State reductions for District 20 are as follows:

General State Aid and Hold Harmless - over \$545,000

Special Education Reimbursement - over \$110,000

Other State Grants - \$100,000

The cumulative impact of past money owed and paid late, not paid at all, and/or of future reductions may accumulate to a budget reduction of approximately \$1.6 million for District 20 for the upcoming school year. This situation will not end soon. There is little indication from the General Assembly or the senior leadership in Springfield that they have any real idea of how to realistically solve this situation.

Our leadership team has worked to review all areas of the District budget examining where to make reductions for the 2010-2011 school year. It should be noted that for the 2008-2009 school year, the District made \$350,000 in reductions. For the 2009-2010 school year, over \$680,000 was reduced. For the upcoming year, we find it necessary to plan for a \$1.6 million reduction.

The Board and District are committed to placing the needs of our children first and protecting the long term financial stability of the District and, as such, are also committed to protecting the budget reserves. These are the District's savings accounts and must be preserved.

It is clear that we must face the reality of a Reduction-in-Force. We will do everything in our power to mitigate the effects on our students resulting from a reduction in staff.

We most respectfully request that you contact your legislators and encourage them to solve the funding of education problems that exist in the State of Illinois.