

Shorewood School District Testimony at the Joint Finance Committee Hearing

April 5, 2017

Bryan Davis - Shorewood School Superintendent; Shorewood, Wisconsin

My name is Bryan Davis. I am the Proud School Superintendent for the Shorewood School District. We are a district of approximately 2000 students and located just east of Milwaukee.

I am here to support the Governor's Budget proposal of a \$200 per student increase in 2017-2018 and \$204 per student increase in 2018-2019 that would provide our school district with the necessary foundation off of which to build our upcoming budgets.

In 2011-2012, the Shorewood School District took over a \$1 million cut in state funding. Since then, we have competitively bid out our health insurance benefits and increased employee contributions to insurance to the Governor's recommended levels. We have also made difficult choices in salary negotiations using the CPI - U benchmarks while continuing to work with our staff to provide quality programming and services to our students and community. We are now, however, at a crossroads. At a time when our expectations for preparing our students for the workforce are at an all time high, we simply cannot meet these increasing demands with the same support we have received in state funding over the last six years. We have used all of the tools that you and the Governor have provided us.

Fortunately, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau reports show that the state is on solid ground financially and state projections show that the money is now available. Over the next two and a half years, tax collections are projected to come in \$455 million better than previously expected. This means it is time to reinvest in K-12 Public Education. With the dividends that have been received by your hard work over the last six years, reinvesting in our schools now will be the best way to assure your legacy of reform has long term benefits. Please support the Governor's proposal at his recommended levels of funding.

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Paru Shah - Shorewood School Board President; Shorewood, WI

My name is Paru Shah. I am the School Board President for the Shorewood School District and was reelected to my second term last night.

In February 2016, we held the Shorewood School Summit over three days with over 100 community members participating to answer the question: "What do we want the Shorewood School District to look like in 2025?" Our top three items were: 1) Authentic Learning Experiences for Students, 2) Support for the Whole Child, and 3) Modernizing and Maintaining our School Facilities. Since the Summit, we have been working with our staff and community on laying the foundation of our work over the next eight years to deliver this vision for our students.

This vision includes improved services to support our students growing mental health needs, restoring our facilities maintenance budget to keep kids and staff safe in our schools, and providing students a chance to apply their knowledge and skills to projects that contribute to our community. In order to deliver on this vision, we need this next biennium budget to create a foundation at the levels of the Governor's Proposal.

As Bryan mentioned, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau reports show that the state is on solid ground financially and state projections show that the money is now available. Over the next two and a half years, tax collections are projected to come in \$455 million better than previously expected. It is time to reinvest the dividends gathered at the state level into K-12 Public Education.

It is also clear that this is the right time to make this move politically. In a recent Marquette Poll, 80% of respondents supported an increase to public education funding. Please support the Governor's Budget at his recommended increases of a \$200 per student increase in 2017-2018 and \$204 per student increase in 2018-2019 so we can begin to restore our schools and deliver the school experiences our students and communities expect and deserve.