

I hope that everyone is enjoying the new school year. We are off to a great start. There are new teachers, new students, new math, and new lights at the High School.

I wanted to cover a few items this month. First the Budget: I want to let all of you know that we are basing our budget and the bond on three important tenants: Educational, fiscal and social responsibility. These three tenants will form the foundation for how we develop and communicate information about both important issues to you. We have in the past and will continue to focus on providing the best education for our children while also maintaining our fiscal and social responsibility. As we begin the budget season, we have decided that when we communicate information about these two items, we will do so by providing a comparison of important points to consider if the budget passes or we operate under a default budget, and if the bond passes or is defeated. Based on feedback from many of you, we feel that this should afford you a more complete picture and be able to juxtapose the consequences of passage or defeat of these two very important items. Also, we are going to be providing a one page data sheet for the bond and one for the budget in order for people to just review the numbers. We will as in the past also provide a narrative of the key issues broken out as I described above.

I want to alert you to our current situation as we continue to operate under the default budget. As of the end of September, the District has incurred unexpected expenses that are approaching \$1.0M. This is the result of expenses for students who have moved into our districts that require various supporting programs. These expenses, which are related to Special Education can and do fluctuate widely through-out the year. While I do not want to appear alarmist, it is important for you to realize that we currently have a serious situation. We have an education and social obligation to ensure that all of our students receive an adequate education that meets their needs and that means absorbing the costs associated with meeting these needs. Our initial budget was based on a very minimal increase, and the default budget resulted in the SAU having to lean out many budget items. The impact of these unanticipated and unpredictable expenses coupled with operating with a default budget has very, very significant implications. A meeting of the Budget and Property Meeting will have taken place after press time. The SAU will be developing a strategy with suggestions on cuts and alternative plans to address this very significant gap. I do not know what will happen if these gaps stay the same or increase, and it could even decrease if some students leave, but we will do everything we can to ensure that classrooms are affected as little as possible. Please try and attend budget meetings so you can be better informed.

A few comments about H1N1 our nurses, staff and administrators have been fully trained and briefed on the best way to minimize spread of the flu. The SAU has adopted the recommendations from the State regarding ways to minimize the impact during the flu season. I want to remind you all of a few of the key points: First, wash your hands. If our children will wash their hands often, avoid shaking hands, and cough and or sneeze into their sleeves, they are doing a great job. Also, if your child is sick with a fever, they should be kept home until they are feverless for 24 hours without any medicines to reduce their fever. If you have any questions, on what to do, please talk to your doctor and or the school nurse there is also information on the Conval.edu webpage.

On a lighter note, how many of you know that the High School now has lights. That means that you and your family can enjoy a high school soccer or football game under the lights. If you haven't visited, please come by and cheer on the cougars. For more information go to the High School website and click on athletics