

Meridian Community Unit School District No. 15

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Meridian Schools has partnered with 360 other Illinois school districts, representing over 1,370,000 students across Illinois, to support a statewide initiative called, "Pass Illinois Budget". This effort's aim is to shed light on the hardships the current Illinois Budget Impasse has on local school districts and its effects on our students.

While public K-12 schools have benefitted from a partially-funded budget, without a full budget our schools, students, families and communities will suffer. For Meridian CUSD #15, state funding comprises nearly 43% of revenue for the Education Fund and about 67% percent of revenue for the Transportation Fund. During the most recent fiscal year (FY17), the Meridian School District has received all of its General State Aid payments. However, the school still hasn't received a mandated categorical payment for fiscal year 2017. Mandated categorical payments equal approximately \$650,000 of revenue per year to our school district. This equates to almost 9% of our total revenue for the operating funds.

The State of Illinois' delinquency in paying these payments, along with reduced funding over the last several years, has put a stress on Meridian CUSD #15's financial health. To be more specific, the Meridian School Board has recently begun the process of amending its 2016-2017 school year budget to reflect the missing mandated categorical payments. The budget adopted in the fall of 2016 had a positive balance of \$76,000 in these operating funds. However, with the missed payments, the school board will be forced to amend that budget and now will carry a deficit of \$266,000.

To date, the Meridian School District has been utilizing its' reserve funds to maintain the programs it offers our students. However, those reserve funds are limited and we cannot continue to cut another 9-10% of expenditures without effecting the programs that we offer.

We call on members of the Illinois General Assembly and the Governor to do the following:

- **Immediately support an end to the state budget impasse.**
- **Fix the education funding formula and invest in students in schools, including higher education, throughout the state.**
- **Pay school districts what they are owed this year.**

The toxic climate at the Capitol often leads one to avoid getting involved. Yet, as both taxpayers and citizens who are concerned about the health and future of our state, now is the time to be engaged. Contact your elected officials to let them know your feelings about the current "state of our state." As a convenience to you, attached to this letter is an informational sheet on how to contact the legislators who represent the Meridian School District.

Please be assured that your Board of Education and I will continue to monitor this situation closely. We will also continue to develop contingency plans to respond to the prospect of an ongoing budget impasse.

We are committed to continuing the outstanding educational services that your child deserves and are committed to serving our school community. Thank you for your continued support of our schools.

Sincerely,

Dan Brue

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