

News Release

School Board Hears PMA's Updated Financial Projections

INGLESIDE, IL – July 31, 2008 – A pending \$225 per-pupil increase in General State Aid (GSA) proposed for the 2008-09 school year—a higher increase to the GSA foundation level than originally anticipated—would have a positive impact on Big Hollow School District's financial picture, according to public finance firm PMA. PMA presented updated financial projections to the Big Hollow School Board at its regular July 21st meeting.

The updated projections factored in the District's addition of 24 teachers to fulfill its promise to reduce class sizes and restore the art, music and computer programs after a successful referendum. Overall, the District anticipates 27 new hires for the upcoming school year. Other Board-approved initiatives integrated into the new projections included:

- Addition of five to six buses to effectively eliminate double-run busing for the 2008-09 school year;
- Hiring of an assistant principal to focus on curriculum and assist with disciplinary issues, RTI (Response To Intervention) implementation, and other administrative duties;
- Salary increases for noncertified staff; and
- Formalizing an external communications program.

Projections suggest that with no new revenue sources and barring any new, unfunded mandates from the state or federal governments, the District may be able to operate "in the black" through 2011. While projections anticipate that the housing slump will slow growth of the District's total EAV (Equalized Assessed Valuation) and therefore slow the growth of property-tax revenue, enrollment growth likely will slow significantly as well.

The Board also reviewed the method and timeframe for notifying parents and students regarding classroom assignments and bus routes. In a new process beginning this year, the School District will mail a postcard containing this information to the home of each registered student. Class lists and bus routes will NOT be posted at the school for security reasons. Superintendent Ron Pazanin stated that postcards notifying incoming kindergarten students whether they are in the morning or afternoon session will be mailed on or around August 7;

postcards pertaining to classroom assignments and bus routes for all grades are expected to go out the week of August 11. As of the Board meeting, approximately 400 of last year's students anticipated to return for the upcoming school year had still not officially registered. Pazanin emphasized that only registered students will receive postcards. The School District office, which has moved to the Primary School building, is open daily from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. to process registrations; the per-student fee is \$200. "Parents should call the District office at 847-740-5320 if their student has not received a postcard by Thursday, August 21," said Pazanin.

Other highlights of the July 21st Board meeting included:

- Board discussion of a request by St. Bede Catholic School in Ingleside to bus the approximately 30 St. Bede students who reside within the Big Hollow School District. St. Bede School itself lies outside District boundaries. Illinois law requires that Big Hollow transport private and parochial students residing within the District to the Big Hollow campus, but the District is under no legal obligation to transport students to the St. Bede campus. The Board will investigate the cost and liability issues related to initiating a separate bus run for St. Bede students with the understanding that St. Bede would absorb the cost of transportation outside District boundaries.
- Board discussion of when to pay Big Hollow's required share of SEDOL building bonds. The Board voted to pay the District's total share, \$335,000, by August 1, 2008, to avoid accruing any interest.
- An update on Big Hollow's implementation of RTI. The Teacher Institute Day on Tuesday, August 26 will pertain to the discipline component of RTI; interested parents and community members are invited to attend the full-day workshop. For further details, visit www.bighollow.us after August 21.

The Big Hollow School Board next meets at 7 p.m. on Monday, August 18 in the Middle School's multipurpose room. As always, the community is invited to attend and provide feedback.