

Emily Lembeck, Ed. D.
Superintendent

January 26, 2009

Dear Marietta City Schools Families and Community Members:

As you know, the current economic challenges faced by all of us are great. This national economic crisis adversely affects education funding at the state and local level and directly impacts our school system. Last June, the Board of Education of the City of Marietta approved a balanced budget for the current school year, despite an upfront austerity cut of \$492,000 imposed by the state.

Following the opening of the school year, when staffing and programs were already in place, the state informed school districts that due to a budget shortfall, they would receive an additional 2% reduction in their funds. For Marietta City Schools this equated to a loss of approximately \$527,000. However, because of unprecedented additional anticipated reductions in state funding, city taxes, and interest earnings our school board was forced to approve a revised budget incorporating a reduction of \$2,795,304. Ultimately, final state reductions will not be known until the Georgia legislature approves its mid-year budget.

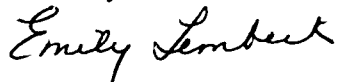
It has been a great challenge to offset the reductions. All cost-saving measures were viewed through a lens of protecting the important work being done in classrooms throughout Marietta City Schools. Included in these cost-cutting measures are reductions in travel and teacher recruitment; personnel adjustments such as a hiring freeze on non-critical positions and filling of positions with existing staff; reductions in substitute teacher costs; delaying the purchase of language arts textbooks and other related instructional items; cutbacks in professional development; cuts in the communication department budget; furlough days without pay for Central Office Administrators; and reductions in business office expenses including supplies and materials.

The state has told Georgia school systems to expect at least another 3% cut next school year on top of this year's reductions. Meanwhile, the anticipated funds from city revenue including property taxes, interest income, SPLOST collections, and federal funding remain speculative. Our school board members and I will contemplate a range of additional measures based on the severity of loss of revenue and review of existing programs and services.

It is important to maintain the strong financial viability of the school system while at the same time giving great consideration to the importance of outstanding educational experiences for all students. Our foresight in gaining Charter System status should enable us greater flexibility in meeting some of these challenges. Again, much will be determined by your legislators who are elected to represent your priorities and concerns.

Marietta City Schools has a long history of excellence and even though the immediate future holds economic challenges, the focus will remain on our mission to prepare each of our students through academic achievement for life success. As always, our board and I are aware that communication is essential. We will strive to keep the lines of communication open, and of course feel free to attend our scheduled board meetings, which are open to the public.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Lembeck".

Emily Lembeck, Ed.D.