



April 7, 2017

We represent the Pulaski Community School District administrative team.

We fully support the Governor's proposal to increase district per pupil categorical aid from the current \$250 per pupil by adding \$200 per pupil in the 2017-18 fiscal year and an additional \$204 per pupil in the 2018-19 fiscal year. Pulaski Community School District is one of the low spending districts in the state when it comes to revenue limits, with a 2016-17 maximum revenue per member of \$9,508.72. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to hire and retain quality employees with our limited revenues. The employee's share of health insurance premiums and copays continue to increase at a much higher pace than their earnings. We know, through feedback from our incoming and outgoing staff that employee benefits are an essential factor in recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff within public education.

The governor's budget provides us with the tools, through categorical aide, to provide a modest increase to our employees while equally sharing the projected increase in benefit costs. The proposal will also allow our district to maintain the high-quality programming that is offered to our nearly 3,700 students throughout 12 municipalities and 4 counties. It will also allow us to reinstate our practice of having a principal assigned to lead learning in each building; a practice that under the current budget was not possible for financial reasons. The budget proposal does not provide excess revenue for the Pulaski Community School District. Simply put, this budget proposal would allow us to continue providing great service while maintaining our tradition of fiscal responsibility with a balanced budget.

However, we are strongly opposed to the budget provision which makes the above referenced per pupil aid increase contingent upon the district certifying to DPI that district employees pay at least 12% of all costs and payments associated with employee health care. While our average premium share for 2016-2017 is 6.6%, our plans have changed significantly post-Act 10 and reduced the district cost for health insurance. In 2010-2011, we offered one plan with a \$20 co-pay and \$500 deductible. At that time, our employees paid 4.2% of the premium. Since that year, we have significantly decreased the benefits of our health insurance plan and have increased the number of options available to staff. Currently, we offer five different options for health plans ranging from a \$1500 deductible POS plan to a \$5000 deductible HSA eligible plan. Our co-pays on office visits, ER, and prescription coverage have doubled since 2010-2011. In an effort to help our employees become healthier, informed consumers

we have implemented a broad based employee wellness program in which we incentivize our staff with a contribution to their health insurance premiums in exchange for their participation and investment in wellness. Why would you consider punishing districts by withholding the aid payment for not making their employees pay a minimum of 12% of the health care costs when they are investing in healthy lifestyles and taking ownership for their health and the impact of health on health insurance premiums? We understand the goal is to limit the District's exposure related to the cost of employee health insurance. We have done this in a variety of ways - not just increasing the employee contribution to premiums.

We would like to invite you to visit the Pulaski Community School District and our classrooms to learn more about the great things that are happening daily with our limited resources. Please visit us to see the work that we are doing to prepare students for their future. From elementary world language, to computer coding integrated as part of our comprehensive science, technology, engineering, and math program we are continually striving to meet the workforce needs of Wisconsin. With a nationally recognized music program and a community funded outdoor athletic complex, we are preparing our students for a lifetime as contributing members of our society who understand the value of community. We look forward to working with you on behalf of our students. Please stand up for Wisconsin school children.

Yours in Education,

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