



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OOSTBURG

410 New York Avenue | P.O. Box 700100 | Oostburg, WI 53070

(920) 564-2346 | Facsimile (920) 564-6138

KEVIN BRUGGINK
District
Administrator

SCOTT GREUPINK
Principal Oostburg
High School

SHERRI STENDEL
Principal Oostburg
Middle School

AARON WHITE
Principal Oostburg
Elementary School

BRYCE DE ROOS
Director of
Student Services

KRISTIN DE BRUINE
Director of
Finance/Personnel

1/25/18

Chairman Thiesfeldt and Members of the Education Committee,

Thank you for scheduling this hearing and providing an opportunity for us to speak in strong support of AB 835. I would also like to thank the large number of legislators who have joined Representative Nygren and Senator Marklein by signing onto this legislation. My name is Kevin Bruggink, and I serve as the District Administrator of the Oostburg School District. Joining me here today is Carrie Dassow, District Administrator of Plymouth School District and Mike Trimberger, District Administrator in Random Lake School District. We are representing our colleagues and districts in Sheboygan County. Representatives Katsma, Representative Vorpapel and Senator LeMahieu represent our area, and we appreciate the strong partnership we have with our local legislators, which includes monthly legislative breakfasts and frequent visits to our schools. We believe the open dialogue we have shared has allowed all parties to benefit by learning from each other.

Our support for AB 835 is grounded in the fact that Sheboygan County school districts have historically been some of the most fiscally conservative in Wisconsin, many with revenue limits at or below \$9200 per student and all but one well below the state average. Our county districts have led in areas like high deductible health plans, creative insurance alternatives, and alternate compensation models. For many of us, these changes came well before Act 10 prompted change in many districts across our state.

Although our support for the additional financial resources in this legislation is strong, history will show that Sheboygan County districts are responsible in how we approach our local tax levies. For example, over the past 10 years, Oostburg has either reduced or had no increase in its local levy six times. In the remaining four years we had modest increases of less than 2 percent bringing our average increase over a 10 year period to 0.43 percent. It is important to note that during this period, Oostburg under-levied by over \$1.9 million dollars. In other words, just because we had revenue limit authority does not mean we used it.

Oostburg and other schools in Sheboygan County are experiencing challenges as we work to expand opportunities for students and partnerships with our business community. Oostburg, Plymouth, and Random Lake lead our area in Youth Apprenticeship opportunities, and each of our schools have unique business partnerships which have contributed to Sheboygan County's strong economic position. Those partnerships are becoming more difficult to support as guidance and STEM staffing challenges become increasingly competitive and we are forced to consider reductions which will keep us within our revenue limit. When revenue limit realities prevent our districts from providing opportunities that are similar to neighboring districts - in Ozaukee County for example - students lose and so does our county.

Sheboygan County is on the cutting edge of business and education partnerships. Examples include Sheboygan School District's Red Raider manufacturing, Plymouth School District's Science and Technology Center and Food Science and Agriculture Center, and first in the nation health care clinic partnerships. The examples don't stop there, but these efforts are threatened as it becomes increasingly difficult to expand these unique models while working within a school funding formula that has dramatic disparities between districts.

A district similar to Oostburg in size, operating at the state average revenue limit, would realize an additional \$1,500,000 annually to serve their students. This creates inequity that affects students and forces low revenue schools to make decisions that place them at a competitive disadvantage in reaching their goals.

We appreciate Governor Walker's support of AB 835 and the work of each legislator who advocated for these provisions in the proposed state budget sent to the Governor and now in this follow-up legislation. We welcome the opportunity to answer questions and talk further regarding how the disparity in revenue limits is impacting our students and the opportunities within Sheboygan County.

Respectfully,

Kevin Bruggink