

September 9, 2010

Dear Parents and Community Members,

The State of Illinois is currently in the midst of financial turmoil. As a result, funding for schools is being reduced and even eliminated in some cases. For example, the General Assembly cut transportation funding to schools by 42 percent for the upcoming school year. The Reading Improvement Block Grant and the ADA Block Grant are two of several funding sources that have been completely eliminated. We have been told by our legislators that these are the first of many painful cuts to come for education over the course of the next five or more years. These cuts along with the fact that the State neglected to make all of its payments to schools last year have caused great hardship for those creating a budget for the current fiscal year. Because of all the uncertainty surrounding the State's ability to pay its bills, we feel we have no other choice but to tighten our belts where spending is concerned. While we approved a balanced budget at the September 8 meeting of the Board of Education, our ability to operate in the black will depend largely upon the State's ability to meet its funding obligations. For those of you wondering, we do have money in reserves, but we would like to save that money for future years should funding be decreased even further and school districts be required to carry an even larger burden where financing education is concerned. At the same time, the State does require school districts to carry a minimum of 180 days cash on hand, thus we are limited in the amount of reserves we can actually use.

What does the State's budget crisis mean for Germantown? The faculty, staff, Board of Education, and I are very committed to taking a conservative approach and making wise decisions where expenditures are concerned. We have decreased bus routes from ten to eight in order to compensate for the huge decrease in transportation funding. We are maximizing our resources by using our current staff to teach RtI and Advanced Learning thus eliminating the need to hire someone new for this school year. We hope to minimize the cuts we have to make in the future by spending wisely now, but please be aware that cuts are a real possibility as long as the State continues to experience such great financial hardship.

Despite the financial challenges we face, our district remains totally committed to achieving excellence in every area of responsibility regarding the education of our children. We are equally committed to improving our community through partnerships with parents and the community as a whole. We know that student success depends on these partnerships.

At Germantown Elementary, we are proud of our accomplishments. Whether in the classroom, on the court, or in extra-curricular competition, our commitment to preparing students with 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge and skills is unwavering.

Every individual associated with Germantown Elementary School is committed to student and community success. We know the challenges that face our school, our community, and our state; however, we are confident Germantown Elementary School students will excel in the world that awaits them. We invite our families, community leaders, and other school stakeholders to partner with us as we look forward to a year of continued success despite the challenges we face.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Robin Becker, Superintendent  
Germantown Elementary School