

WILMOT FEEDER SCHOOLS CONSORTIUM

June 3, 2015

Dear Families, Staff, and Community Members:

We are writing to you today as advocates not only for the children in our districts, but also on behalf of the 870,000 children across the state of Wisconsin who attend public schools. As you may be aware, funding for public education has become a heated topic once again. The proposed legislation (both budgetary and policy driven) will have profound impacts on our public schools.

Unfortunately, what is being left out of the discussion and decision making process is the fact that **Wisconsin has one of the highest graduation rates in the nation**, with high school graduation rates exceeding 90%. Additionally, **Wisconsin consistently scores among the top four states in the nation on the ACT College Entrance Exam**. Even though the Education System continues to graduate some of the top students in the nation, schools in Wisconsin will unfortunately contend with the following facts:

- For the first time, Wisconsin will fall below the national average in per pupil spending. Since 2008, Wisconsin has seen a 15% decrease in per pupil spending for public education.
- In the coming budget, public schools will have less general state aid than in 2010
- Wisconsin is one of only 5 states that have been keeping spending on public education close to flat. All other states have been increasing spending on public education at an average of 4% to maintain cost of living increases.
- Under current statute, public school students can open enroll to other public school districts. A total of \$6,635.00 follows that student to his/her new school. Under the legislation on the floor in Madison, public school students can also enroll in a voucher school (a non-public school approved by the state, which are currently all religious schools). A voucher of \$7,210.00 for K-8 students and \$7,856.00 for high school students follows that student to their voucher school (that is 18% more for a student attending a private school).
- Other items in the budget bill deal with special education vouchers, home school students participating on high school sports teams, "learning portfolios" for graduation credit, licensing teachers without an education degree and a new civics test a student must pass before graduation.
- The Joint Finance Committee's (JFC) education budget underfunds Wisconsin public schools, forcing school districts to reduce educational opportunities for the children they serve. At the very least, we need an inflationary increase in revenues to meet the needs of our students.

We urge you to learn more about the proposals in the 2015-2017 state budget and how it will impact schools throughout the state of Wisconsin. If you agree that supporting public education is important, please join us in advocating on behalf of the children so that we can continue to provide one of the best public education systems in the nation. Please let your voice be heard by forwarding this message to families, friends and neighbors. You may also contact your representatives directly:

Senator Van Wanggaard Sen.Wanggaard@legis.wisconsin.gov
Representative Samantha Kerkman Rep.Kerkman@legis.wisconsin.gov
Representative Tyler August Rep.August@legis.wisconsin.gov

Thank you for your support of Public Education!

Joseph Price,	District Administrator - Twin Lakes School District #4
John Gendron,	District Administrator - Randall Consolidated School
Martin McGinley,	District Administrator - Wheatland J1 School District
Jon Schleusner,	District Administrator - Silver Lake Joint, Salem JT 1
Daniel S. Kopp,	District Administrator - Wilmot Union High School District
George Steffen,	District Administrator - Trevor-Wilmot School District