Next week the General Assembly comes back to Springfield. I cannot stress enough the importance of communicating with your legislators regarding the needs of your district. In particular, I would urge you to stress the need to pass the Budget Implementation Bill (BIMP) enacting the General State Aid (GSA) Foundation and Special Education Personnel Reimbursement levels for FY 2008.

The budget that passed earlier this year included more than 550 million additional dollars for education. When the budget was passed in late August our primary concern was getting money to school districts as quickly as possible. A decision was made to distribute State Aid based on each district’s FY 2007 GSA entitlement. We decided to wait until all data was final before recalculating GSA to avoid having multiple calculations.

It is our hope that the General Assembly will act upon legislation setting the new levels for the GSA Foundation and Special Education Personnel Reimbursements during this Fall Veto Session. Regardless, we will begin recalculating GSA payments for the first payment in November to reflect the final FY 2008 entitlements.

If lawmakers approve the Budget Implementation Bill during the Veto Session, the Foundation Level will increase by $400 per student to $5,734. This will result in 816 districts/lab schools/safe schools realizing an increase in their GSA payments from what they are currently receiving. However, if the General Assembly does not enact the new Foundation Level in the BIMP during the veto session, 726 districts/lab schools/safe schools, starting in November, will receive less GSA than they are currently receiving. These losses will be due to changes in local Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV), Average Daily Attendance (ADA) and/or Corporate Personal Property Replacement Taxes (CPPRT) without the state being able to offset the effects of these changes with a higher Foundation Level.

We cannot continue to pay GSA at the FY 2007 levels past the second payment in October. At this time, we must consider all data necessary to make the GSA calculations final. By the end of October, we will have updated EAV, ADA and CPPRT information for all the districts and will need to reflect that new data in the calculations. It is our hope that a new Foundation Level will have been passed by the General Assembly by late October.

I urge all of you to reach out to your legislators and encourage them to pass the BIMP legislation during the Veto Session. This will establish the new Foundation Level as well as increase levels for Special Education Personnel Reimbursement. If they do not, November GSA will decrease for 726 districts and the earliest we may see increases in funding will be January of 2008 when the legislature returns for their Spring Session.

You can go to [http://www.isbe.net/funding/html/gsa.htm](http://www.isbe.net/funding/html/gsa.htm) to see an estimate of what your district’s November GSA payment would be should lawmakers not approve a BIMP. Again, this is only estimated at this time, but we hope this will assist you in planning purposes.

Chris