



# Auburn Community Unit District No. 10



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FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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The governor signed into law last Wednesday the bill that promises an increase in education funding for the 2016 school year. Although this is being framed as a responsible measure and a win for schools, it has created a great misperception that public education is being fully funded. This measure does not fully fund schools at all. The governor has promised schools 92% of a foundation level formula from 6 years ago. This would be equivalent to you receiving 92% of your paycheck from your base salary from 2010 and then be told you should celebrate because last year you only received 87%. Also, remember that last April, mid-budget, we were shorted over \$600,000 from the State because it was decided to simply not pay the originally reduced amount that was promised last July. The State has proven over the past several years that signing a financial obligation into law does not mean that there is any legal obligation to actually pay it.

Keep in mind that there is no additional revenue put in place to back the current funding as it sits now. The revenue the State of Illinois receives from state income tax was left to sunset from 5% to 3.75% and the governor has made every attempt to freeze local property taxes, which is the only other piece of revenue for public schools. Also, there is neither a plan nor any intention to back-pay any past compounded financial shortfalls. So each year that passes with a frozen foundation level, the prorated percentage reflects a larger dollar amount being denied to school districts in proportion to the rising operational costs to educate each student.

The other piece to note is that the whole premise of General State Aid is to equal the financial playing field for schools across the State of Illinois. So, when an across-the-board proration takes place, those districts more dependent on GSA are losing more money than those more reliant on local property taxes. Although various funding proposals are attempting to balance this piece of the puzzle through forms of hold-harmless provisions, prorating GSA has magnified the inequities that GSA was originally designed to correct.

Since I have been approached this week with a few, "Hey! Good news about the school funding!" I thought you should know not to be fooled by the political rhetoric.

Darren J. Root, Ed.S.  
Superintendent

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