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WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY – EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today in support of Assembly Bill 835 which would provide additional resources to help Wisconsin Public Schools provide a great education for our students. I currently serve as the Chief Business and Finance Officer of the Oak Creek-Franklin Joint School District. Like many low spending school districts, we have been “locked in” to lower spending for 25 years since the adoption of revenue limits. My District and my community take a certain pride in the fact that we are a low spending, high achieving district, but at the end of the day, while more money does not guarantee student success, falling too far behind financially leaves us vulnerable to losing the talented educators that are helping our district exceed and significantly exceed expectations at our schools.

I believe revenue limits and setting per pupil limits is a matter of equity or really inequity. Currently, the top 5 districts per pupil spending has an average per pupil cost of \$16,661 while the lowest 5 districts per pupil spending has an average of \$9,179. **That is a difference of \$7,482.** If we move to the top 10 per pupil spends and the lowest 10 per pupil spends, **the difference per pupil is \$6,300.** Furthermore, if we look at set of similar communities, Southern Door County and Gibraltar Area, there is an astonishing difference of \$6,760 per pupil.

Much closer to home for the Oak Creek-Franklin Joint School District is the difference per pupil between students who live in the city of Franklin and attend our district compared to that of students who live in the city of Franklin and attend a different school district across a street that serves as our boundary. That difference per pupil is \$1,660. The revenue limit formula and per pupil spend is valuing students, from the same city, whose families chose to live on one side of the road versus the other by a value of \$1,660.

While the increases in the low revenue ceiling will not impact Oak Creek-Franklin for a couple of years, I believe this legislation starts the process of bringing equity to the value of a child for each school district. In fact, approximately 48% of districts will view this as a move towards equity funding on a per pupil basis. Furthermore, this legislation will allow the Oak Creek-Franklin Joint School District the opportunity to move closer in equity to its Milwaukee Area peers where we currently sit as the lowest spending district on a per pupil basis.



**Oak Creek-Franklin
Joint School District**
BUILDING SUCCESSFUL FUTURES TOGETHER

For us, we would put these funds to use with two main focuses. First, our goal is hiring high quality educators, and we are very successful at this. These funds would assist us in retaining these individuals. We pride ourselves on a lower than normal turnover rate, but the ability to consistently provide raises to our high quality educators is quickly coming to an end. Second, our district has 13 facilities with a \$1.2 million capital improvement budget. We need to address some long forgone maintenance and move from reaction based responses to preventative based practices.

I ask for your support of this legislation and what I hope will be a future effort to permanently index the low revenue ceiling to a certain percentage of the statewide average to help avoid a future scenario where the equity for each child does not continue to grow wider but moves towards valuing each child by funding, not just statements.

Thank again for the opportunity to testify on behalf of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Chromy".

Andrew Chromy
Chief Business & Finance Officer
Oak Creek-Franklin Joint School District