

From the School Board
October, 2017

*“The budget is not just a collection of numbers,
but an expression of our values and aspirations.” Jacob Lew*

The Howard-Suamico School District (HSSD) Board of Education shares Mr. Lew’s perspective on budgets – our district budget should reflect your values and aspirations relative to the education of our youth. Among many tools, the budget may be the most effective tool the board has to express community values in the district’s work. The board’s input into a budget begins in late spring and increases with frequency and detail into the summer. While all budget discussions are open to the public, each fall the budget is presented in detail during a special hearing at which time the public can share insights and vote on the preliminary tax levy. As a follow up to this meeting, on October 23, 2017, the Board approved a levy of \$25,126,503, which supports a district budget of \$86,751,091 – an increase of .5% from the previous year. This levy will result in the school’s portion of our property taxes remaining stable at \$9.19 - 7.8% below the state’s average levy.

The total revenue available in our budget reflects funds from both local and state sources. It was the state portion of the revenue, which presented us a unique planning challenge this year as the Wisconsin budget was not finalized until September. While this delayed state budget required a unique level of flexibility, one of our more pressing issues, the revenue cap legislation, has challenged HSSD since 1993. This 24-year-old legislation has positioned the district to annually receive less revenue, on a per-pupil basis than 95% of school districts in the State of Wisconsin.

Efforts to revise this “revenue cap” legislation in a manner that more accurately reflects our state constitution’s desire for fair funding have been the board’s advocacy focus for a number of years. Local legislators responded this year in passing legislation that begins to reverse the affects only to see it vetoed by the governor’s office. HSSD will receive additional revenue in the upcoming budget year; however, it will not make up the almost \$7 million gap between us and some other local schools. Regardless of the budget challenges, your board alongside hundreds of passionate, dedicated staff will remain focused on delivering what our community values – a world-class education for every student who attends our district.

For more information about the Howard-Suamico School District Budget please visit our website at www.hssd.k12.wi.us, or for additional information regarding this article, contact school board member Mark Ashley at 737-2067 or markashl@hssd.k12.wi.us.