

Our school funding system is in need of some attention. Over the last 25 years the system has been driven by Madison with a primary focus on taxpayers. Revenue limits have been layered into school finance and have been successful in controlling taxes, however they have failed to bring equity to Wisconsin's students. In addition the per pupil aid is disequalizing and goes against equalizing local tax effort.

Madison has introduced and grown tax relief programs and disguised them as school funding (for example School Levy Credits). Madison has created per pupil categorical aids that have been disequalizing and not rooted in the traditions of Equalization Aid. Madison's tinkering with school finance to advance tax relief has resulted in greater confusion and less transparency.

Now is the time to think outside the box. While the Governor's budget does little to address revenue limit inequality, it does simplify a number of other issues. Making school finance more transparent and predictable is critical to helping you do your job and me do mine.

1. Eliminate School Levy Credits
  - a. Creating a minimum aid of \$3,000 per student
  - b. Creating a Hold Harmless
2. Increase revenue limits by \$200 /\$204 and index to inflation
3. Low revenue limit adjustment to \$10,000
  - a. It's the next step from the last legislative session, still more work to be done to pursue revenue limit equity
4. Increase special education aid and break the decade long freeze - This funding will enhance the universal curriculum that benefits both regular and special ed students.
5. Fund 4K to 1.0 FTE membership to help address learning gaps, this investment will pay dividends in future years
6. Include the local tax impact of levying for private school subsidies on tax bills. The South Milwaukee levy increase for private school subsidies was over 500% more in 2018-19 than in 2017-18. Perhaps further investigation is needed to see just how this shell game is working, it appears that Madison created a subsidy that they are shifting to the local taxpayers, which is not good public policy.

In closing, I would suggest checking your "D" or "R" at the door, toss aside your "pledges" of how you will or won't do something. Review what is being requested, refer back to a strong Blue Ribbon Commission report that supported a large amount of the recommendations that are included in the Governor's budget. Remember that passing the "buck" on funding schools is not acceptable, depending on local referenda to fund schools is legislative malpractice.

Thank you for your time, and the best of luck to you throughout this process.