

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR QUALITY EDUCATION**

Palatine, IL, October 9, 2006 - The District 15 Concerned Parents, a group which formed in response to the current negotiations in progress between the District 15 Board of Education and the Classroom Teachers Council, is issuing the following statements:

We have formed to express our support for a fiscally responsible Board of Education in its negotiations with the Classroom Teachers Council (CTC) that represents teachers in its collective bargaining negotiations with District 15 (D15). We believe that the latest published proposal made by the Board offered a fair and competitive compensation and benefits package. We believe that quality education can only be maintained through fiscal responsibility and in ensuring the long term fiscal health of the district. We further believe:

- Teachers in D15 are valued and respected by the community.
- D15 compensation and benefits for the teachers is very competitive with other districts in the area.
- The contract package offered by the Board to the CTC is fair. It represents a package that replicates market conditions experienced by district residents. In the area of health benefits, the D15 offer is significantly better than the health benefits of the community it serves\*. The contract package proposed by the CTC is out of sync with current economic reality.
- Property tax increases, and therefore revenues to District 15, are **limited by law** to 5% per year, or the CPI, whichever is **less**. From 2000 to 2005, the CPI ranged from 1.6 – 3.4\*\*! Property tax appeals further reduce the tax revenue coming into the District.
- District 15 has been burdened with spiraling health care benefit costs which have also reduced the annual budget available for teacher salaries.
- With low growth in revenues, and increases in benefit and other operating expenses, District 15 has had, and will have no choice but to make spending cuts throughout the District, including field trips and clubs, reductions in fine art and music, reduced LRC and computer staff, and larger class sizes. With stable enrollment, class sizes are 10% above state averages.
- Quality education **will be** impacted by staff reductions and class size increases. The quality education that District 15 is known for **will** suffer if the long term fiscal health of the District is jeopardized by compensation increases that outpace revenue and the CPI.

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## FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR QUALITY EDUCATION (page 2)

- Deficit spending is not an option as District 15 continues to hold outstanding debt obligations of approximately 50 million dollars\*\*\*. This debt costs the district several million dollars each year in interest alone. These dollars reduce the available funds for educational spending.
- A strike would be extremely disruptive to the community. In today's economy with the majority of families in District 15 dependent on two incomes, a strike would create negative ramifications for families that have no alternatives or support. The CTC holds the decision for a strike entirely in its control. We encourage the Board to hold firm and not give in to demands that will force undue burdens on the community at large. A strike will be hard on everyone - but we do not advocate deficit spending to bring a strike to a close.

We, the members of District 15 Concerned Parents, are uniform in our support for the Board's latest published offer (Sept 21, 2006) in the contract negotiations. We urge the CTC to carefully consider the ramifications of the negotiations and further urge them to settle quickly with the Board's realistic, competitive and fiscally responsible offer.

We encourage all parents who share our concerns to join us in advocating for the educational and financial futures of our children. This isn't about being against the teachers – it's about being for the kids!

\*Mercer Human Resources Consulting, 2004 Survey of Midwest Employers

\*\*Bureau of Labor Statistics

\*\*\*Moody's Rating Report, April 2006

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