
Port Edwards Public Schools

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April 7, 2017

Dear Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

My name is Kyle Cronan, I am the District Administrator for the Port Edwards School District. I have great news to report, the Port Edwards School District has shown 8% growth in enrollment over the past two years. To put that into perspective, this year we had to hire additional kindergarten, 3rd grade, 5th grade and special education teachers. We are anticipating hiring additional 1st and 4th grade teachers for next year. Port Edwards has seen fabulous growth.

This increase in enrollment comes with growing pains. Our district is emerging from several years of enrollment loss, teacher and staff layoffs and declining revenue. Despite the 8% increase in enrollment over these past two years, our revenue limit will actually be lower next year than it is this year. Balancing the budget has proved difficult at best. Employee benefit costs have been reduced by shopping for a new insurance program. Our staff moved to a high deductible plan that is supported by an HSA. The district paid the insurance premium allowing staff to use the savings realized to fund their HSA, this program saved the district money and allows us to remain competitive in hiring. Since 2010 the district has cut staff and will continue to look at staff reductions where possible, despite also needing to hire teachers. Our staff members wear many hats, in fact I serve as both the district administrator and high school principal, and in Port Edwards this is not uncommon to have one person fill multiple functions. Further staff reductions whether from the teaching or support staff ranks affect our program offerings dramatically.

Our students have been performing at a very high level on state assessments, we do great work for our students and community. We need a change in our revenue situation now. That is why I am calling for the state legislature to adopt Governor Walker's proposed education budget. I strongly support the per pupil increases of \$200 and \$204 to categorical aid over the next two years. I also support the governor's call for increases to sparsity aid, this aid helps our rural schools. Finally, the governor's mental health initiative is a great start to address a growing need in our schools and communities.

We need your help to maintain our great community schools. With the loss of over \$900,000 in revenue over the past 8 years and a continuing decline because of how the funding formula is constructed, I am asking you to support these needed budget changes. Thank you for listening to our story from Port Edwards.

Sincerely,

Kyle Cronan
District Administrator/9-12 Principal
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Cc: Scott Krug & Patrick Testin

Improving America's future ... one student at a time.
