

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Elementary Strings – MMSD Budget Update

The 2004-2005 school budget process is underway. On Thursday, March 11th, the Superintendent released his recommendations for \$9.9 million cuts needed to bring next year's budget in line with state imposed revenue caps.

- The Superintendent **did not recommend any changes in the elementary strings program** at this point in next year's 2004-2005 school budget process. However class sizes are large and growing, which negatively affects students' ability to learn in all academic subject areas.
- The school **budget process is very volatile**, and budget decisions are **not final** until the School Board approves the entire budget, which could be as late as June 2004.
- Last year, the District Administration recommended a fee for Grade 4 strings, which the Board vetoed. **The Board did approve all other fees. However, the effect was to cut the academic curriculum at the last minute after public hearings were held. The curriculum was cut, but the referendum enabled the curriculum to be re-stored.**

What Can You Do?

- **Stay informed.** E-mail me (Barb Schrank – schrank4@charter.net). I will keep you posted if financial changes or cuts are being contemplated in the budget for the elementary strings instrumental curriculum.
- **E-mail** the Superintendent and School Board members - comments@madison.k12.wi.us.

Madison Schools Elementary Strings – Additional Information

- ***High Demand*** - nearly **2,000 fourth and fifth grade elementary students** participate (>50%).
- ***Growing Program*** – Since 1993, 4th grade **strings program** enrollment **increased by 21%** while district 4th grade enrollment decreased by 10%.
- ***Low-Income Grants*** - **450 low-income fourth and fifth graders receive instrument grants** at no incremental cost to the District.
- ***Costs Covered*** - **Rental fees cover the costs** of new instruments and the repairs for existing instruments.
- ***Cost Effective*** – The **entire K-12 music education** curriculum costs the District **\$238/participant/school year** (nearly 20,000 participants). The District spends \$990/participant for elementary math; \$2,000/participant for elementary language arts.
- ***Efficient*** - Elementary string teachers are **efficient** – **200 students/full-time strings teacher**.
- ***Academic Curriculum*** - Elementary strings are the first two years of the MSMD School Board approved Grades 4-12 instrumental academic curriculum.

What Can You Do – Be Proactive for Your Children?

- ♣ **Stay informed.** E-mail me (Barb Schrank – schrank4@charter.net). I will keep you posted if financial changes or cuts are being contemplated in the budget for the elementary strings instrumental curriculum.
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