

School District of Amery

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Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members:

The School District of Amery is an excellent school district because of our community's support! Your students achieve at a greater level than most area schools. I am concerned that the upcoming State budget will hurt your school district, and I hope you will read through this information and help me to advocate for your children.

The Governor's biennial budget released in early February has brought up many questions regarding how the budget proposal will impact public education in the Amery district. This letter provides a quick overview of the financial impact of the Governor's proposal.

School finance is complicated, to say the least. A district's revenue limit is the maximum amount of revenue that may be raised through state general aid and local property tax. Until recent years, revenue limits have been increased annually at the rate of inflation to accommodate increases in costs to school districts to maintain programs and staffing. The proposed state budget has a \$0 increase in revenue limits. In addition, the 2015-16 proposed budget reduces our per pupil aid by \$150. While \$150 doesn't sound like much, the impact equates to a \$238,499 reduction in revenue for the School District of Amery. Even if the \$150 is put back in the State's budget, this will still mean a \$0 increase for the upcoming year. With no inflation increase and a reduction in aid, the District is facing a projected budget shortfall of \$1,164,325 and will need to make tough choices to balance the budget. According to Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance, with no increases in revenue, funding for the 2015-16 school year will approach the equivalent of what was provided to schools in 2009.

The Governor's budget also is promoting the expansion of the voucher school program throughout the State. You, as a parent who supports us and has children attending a public school, need to know that this expansion will send money away from your children's classrooms to classrooms in private schools. Currently, our taxpayers in the School District of Amery are paying \$136,000 more in property taxes because this amount, intended to lower your property taxes, is instead going to the Milwaukee Charter School program.

The School District of Amery has remained fiscally responsible in respect to the investment local taxpayers make to support our schools. Over the past four years, we have juggled expenses and made cuts to the budget in the amount of \$2,793,153. We have deferred maintenance and reduced purchasing to protect the programming provided to your children. The District needs additional revenues to continue to provide the highest quality and most well rounded educational environment for our students.

Wisconsin and the School District of Amery have a history of investing in one of the nation's best public education systems. As we lobby for your students, we want state legislatures to support increase funding for public education in the 2015-17 biennium budget. I encourage you to share your concerns and address your comments and questions to our legislators.

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Sincerely,



Stephen V. Schiell
District Administrator