

Don White

From: Don White [dwhite@pekin.net]
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2004 6:17 AM
To: Don White
Subject: Listserv Welcome (11-12-04)

Welcome to the first District 108 Superintendent's Community Listserv email! I am pleased that so many people have signed up to join this listserv. I encourage you to send this message to others. The directions for subscribing or unsubscribing will always be included at the bottom of the listserv messages.

It may come as no surprise that I want to focus this first listserv message on school funding. As everyone knows, our recent referenda failed. While that is disappointing, I feel we have to move forward and look for ways to address the revenue side of our budget.

I recently read a newspaper article someone quoted as saying that "We are not in the midst of a budget crisis. We are in the midst of a revenue crisis." Given the millions of dollars that have already been cut from the District 108 budget, I think this quote can be applied to our situation, also. Of course, we can always continue making reductions to balance our budget, but I would argue that many of the cuts already made and those that will have to be made in the future if we don't solve the revenue side of the budget have had and will continue to have at an even great magnitude a negative impact on our ability to provide a comprehensive education for our students.

In addition to sharing information and lobbying our legislators to support House Bill 750 (more follows), my efforts will also include making a recommendation to the Board that we place the same questions on the April, 2005 ballot. I do not know how the Board will respond, but I feel we have to seek every way of solving our current financial needs.

With this said, I would like to share what I believe is a promising piece of proposed legislation - House Bill 750. If approved by our legislators and signed by the Governor, HB750 greatly reduces the burden currently placed on property owners. In fact, it shifts the burden of funding public schools in Illinois away from a regressive taxing system (property taxes) to a more progressive tax (income). While this bill does call for an increase in the Illinois Income Tax from 3% to 5% and it adds some sales taxes to non-taxed services, it dramatically shifts the burden from property owners to a more fair system. If approved, Illinois would move from 41st in the country to 37th in the country in the way it funds public schools.

I completely understand that new taxes are very hard to support. However, we must solve the current manner in which we fund public schools or communities will continue to face local solutions and an ever-increasing burden on the local property owner. I encourage you to learn more about HB750 and to share this email with your friends, colleagues, and anyone else that is tired of our current system. I also urge you to write letters to our legislators encouraging them to support HB750 as a potential solution to solving the current revenue crisis!

You can learn more about HB750 by visiting these sites:

<http://www.schoolnewsservice.com/HB750Letters.htm> (This site has example letters.)
<http://www.ctbaonline.org/> (This site has information about the author of the bill, Ralph Matire.)
<http://www.legis.state.il.us/> (Enter HB750 to search for this bill.)

Please let me know if you have questions or a need for additional information.

Thank you,

Don

11/17/2004

You can choose to dream or you can dream and do something about it. I prefer the latter.

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