

March 30, 2010

Dear Parents,

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify some misconceptions and concerns about our district's special education programs and services for the 2010 –2011 school year. First and foremost, we want you to know that special education has, and will continue to be, a top priority for our district. The district is dedicated to ensuring that your child receives the appropriate special education services necessary to help them achieve their full potential. This will not change, as it is our philosophy and mission for all the students of Evergreen Park. Your child's special needs will not be compromised.

At the Board of Education meeting on March 24, reductions in staff were summarized and outlined. These reductions were made because the district's enrollment has been decreasing. Reductions will be put in place for both general education and special education classes. The number of special education staff members needed is based on the number of students needing specialized services and specifically which services they need. Many special education parents were present at the March 24 meeting and voiced their concerns. It was an emotional meeting and difficult for everyone present. There are many rumors circulating and we want to make sure that you, as parents, receive accurate information.

Enrollment projections have been closely monitored and the decision to release staff is never taken lightly. I would like to share with you that we are anticipating the following self-contained classes for the upcoming school year:

- ❖ **Early Childhood (ages 3-5)**
 - 4 half-day sessions, same as this year
 - Maximum enrollment is 10 students
 - Teacher and aide

- ❖ **Cross-Categorical Kindergarten**
 - One class, same as this year
 - Maximum enrollment is 10 students
 - Teacher and aide

- ❖ **Primary Self-Contained (grades 1-3)**
 - Three classes, one less class than this year
 - Maximum enrollment is 13 students
 - Teacher and aide

- ❖ **Intermediate Self-Contained (grades 4-6)**
 - Three classes, one less class than this year
 - Maximum enrollment is 13
 - Teacher and aide

- ❖ **Junior High Self Contained (grades 7-8)**
 - Two classes, same as this year
 - Maximum enrollment is 13
 - Teacher and aide

The number of classes listed above is based on enrollment projections for next year. Enrollment projections can change between now and the first day of school in August. At this time, projections do not indicate maximum enrollment for any of these classes. If increased enrollment warrants the opening of a new class, the district will do so.

Eight instructional assistant/teacher aide positions will be reduced for next year. **Five eighth grade students who have one-to-one assistants will move to the high school next year. Current projections indicate that two less self-contained special education classrooms are needed next year. The result is that two teachers and two aides have been released. Based on student needs, one less aide one-to-one aide is needed for next year.** These reductions in staff are made in accordance with the teacher and support staff contracts and Illinois School Code.

If you have any questions or additional concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's principal or me. We care deeply about our special education students, and feel confident that your children currently do and will continue to receive a high quality education in our district.

Sincerely,

Diane P. Cody, Ed.D.
Superintendent