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April 12, 2018

Dear Arbor Park Community Members,

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on the financial situation of our school district. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is planning to issue vouchers for additional funding to the State Comptroller for some schools according to the new Evidence-Based Funding Model. This funding is heading to the most under resourced districts in our state.

Our district is defined in the Evidence-Based Funding Model as an under resourced school district with a funding adequacy of only 57.30%. According to the calculations from ISBE, we will be receiving an additional \$571,810.90 in state payments before June 30, 2018. This is exciting news for Arbor Park and will afford us the opportunity to invest in needed academic student supports that have been lost over the years due to the economic downturn and a lack of consistent funding from the State of Illinois. While we welcome this increase, please be aware that this new money only moves us to a funding adequacy of 60.40%.

However, this short-term increase in revenue is met with an uncertainty in how the State of Illinois will be able to sustain this practice beyond the current 2017/18 school year. Unfortunately, we continue to hear that state officials have an interest in shifting pension costs, freezing residential property taxes and altering the ways in which school districts are allowed to issue debt. Any one of these changes could present the District with major funding challenges in the future.

To be certain, we are very appreciative of the support from ISBE and the State of Illinois. We will continue to make decisions on new initiatives that are fiscally responsible and student centered. Our goal as a District is to provide a robust and challenging focus on academics while offering extra-curricular activities that represent the values and interests of the Oak Forest/Tinley Park Communities. We hope that this short-term benefit matures into the Illinois educational system being adequately funded for all.

Have a wonderful rest of the school year and thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Andrea Sala

For research summaries about the evidence based models of funding that were used for the current recommendations on adequacy please see this link: <http://picusodden.com/state-studies/>.

For overview videos about evidence based funding:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jx6Q-NPfbg8>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3mQ1Hpl3is>