



From the desk of Mr. Herl . . .
January 27, 2010

The Wheatland school district has the same concerns as the majority of the districts in the state. Some very difficult decisions will need to be made. The continued decline in funding due to the state budget cuts and declining enrollment is the focus throughout the state. Four districts in House of Representatives District #118 began the current fiscal year with less than a 30 day cash reserve and four additional districts with less than a 60 day cash reserve. Many districts are anticipating additional cuts and deliberating how funds can be generated.

If there is no change in the base state aid per pupil (BSAPP), the FY11 general fund is estimated to be reduced by \$72,000 due to lower enrollment. The (BSAPP) has been reduced 9.5% from \$4433 to \$4012 this school year. In 2004-05, USD 292's full time enrollment (FTE) was 184; currently the district FTE is 102 for FY10. Fortunately the enrollment is stabilizing if not improving slightly.

The Local Option Budget (LOB) is not being assessed to the maximum authorized amount. An additional \$91,000 can be collected through local ad valorem tax dollars within the district. USD #292's LOB authorized amount is approximately \$387,000. This amount is determined by a percentage of the general fund.

The decision must be made on how to make up for the deficit in FY11. Possible solutions have been discussed by the Board of Education. Some of the solutions include raising the LOB, reducing programs in the district, cutting staff and/or reducing salaries. Additional scenarios are to combine classrooms at WES, combine classrooms and move the PK-4 grades to an area in the high school, move the PK-4 grades to Grinnell, consolidate with USD #291 and/or begin talks with other districts.

Should the elementary classes be combined in this district, the class size will have a range of 13-15 students. This will result in a reduction of staff and combined grade levels. The option of sending PK-4 grades to Grinnell will increase the class size to 10-17 students. Funding for these students would likely be paid to USD #291.

Once again these are very difficult decisions for the district. The USD #292 Board of Education encourages you to share your thoughts. There are board meetings on the second and fourth Monday of every month.

The Grainfield Community Development Committee will have a meeting in the Wheatland Elementary on February 6, 2010, at 3:00. I will have discussion about possible solutions for the district. You are encouraged to attend.

Darrin Herl, Superintendent
USD #292 – Wheatland