

November 6,2009

School Finance...

This month I am writing to ask for your help. School districts are not being adequately funded and the most recent cuts will have a tremendous impact on the programs we offer children. This letter will explain the level of anticipated reductions and how that translates to our district budget. After you read the letter, **please contact your legislators and the governor and let them know that their actions to reduce the revenues to public schools are unacceptable and that our children deserve better.**

Lansing took school funding away from local communities with the passage of Proposal A. They told us at that time that they would provide reliable and stable funding to all Michigan Public Schools. They have known about the state budget crisis since the spring yet have not acted until now. It is time for them to live up to their promises and fix the problems, not just pass them down to local schools.

“Lansing is pushing schools over the budget cliff!”

-Tom White

We in the Delton Kellogg school district have done a tremendous job of providing an excellent education through these difficult economic times and our students are being recognized on a local, state and national level. We will continue to do everything we can to sustain this work; however, it is difficult at best when our operating costs continue to increase and **our local and state funding has been reduced to a level as low as it was 10 years ago** (the 1999-2000 school year). If you look at Bulletin 1014, from the Michigan Department of Education, you will see that Delton Kellogg School District ranks in the bottom 3% (751st out of 773 districts) in the total revenue received. Reductions in school funding are difficult for all school districts; however, the impact is even greater on districts who's total revenue is in the 3% of all Michigan school districts.

As you know, in recent days Michigan school districts have been notified of significant reductions to their funding. For Delton Kellogg it means a reduction of \$292 per child for a total of \$480,000. We are already one third of the way through our fiscal year and will now have to find a way to reduce our budget by that amount. To give you an idea of what \$480,000 represents in our school district, I offer you the following information:

Potential Impact of State Proposed Cuts...

\$480,000 = 5.2 Teachers (at an average total compensation of \$91,671 each)

\$480,000 = 4.25 Administrators (at an average total compensation of \$112,831 each)

\$480,000 = \$88,253 more than the entire athletic department budget (\$391,747)

\$480,000 = 74% of the total transportation budget

\$480,000 = 4 new textbooks for every K-12 student (average cost of \$65 per book)

\$480,000 = 7 New School Buses (at \$69,000 each)

\$480,000 = 480 Computers (at \$1,000 each)

\$480,000 = Cost of two of the three following electives: art, Music and Physical Education

Reductions Already Implemented...

In Delton Kellogg School District we have already reduced our budget by millions of dollars in the past five years. Those cuts include but are not limited to:

- Privatizing our custodial services (\$290,000 annually)
- Privatizing the high school principal position (\$27,000 annually)
- Privatizing the substitute teacher services (\$8,000 annually)
- Closing of the upper level of the elementary school (To Be Determined)
- Consolidation with Thornapple Kellogg for the Food Service Director services (\$45,323 annually)
- Reduction in the number of teachers (24%), mechanics (29%), counselors (40%), administrators (20%), and media clerks (80%).
- Discontinuation of an annual bus purchase (\$70,000 in 2009-2010 school year)
- Elimination of freshman football and middle school cheerleading (\$7598 annually)
- Reduction in school supply purchases (\$45,000 over the last 5 years)
- Freezing supply expenditures (35,000 for 2008-2009 school year)
- Reduction of energy costs by adjusting heat to schools, turning off parking lot lights between 11PM and 6AM, programming heat schedules for classrooms (To Be Determined)
- Reducing one bus run (\$10,000)
- Increasing the cost of pay to participate fees (\$4,000)
- Freezing capital outlay purchases (\$200,000 in past 5 years)

You Can Help...

Please contact our Governor and legislators and them tell them...

- Fulfill your promise to students and raise the \$100 million necessary to balance the School Aid budget you passed.
- Any additional shortfall in the 2009-10 budget must be filled with stimulus money. Schools cannot sustain another mid-year proration.
- Act now to fix the structural school funding problem (revenues and reform) and provide students with the level of education that can only come with a stable and predictable school funding source.
- We expect Lansing to take action that will find a long range systemic solution to the state budget problems.
- The Delton Kellogg School District has made the tough decisions needed to address the declining revenues in our school district, but it can not sustain the level of funding decreases being proposed.
- Imposing a reduction of nearly 3.4% of our total budget one third of the way into our fiscal year is unacceptable.
- Our children deserve a quality education that can only be provided when there is reliable, stable funding to public education.

The legislators are not listening to us...perhaps they will listen to you. The proration is due to take effect on November 20, 2009. Time is running out. Lansing can and must do better!!!

The contact information for **Rep. Brian Calley** is:

briancalley@house.mi.gov

(517)373-3447.

You can reach **Senator Patricia Birkholz**, by email at

SenPBirkholz@senate.michigan.gov,

(517)373-0842.

Governor Granholm can be contacted via phone at (517)373-3400 or (517)335-7858 (Constituent Services).

Opportunities for You...

I will be traveling to Lansing on Tuesday, November 10, 2009 to speak with our legislators. If you are interested in joining me and helping them understand the how these cuts will impact our school district and our community, please let me know by Monday at 4PM.

A Community Forum will be held at 7PM on November 16 in the High School. We will be showing the community how the State of the State is impacting the Delton Kellogg School District and what the future could look like if we continue to loose funding. More information will be forthcoming.

Thank you for your help in advocating for the children of Delton Kellogg School District! Our children are our future and they deserve an outstanding education!!

Cindy Vujea