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## **BERWYN C.A.R.E.S. ASKS DISTRICT 201 TO WORK WITH COMMUNITY TO FIND ALTERNATIVES TO CUTS**

**March 1, 2010 (Berwyn, IL)** – With graduation rates and test scores that significantly lag the state average, the J. Sterling Morton High School District 201 Board has faced an increasingly strained relationship within the local community. On Thursday, February 24, 2010, the Board held a public meeting to discuss proposed new cuts to address district financial concerns.

Now hundreds of students, teachers and residents are joining together to question the rationale for eliminations that further dilute the curriculum and undercut local students and the community. “We understand the need to deal with the district’s financial issues and we want to commend the District for working to address them. However, we hope they will reconsider proposals that compromise the future of our students, particularly our highest performing and highest risk students,” said Shelley Titzer, President of Berwyn CARES.

Proposed cuts include:

- A decrease in credit hours required for graduation from 22 credit hours to 20.
- The elimination of a 3rd science course as a graduation requirement.
- A class enrollment requirement of minimally 85%.
- The elimination of the Prairie State track for lower achieving students.
- The elimination of regular school day “second chance” classes for students who fail (requiring them to retake these classes in night or summer school)

The double edged sword of the proposed cuts at District 201 is they may serve to increase drop-out rates as well as limit chances for college acceptance. The elimination of second chance classes means low income students will not be able to afford to make up these classes in night school or summer school and an 85% enrollment minimum will be felt hardest in AP courses.

According to BerwynCARES the challenges at Morton are representative of what is happening in education throughout the State and point to both the need for funding reform and an evaluation of how school boards interact with the communities they serve. The schools hardest hit are often those with largely minority and low income students.

“These are challenging times for our schools and point to the need for new ideas and input. Berwyn CARES would like to see the District 201 School Board establish a community-based advisory committee. If staff, principals, teachers, students, parents and community members work together we may be able to find creative ways to improve district academic and financial performance,” said Mrs. Titzer.

*Berwyn C.A.R.E.S. (Citizens Aligned to Renew Education for Students) is an organization created to unite residents interested in renewing and sustaining an enthusiasm, interest and passion for the education system in Berwyn. More information is available online at [www.berwyncares.org](http://www.berwyncares.org).*