

# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HARTFORD JOINT NO. 1

DEDICATED TO THE SUCCESS OF EACH STUDENT

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CITY OF HARTFORD, TOWNS ADDISON, ERIN, HARTFORD – WASHINGTON COUNTY • TOWNS ASHIPUN, RUBICON – DODGE COUNTY  
HARTFORD, WISCONSIN 53027

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April 5, 2017

Dear Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on Governor Walker's 2017-19 State of Wisconsin biennial budget proposal. On behalf of nearly 2,000 students in Hartford, we strongly support that Governor's proposed \$200 / \$204 per pupil increases in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal years. For much of the past decade we have asked the Governor and legislature to provide new resources in line with increases in inflation and this budget proposal does that. On behalf of Hartford, thank you!

The School District of Hartford Jt1 is a high achieving District. We currently exceed expectations on the DPI School Report card and we are striving for 4.9 points on the school report card to reach "Significantly Exceeds Expectations". Based on flexibility that you have provided since 2011, we have been able to innovate and are bringing best instructional practices into our classrooms to boost student achievement. We are able to do this despite being a low spending school district. We are a financially frugal district and since 1993 have spent below the state average per student. (Currently \$600 per student less in revenue limit and \$800 per student in overall shared costs)

We are not complaining about our funding and our proud to be a fiscally conservative District, but ask you to approve the \$200/\$204 in per pupil increases that the Governor has proposed to allow us to innovate in our District. As the unemployment rate has fallen in a strong Wisconsin economy, we face competitive pressure to attain/retain highly effective teachers who have been proven to be the key factor in student achievement. The \$200/\$204 per student represents a "cost to continue" for our District, though we continue to implement new programs that meet best practice and pay for those new programs by eliminating less effective programs. We believe that our District budgeting practices exemplify best practices and provide good accountability to our taxpayers.

We have used the tools provided within Act 10 aggressively. Our District has competitively bid our Health Insurance twice (2011, 2016) and employees in our District contribute 16-21% of the premium cost for their Health Benefits. Our projected spending on Health insurance in 2017-18, seven years after the implementation of Act 10, is projected to be 30% less than it was during the 2010-11 fiscal year. We also have eliminated any unfunded post-employment benefit liability, and have begun saving for future capital facilities needs through the recently approved Fund 46 Capital Improvement Trust.

Our student achievement has grown, innovation has thrived, our property taxes have been reduced for six consecutive years, and we've eliminated millions of dollars in debt and unfunded post-employment liability, but now we need you to invest in us and the best practices that we bring to Hartford students and our taxpayers. Please support the Governor's budget proposal for \$200/\$204 in new per pupil funding and eliminate any new mandates that would restrict us from creating new opportunities for our kids. We look forward to partnering with you to innovate and sustain a great educational K-12 experience for all Wisconsin students.

Sincerely,

John Stellmacher  
Chief Financial and Operations Officer  
School District of Hartford Jt1

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