March 3, 2015

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Constituents,

The Osceola School District and Community has a long tradition of providing public education to create lifelong learners who will have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to lead productive lives in a democratic and sustainable society.

The Governor’s biennial budget released in early February has brought up many questions regarding how the budget proposal will impact education in the Osceola School District. This letter provides a quick overview of the financial impact of the proposed state budget.

School finance is complicated, to say the least. In the 1993-94 school year, Wisconsin implemented revenue limits. A district’s revenue limit is the maximum amount of revenue that may be raised through state general aid and local property tax. The state revenue limit is 89% of the District’s budget. Until recent years, revenue limits have been increased annually at the rate of inflation to accommodate increases in costs to school districts to maintain programs and staffing. The proposed state budget has a $0 increase in revenue limits. In addition, the 2015-16 proposed budget reduces per pupil aid by $150. While $150 doesn’t sound like much, the impact equates to a $251,700 reduction in revenue for the Osceola School District. With no inflation increase and a reduction in aid, the District is facing a projected budget shortfall of $667,000 and will need to make tough choices to balance the budget. According to Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance, with no increases in revenue, funding for the 2015-16 school year will approach the equivalent of what was provided to schools in 2009.

The Osceola School District has remained fiscally responsible in respect to the investment local taxpayers make to support our schools. Over the past four years, we have juggled expenses, deferred maintenance, and reduced purchasing to protect the programming provided to our students. The District needs additional revenues to continue to provide the highest quality and most well rounded educational environment for our students.

Wisconsin has a history of investing in one of the nation’s best public education systems. Students in Wisconsin schools today deserve the same investment as past generations. As we lobby for our students, we want state legislatures to support increased funding for public education in the 15-17 biennium budget. I encourage you to share your concerns and address your questions to your legislators:

Governor Scott Walker
115 East Capitol
Madison, WI 53702
(608) 266-1212
govgeneral@wisconsin.gov

Senator Sheila Harsdorf
122 South, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702
(608) 266-7745
Sen.Harsdorf@legis.wi.gov

Representative Adam Jarchow
19 North, State Capitol
PO Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708-8952
(888) 529-0028
Rep.Jarchow@legis.wisconsin.gov

Sincerely,

Mark Luebker
Superintendent of Schools

The School District of Osceola does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or handicap.