

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Sauk Rapids-Rice School Board Approves Plan to Increase Access and Opportunity through Technology

The Sauk Rapids-Rice School Board approved a plan to increase access and opportunity through technology for all Sauk Rapids-Rice students in three deliberate phases. Each of these phases would include increased access and opportunity (i.e. devices) for students that are best suited for children at their respective educational and development levels.

- Phase 1: High School, Grades 9-12
- Phase 2: Middle School & Upper Elementary, Grades 5-8
- Phase 3: Early Childhood & Elementary, Preschool-Grade 4

Why Now and How Will This Be Funded?

The District has spent a significant amount of time researching and investigating how additional technology might look in our schools and classrooms. Through effective fiscal management and some opportunistic legislative changes, our district is in a great position to move ahead with this plan and to be able to sustain it.

The state has initiated additional financial support for all day every day kindergarten beginning next year, a program currently funded in the school budget. In combination with the recent legislative action related to increased location equity aid, Sauk Rapids-Rice will receive approximately \$1.5 million more dollars each year, beginning next year. Sauk Rapids-Rice benefits more than most school districts because of our low operating referendum, and less than average funding. We are excited and appreciative of these legislative changes and the legislature's attempts to equalize funding for all children, and are committed to using the resources to directly support our children and their families.

Levy Promises

First and foremost, we must thank our public for their support. We have and will continue

- PAGE 2 -

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to fulfill our levy promises, using dollars to maintain and lower class size where possible, provide free busing for Sauk Rapids and Rice residents, and to fund the number and quality of classes currently offered. The Board and administrative team remain committed to this endeavor and will continue to make these promises a priority.

Last year (2013-14), we added approximately 10 new positions across the district to maintain and reduce class sizes when possible and will be adding approximately 14 more for the 2014-15 school year, which was approved by the Board of Education April 28, 2014. These positions will maintain and/or lower class sizes, while providing additional support for students and families. These positions, along with the items mentioned above will be paid for with levy dollars. Written differently, we will continue to fulfill our levy promises.

Date: 4/28/2014