

January 26, 2004

The Honorable Rod Blagojevich
Governor
State of Illinois
207 Statehouse
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dear Governor Blagojevich,

As elected representatives of Fox River Grove School District 3, we are asking that a special session of the General Assembly be called to address the crisis facing educational funding in the State of Illinois. We believe that under funding, the burden of unfounded mandates, and the spiraling effect of tax caps on local communities have an adverse effect on our students and community.

This year District 3 is in the process of creating a balanced budget for FY05 by increasing registration and user fees by over 50%, reducing programs and staff by 15% and asking our voters to approve an education tax rate increase of 17%. Should the referendum fail, the school district will be forced to reduce teaching and other staff by over 36%. This results in a shorter school day for students, class size at all grade levels will increase from about 22 to over 32. From our perspective we are being forced to adhere to a strict business model of avoiding deficit spending at the expense of the children. It is our belief that the failure of the State of Illinois to adequately fund education has resulted in future generations failing to have the educational advantages afforded to recent past generations.

Our school board is mandated by state and federal regulations to achieve specific educational goals for all children. However, our community can only be asked to carry the educational burden of inflated local property taxes for so long. The State of Illinois must begin to fulfill the fundamental responsibility for funding public education.

The General Assembly must deal with the unpopular politics of funding education. In our opinion, this is no longer the time to study or debate the need to provide adequate state funding of education. All educational studies of the past three decades indicate that the state must provide a larger percentage of school funding and that local property tax relief must be provided. Residents of Fox River Grove already pay a much higher tax rate than most communities in our state. The delivery of education is suffering due to the uncomfortable politics of raising the state income tax, increasing the base for sales taxes and other revenue enhancements. Education and education funding must be addressed now!

We thank you for your consideration of our request for a special session of the General Assembly to address education funding in the State of Illinois and hope to be of service to you and others in helping to understand the nature of our concerns for the children who attend our schools and all schools throughout the State.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Zasadil
President

Don Rose
Vice President

Pat Hughes
Member

Robert Nunamaker
Member

Gerry Blohm
Member

Kay Laube
Member

Doris Sadik
Member

John M. Hill
Superintendent