

*Edinburg Community Unit School District #4*  
*100 East Martin Street*  
*Edinburg, Illinois 62531*  
*217-623-5603*

*Lynda E. Irvin, Superintendent*

*S. Matt Graham, Principal*

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March 20, 2009

Dear Parents,

We realize that Pre-K parents may or may not be aware of the fact that the state of Illinois has not been fully funding our current preschool program. We were approved to receive \$102,402 to fund the program for the 2008-2009 school year and thus far, have only received \$26,824.00 to date. This funding covers the cost of salaries for teachers, aides, bus drivers, custodians, and supplies and professional development. Our district currently has assumed these costs for the 2008-2009 school year, but is not financially able to fund these costs without the state's monetary aide in the future. The school board and administration have remained committed to applying for the grant for 2009-2010 school year at its first submission date of April 21, 2009.

We will wait for the Illinois State Board of Education to make a decision on funding which usually happens late May to June 30<sup>th</sup> yearly. At that point the school board will be considering whether or not we will continue to have a preschool program next year with or without funding dollars. We may not know until July whether there will be a preschool program at our school district for next year. We are providing preschool screening so that if the program does open at the start of school next year, we will have the students screened and ready to begin. In the meantime, Mrs. Stout and Mrs. Brookens have willingly agreed to the ECUSD #4 Kindergarten teacher and aide positions open due to Mr. Collin's retirement announcement.

Students are selected for our program based on eligibility criteria as determined by the preschool grant application which is approved by the Illinois State Board of Education. We are allowed only 20 students per session (a.m. and p.m.) for serving a total of 40 students. You will be notified if your child does or does not qualify for our preschool program. Some children are put on a waiting list because there are too many who have high eligibility scores and we are not able to provide services to more than 40 students. When a slot opens later in the year, these parents are then contacted to let them know that their child can receive services at that time, if they choose to send them. Another notification will be sent later in the summer to those who qualify if the program does open for service next school year.

So what do parents need to do in the meantime?

1. Come and bring your child for screening. The more data we have, the better case we can make with the school board and Illinois State Board of Education that this is a critical and essential program for Edinburg students.
2. If contacted by another group such as other government grants or private preschool providers, be up front with them concerning the state funding issues and let them know your plans. Remember every school district in the state is in a similar situation unless that school district is extremely wealthy and can afford to support its own pre-kindergarten program without state aid.
3. Please contact our legislators to encourage them to provide current and future funds to our school district for this very worthwhile program. Every dollar not funded this school year has taken essential educational resources away from our entire K-12 student population; therefore, student learning is being put at risk with each passing day as without funding resources school districts are having to make decisions on staffing, textbooks, learning materials, fieldtrips, etc. that support the basic educational program opportunities critical for improved learning, teaching, and student achievement. Legislative members' contact information is on the back side of this letter.
4. If funding becomes available, a PreK teacher and aide would be hired as soon as possible.

No parent likes to receive this kind of information, and no educator or school board member ever wants to be in the position to have to make this kind of information available to students and parents. I am amazed at how many politicians campaign on the platform of early childhood education; yet, fail to commit the critical funding to make it a reality. On behalf of the school board and administration, we are doing everything possible to make this happen next year for our younger students as it is critical for their future educational success. Won't you please help out by contacting legislators and letting them hear first hand from real students and parents how their decisions are impacting your lives today, tomorrow, and in the future?

Thank you,

Lynda Irvin, Superintendent