

# Rio Community School District

**Elementary School**  
355 Lowville Rd.  
Rio, WI 53960  
920-992-3143 / Fax: 920-992-3012



**Middle/High School**  
411 Church St.  
Rio, WI 53960  
920-992-3141 / Fax: 920-992-3157

**Craig Vetter**  
Elementary Principal

**Mark McGuire**  
District Administrator

**Cory Hinkel**  
MS/HS Principal – Athletic Director

June, 16, 2015

Dear Parents and Community Members,

Recently we closed the doors on another successful school year. As I reflect on the year, we have much to be proud of. Our teachers worked hard to be sure our students were academically successful. Students and teachers had more access to technology. Our athletes saw success, especially this spring with several students participating at the state track meet and our baseball team participating in the state baseball tournament. All the good things we do for our students could be in jeopardy though, if the proposed state budget were to become law.

Rio Community Schools, along with all public schools across the state, will be facing significant challenges if the proposed budget were to be passed and signed into law. The following items will have an impact on our school district:

- Wisconsin will fall below the national average in per pupil spending, for the first time ever
- Since 2008, Wisconsin has seen a 15% decrease in per pupil spending for public education
- The proposed budget will provide less state general aid than in 2010
- Wisconsin is one of only 5 states that have been keeping spending on public education close to flat while all other states have been increasing spending on public education at an average of 4%
- The expansion of voucher schools, along with the funding of those schools, will be taken directly from public school general aid. Current state statute allows public school students to open enroll to other public schools. An amount of \$6,635 follows a student to the new school. Legislation that is currently being considered by the legislature would allow public school students to enroll in a voucher school, which is a non-public school approved by the state, that are all currently religious schools. A voucher of \$7,200 for K-8 students and \$7,856 for high school students follows that student to their voucher school. As a result, non-public school students are eligible for 18% more funding than public school students.
- There is consideration of home-schooled, voucher, and charter school students who reside within our school district but do not attend the Rio Community School District to participate in any extracurricular or athletic team that is offered by our district. If this were to happen a host of issues will arise such as how will a student be considered eligible to participate in an extracurricular activity or in athletics.
- The proposed state budget does not allow for an increase in special education funding (which has not been increased in seven years) but does allow for a student who is identified as special education to potentially enroll in a private school with a private school voucher of \$12,000. This voucher would come directly from our school district budget. Students who enroll in the private school using the special education voucher would not be guaranteed the legal rights afforded to them under federal law.
- There are also changes to teacher licensing in the proposed state budget. The changes, according to the School Administrator Alliance, "would position Wisconsin as having the lowest entry standards for the teaching profession in the country."

The Rio Community Schools are an important part of our community. They are a focal point of our community where student engage in their learning and community members gather for events. I hope we will continue to educate future generations and I'm asking if you believe that Rio Community Schools are important to our community and public schools as a whole are important, please contact Senator Luther Olsen, [Sen.Olsen@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Sen.Olsen@legis.wisconsin.gov) and Representative Keith Ripp, [Rep.Ripp@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Rep.Ripp@legis.wisconsin.gov) and ask them to fully fund public education so we can continue to educate the children of our community.

Sincerely Yours in Education, Mark L. McGuire