

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 11, 2010  
For more information contact:  
Ed Hightower  
618.656.1182

### District 7 outlines proposed budget cuts

Superintendent Ed Hightower presented to the Board of Education for its consideration a five point action plan for 2010-11 at its regular board meeting tonight. The plan addresses spending, financial stability, and maintaining a stable tax rate for District 7, which is currently the lowest in Madison County at 3.9594.

Hightower cited the impact that the State of Illinois' ongoing financial crisis is having on public education from pre-kindergarten through college. "It's not only public school districts that are waiting for funding. According to an editorial in the Chicago Tribune on January 6, Illinois' public universities are waiting for tens of millions of dollars in long-overdue state funding. All have taken steps to address the delayed funding – from the University of Illinois' decision to furlough workers to hiring and wage freezes to cutbacks on travel," Hightower said.

According to Hightower, the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability (CGFA) is currently estimating that the State will have to "carry over" to FY 2011 approximately \$3.7 billion in appropriations (unpaid bills) from the current fiscal year. "By the time legislators return to the Capitol for the 2010 spring session, the budget deficit will likely grow to approximately \$13 billion. More than likely, the FY 2011 budget won't be balanced, and the "carry-over" of unpaid bills into FY 2012 could be historic," Hightower said.

Hightower further stated that the Board and administration have continued to modify the District's current three-year financial plan, and as a result of the uncertain financial picture for 2010-11 and beyond, the District will implement an alternative financial plan that will guide all financial decision making through the ongoing financial crisis that has resulted from the State of Illinois' continued financial woes, which could result in an over \$13 billion deficit; the local revenue reduction due to a decline in the Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) growth rate from 3.5% to 0%

(\$1.2 million); and the additional reduction of federal stimulus funding not being available for state distribution (\$1.6 million).

The administration established the following goals while developing its financial plan:

1) To preserve safe and quality learning environment through the continued upkeep of school facilities; 2) To maintain class sizes within the contract limit throughout the district in order to provide quality student instruction; and 3) To preserve extracurricular opportunities for District 7 students including athletics, performing arts and other clubs and activities. Based on these goals, the administration recommended that the Board of Education consider the following steps to address the current financial crisis:

1. Continue the freeze on all discretionary purchasing/spending unless funds are made available by outside donors, grants, or other contributions:
  - Freeze all salaries of administrators and exempt personnel for 2010-11
  - Negotiate contract with Edwardsville Education Association (EEA) using some of the projected savings from the sixteen (16) teachers now scheduled to retire at the conclusion of the 2009-10 school year
2. Reduce operating expenditures by over \$3.0 million for the 2010-11 school year while not increasing student fees; such as, textbook, activity and meal prices
  - Reduction of administrative positions
  - Proposed reduction of teaching staff through attrition and release of probationary employees, which is subject to negotiations
  - Proposed reduction of ESSPA staffing, which is subject to negotiations
3. Preserve the District's financial stability, including the maintenance of the current "A" bond rating by:
  - Reducing expenditures through increased building and operational efficiencies and managing cash flow requirements

- Preserving Working Cash reserves for emergencies (projected at \$6 million for 2010)
4. Maintain a stable tax rate that will remain under \$4.00 to ease the burden on District 7 taxpayers, as evidenced by the Board's decision to lower the estimated 2009 Life Safety rate from the state-approved maximum of \$.05 to \$.01, and
  5. Not request additional educational funding through a tax referendum.

**Proposed Budget Reductions For Board Consideration:**

1. Proposed reduction of certified probationary staff (anticipated to be 24 positions) - \$1,007,000

**Elementary Class Size Contractual Limit –**

**Kindergarten - 26**

**1<sup>st</sup> thru 5<sup>th</sup> - 28**

Assistants will be added at grades K-3 when 25 students are enrolled

<b>Goshen</b>		1 <sup>st</sup> – 21	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 22
<b>Leclaire</b>		1 <sup>st</sup> – 22	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 22
<b>Nelson</b>		1 <sup>st</sup> – 21	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 21
<b>Glen</b>		1 <sup>st</sup> – 21	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 22
<b>Hamel</b>		1 <sup>st</sup> – 20	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 20
<b>Midway</b>		1 <sup>st</sup> – 23	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 19
<b>Cassens</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 23	4 <sup>th</sup> – 25	5 <sup>th</sup> – 24
<b>Columbus</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 24	4 <sup>th</sup> – 26	5 <sup>th</sup> – 25
<b>Worden</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 22	4 <sup>th</sup> – 27	5 <sup>th</sup> – 27
<b>Woodland</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 21	4 <sup>th</sup> – 24	5 <sup>th</sup> – 27

**Middle School Contractual Class Size Limit is 29.**

**Lincoln Middle School** – reduction of one eighth grade certified position. **Sixth grade** has a projected enrollment of 292 which includes growth for 28 new students with no new staff;

**Seventh grade** has a projected enrollment of 294 which includes growth for 11 new students with no new staff; **Eighth grade** has a projected enrollment of 288 which includes growth for 3 new students with a reduction of one certified position. Class sizes for Lincoln average 26.5 for sixth grade, 26.7 for seventh grade, and 26.2 for eighth grade.

**Liberty Middle School** – **Sixth grade** has a projected enrollment of 309 which includes growth for 28 new students with no new staff; **Seventh grade** has a projected enrollment of 311 which

includes growth for 14 new students with no new staff; ***Eighth grade*** has a projected enrollment of 309 which includes growth for 4 new students with no new staff. Class sizes for Liberty average 28.1 for sixth grade, 28.3 for seventh grade, and 28.1 for eighth grade.

### **Edwardsville High School – Average Class Sizes of 27-28**

#### 2. Proposed reduction of ESSPA Staff – \$562,000

- Educational Assistants associated with changes to the Early Childhood program - \$160,125
- Two Additional Educational Assistant Positions - \$22,875
- Elimination of School Safety Officers and proposed hiring of fourteen (14) “building access” monitors – Net savings of \$179,000
- Elimination of One Grounds Department position - \$30,500
- Elimination of six custodial positions - \$169,500

#### 3. Reduction and reassignment of Administrative Positions - \$275,000

#### 4. Reduce elementary and middle summer school program - \$75,000

#### 5. Reduce district overtime costs for custodians, grounds, maintenance & food service departments - \$75,000

#### 6. Reduce the 2010 summer maintenance budget - \$150,000

#### 7. Reduce athletic budget - \$125,000

#### 8. Reduce fine arts budget - \$75,000

#### 9. Reduce curriculum budget supplies - \$55,000

#### 10. Reduce printing and postage costs - \$50,000

#### 11. Reduce grounds and custodial department supplies - \$100,000

#### 12. Reduce technology budget - \$75,000

#### 13. Reduce business department costs (paper, ancillary supplies) - \$40,000

#### 14. Reduce up to five copiers and renegotiate lease - \$50,000

#### 15. Eliminate three regular education buses to reduce transportation costs - \$150,000

16. Eliminate all out-of-district field trips - \$75,000

17. Eliminate all District Conferences & Travel - \$40,000

18. *Freeze 2010-11 Administrator and Exempt Salaries - \$175,000*

***Total proposed budget reductions - \$3,154,000***

Hightower said the Board presented the list of proposed budget reductions to the Edwardsville Education Association (EEA) and the Edwardsville School Service Personnel Association (ESSPA). As required under the Illinois Education Labor Relations Act, the Board cannot implement or make a final decision on any proposed budget cut that affects the wages, terms and conditions of employment of employees represented by a labor union until such time as the Board completes both decisional and impact bargaining over the proposed budget cut, which bargaining has been initiated.

Board President Greg Roosevelt said that the Board recognizes that the current economic recession has impacted many District 7 citizens who are currently struggling just to make ends meet. "The Board and administration will continue to operate the District with the funds available and make the necessary reductions to address its needs during this financial crisis," Roosevelt said.

The Board of Education will bargain with labor groups over proposed budget reduction plan during the months of January and February. The Board will act on proposed budget reduction plan on March 22.