



April 24, 2019

Good Morning,

I am Michelle Langenfeld, Superintendent in the Green Bay Area Public Schools. Thank you for your service and the opportunity to speak on behalf of Green Bay's 21,000 students – 4,500 who are English Learners; 3,000 whose needs are being addressed through special education services; and more than 12,000 who are economically disadvantaged – each deserving of equitable access to a high quality education regardless of life's circumstances.

While we appreciate the increased funding the District received in the last biennial budget, it did not address the inequities in funding - leaving Green Bay and many other districts across the state challenged to deliver the educational programming, opportunities, experiences and supports each student deserves. While school district administrators, staff and community members have stepped up by reallocating resources, fundraising and passing referenda to make ends meet, this is not sustainable, nor will it result in a bright future for the state of Wisconsin.

As part of the bipartisan Blue Ribbon Commission work, we were afforded the opportunity to hear from national experts who assessed and provided input on how we fund our schools. Our reimbursement rate of 8% for English Learners was called out as "pitiful" and the lowest rate in the nation. The reimbursement rate for special education is not far behind at approximately 25%. This has resulted in Districts across the state transferring \$1 billion dollars from the general revenues to fund special education services. In Green Bay, the transfer of funds was more than \$30 million dollars.

At the De Pere Blue Ribbon Commission hearing, we heard from members of the Greater Green Bay Chamber who expressed concerns regarding the disparities in funding and its potential impact on workforce development. Our business community joins us in the recognition that in order to ensure a sustainable future for the vitality of the state, Wisconsin must invest now in public education.

In closing, I ask that you support the recommendations from the bipartisan Blue Ribbon Commission, particularly in the three areas of greatest need: special education, bilingual-bicultural and economically disadvantaged. In doing so, you are taking the next critical steps to address funding inequities for public school districts across the state, ensuring a bright future for Wisconsin's children, families and the economy.

Thank you,

Michelle Langenfeld, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Green Bay Area Public Schools

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