

# *Herscher Community Unit School District No. 2*

DR. RICHARD S. DECMAN, SUPERINTENDENT  
SHELLY PARSONS, SPECIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR  
PETE FALK, CURRICULUM DIRECTOR

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March 14, 2017

Dear Herscher School Community,

I am writing to inform you about a situation in our school district that unfortunately has caused us to implement a Reduction in Force (RIF) of teachers and staff. We have many excellent teachers and staff members throughout the District. We are saddened to have to make these personnel reductions that are unfortunately directly related to our decreasing enrollment. By reducing faculty and staff we are attempting to avoid a large lay-off or reduction in the future.

In the 2005-2006 school year, the Herscher School District had 2,111 students in its schools. The 6<sup>th</sup> day enrollment for this year was 1,668 students. Our enrollment has dropped almost 21% in the last 11 years. Specifically, the enrollment at Herscher High School in 2005-2006 was 693. We are projecting the enrollment at Herscher High School will be under 500 students by the 2019-2020 school year. As a result of this decreasing enrollment over the last several years, the District has reduced several positions including administrators, teachers, custodians, kitchen workers, paraprofessionals and others. We also closed Reddick Grade School after the 2012-2013 school year. As a result of these cuts, we are "inching closer" to a balanced budget.


During this same time period, the State has "cut" transportation payments and General State Aid which cost our District millions of dollars over the past 11 years. We have been able to overcome this loss in revenue by making wise investments, reducing personnel when possible, spending our reserves, reducing budgets and re-negotiating deals with various school service vendors.

During this time, the Board of Education has also spent money on projects that many folks have questioned such as: the purchase of \$1,500,000 in technology equipment, the repair of all of our District roofs, the replacement of our underground fuel storage tank, the building of a new greenhouse at Herscher High School, the replacement of the lights at Herscher High School football field, the update of the Herscher High School weight room, the addition of air conditioning throughout the District, the addition of clubs and activities for students and many more. However, many of these projects were opportunities for the Board to make a lasting impact for students at a reduced cost. For example, the cost of the Herscher High School weight room project was offset by a matching donation from the Athletic Booster Club and the cost of the new greenhouse was offset by a large donation by the Agriculture Boosters.

During every discussion regarding the expenditure of funds, the Board must determine the value of the opportunity compared to its costs.

We continue to take action in order to gain financial stability going forward for our school district. As painful as these cuts are for everyone, they are directly related to having less students in our buildings. We will continue to strive to provide the best possible educational programs and opportunities for our students today and in the future.

We appreciate your concern and support for public education and the students in our school district.

Sincerely,  
  
Dr. Richard S. Decman  
Superintendent of Schools

*"Education... The Ultimate Investment."*