



School District of New Richmond

Patrick B. Olson

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To: Members of the Joint Finance Committee

Date: April 19, 2017

Re: Proposed 2017-19 State Biennial Budget – SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL

My name is Patrick Olson and I am the District Administrator at the School District of New Richmond. This past year we earned the status Significantly Exceeds Expectations on our district report card. On behalf of all 3,375 students, 489 staff members, and our Board of Education at the School District of New Richmond, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

Your task of reviewing all state appropriations and revenues is not an easy one. As you approach the Wisconsin 2017-19 Executive Budget, I would like you to keep in mind our core purpose at the School District of New Richmond which is to inspire every student to learn to his or her potential.

We support Governor Walker's budget proposal calling for an increase of \$649 million dollars in aid to K-12 Education. The most critical component of his proposal is the \$200 per pupil categorical aid increase that is proposed in 2017-18 and the additional \$204 per student increase proposed in 2018-19. The increases in categorical aid will help our District:

- 1) Expand our mental health offerings to our elementary schools after success with our middle school and high school programs.
- 2) Keep class sizes at a reasonable level throughout our District.
- 3) Continue our Welding Academy through a partnership with WITC and other local school districts.
- 4) Fund the needed resources to accommodate ALL our students regardless of need.
- 5) And much more.....

As a District, we respectfully request the budget provision which makes a district's receipt of the new per pupil aid contingent upon employees paying at least 12% of all costs associated with employee health care plans not be included in the executive budget. As a fiscally responsible District, our Board of Education has utilized the parameters previous set to maximize per pupil spending through local control.

I love my job because each day I have the pleasure of working with highly skilled and professional staff members that care about students and work tirelessly to help them reach their potential. I personally get to see the difference that our TEAM of staff, parents, and community collectively make for each child that walks through our doors.

It is well documented that the quality of public education in the state of Wisconsin is second to none and I would hate to see that change due to a lack of resources. Going backwards is not in our vocabulary and we strive as educators to prepare our students for college and career readiness.

I would like to give you a snapshot of what public funding does for the School District of New Richmond and how it helps students reach their potential on a daily basis.

- 1) It allows Olivia in first grade to build her literacy skills and develop lifelong habits of reading, writing, and working independently.
- 2) It allows the New Richmond High School Agriculture and Science classes explore hands on topics such as aquaponics, chemical bonding, and learning about cellular biology.
- 3) It allows our High School to be recognized as a Level III Advanced Placement Pacesetter School for impressive student AP access and excellence in AP exam scores in the state of Wisconsin.
- 4) It allows Hannah, a junior, a chance to take college credits through our youth options program and get early exposure to achieve her dream of being a Speech Pathologist.
- 5) It allows Mrs. Mealey to educate and pass on her passion for music to her students and helps cultivate opportunities for students to explore the fine arts.
- 6) It allows Emma to help her Powerlifting Team accomplish a State Championship while learning life changing skills such as leadership and how to handle adversity.
- 7) It allows Kyle an opportunity to explore numerous topics in middle school which includes Project Lead the Way, Career Pathways, and Science Olympiad.
- 8) This is just in the last two months, just think what is accomplished in an entire year!

In the end, the Joint Finance Committee will be in charge of making decisions that will affect thousands of students across the state of Wisconsin. Before making a recommendation please ask yourself that all important question, “Is this what’s best for ALL students?”

On behalf of the students, staff, parents and community members of New Richmond, we thank you for your time and your willingness to listen.

Respectfully,

Patrick B. Olson
District Administrator

Cc- Senator Sheila Harsdorf, Representative Rob Stafsholt