

Reaching Out as a Community Member:

As a school district, our focus in recent months has been one of reaching out and engaging with the greater Platteville Community. We recognize that our futures are completely intertwined. As a district, we are incredibly grateful for the community's support and have taken steps over the last year to take seriously our role as a community member. The OEGray School has become a significant supporter of Platteville community agencies, with the most recent addition of The Senior Center. All of our tenants, (Head Start, Family Connections, Wisconsin Forward, Southwest Tech, and now the Senior Center) are valued community agencies and we offer them an unbeatable rate with a goal of simply covering our costs. We are pleased to propose a building name change to the OEGray Community Learning Center, because that is what it has become.

We have reached out to our employers in the community, inviting them to engage in conversation around our joint needs. Over fifty of them joined us in our "Back to School" luncheon and we recently sent our seventh graders and our sophomores on a tour of four of our local manufacturers (4x Innovations, Platteville Business Incubator, L & M Corrugate and Hypro). Each month over the next year, our board members will be meeting with various business and community sectors including financial services, communication industries, human services, health care providers, post-secondary Institutions, and city and county government, all with a goal of better understanding our shared relationship.

This has been a unique year for the Platteville School District for other reasons. It is the first year of the state's biennial budget, which always brings some uncertainty, but never so much as this year. We typically held our annual meeting at the end of August, but there were still so many unknowns in August this year that we would have been making decisions purely on best guesses. We did not want to present a budget to our electors that could be substantially different from what was approved by the time it was finalized. As a result, we postponed our annual meeting to Monday October 30th, at the OEGray Professional Learning Center. The budget hearing will be at 6:30 p.m., and the annual meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m.

We will be presenting a \$17,147,807.00 budget which reflects a little over 2% increase in operational expenses. This is a significant decrease of nearly 4% from last year's actual expenses, because of the reduction in maintenance and building costs that were incurred over the last couple of years. Our budget is tied to the number of students we have, plus the amount approved by voters in our past referendum to fund facility improvements. The good news for homeowners is that property values are starting to increase. Unfortunately, as property values increase, the state's contribution to shared costs actually decreases. In the end, our mill-rate is a complex formula that will not change from last year. Our mill-rate pre-referendum in 2013-14 was \$11.44 per thousand. On Monday evening, we will be asking our electors to approve a mill-rate of \$10.07, showcasing for the community our continuing efforts to be fiscally responsible while providing an outstanding education.

Thank you for your continued support and we hope to see more of you in the future, as we recognize, "We are all Hillmen!"