



Peshtigo School District

Home of the Bulldogs

April 24, 2019

Subject: Joint Finance Committee Testimony

Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for your service to the children, families, and residents of Wisconsin. I appreciate your time today and the work that you have ahead of you with this budget. Making everyone happy is a difficult task.

The Peshtigo School District is located in northeast Wisconsin, in the heart of the manufacturing industry of Marinette County. The district serves just over 1,200 students, with a population of 13% of the students with disabilities and 34% of students who are economically disadvantaged. The District operates with a \$13 million Fund 10 budget.

Today, my testimony is about equity. Every student must receive a great education to succeed individually and for the community of Peshtigo and the State of Wisconsin to prosper socially and economically. As a public school district superintendent, I advocate for the following budget proposals as they will benefit all students.

Special Education Categorical Aid

PSD transfers about \$1,000,000 annually from Fund 10 to Fund 27 for additional expenses above state and federal aid revenue. This transfer equates to 8% of our total budget. Each additional 10% of aid would provide \$110,000 in additional funding for all students. **PSD supports the increase as reimbursable categorical aid as proposed by Governor Evers. Every district has students with different needs and the reimbursable aid will provide the best chance at equity.**

Aid for Low-Income Pupils

Low-income students encounter many hurdles that require additional resources to assist them in their education. Often these students have less access to food, housing, health care, mental health services, and parental support; especially at the early childhood age. **PSD endorses additional funds through the weighting of low-income students as 1.2FTE.** This funding will provide early interventions in reading and mathematics, early childhood development, mental health, and transitional services to careers and/or college.

Revenue Limit Increase

PSD is faced with expenses related to transportation, food service, and utilities that rise at least to the CPI rate level. We are also experiencing a labor shortage in support and professional staff that calls for

an increase in wages to compete in the job market. **PSD supports Governor Evers proposal to raise the revenue limit to \$9,700 and \$10,000 and to fully fund this additional revenue through equalized aid.**

Two-Thirds Funding and School Levy Tax Credit

Increases in revenue limit must be accompanied with additional support from the state. **PSD supports the state returning to its commitment to fund two-thirds of K-12 school revenues and the increase is realized in the general school aid formula.** The additional aid will be equalized and equitable amongst the tax base and mitigate increases in local property taxes.

Educator Workforce Shortage

The number one factor in student success is their teacher. PSD has experienced a considerable decrease in the number of applicants and the quality of those applicants. **PSD supports the creation of a loan forgiveness program to motivate potential teachers to choose education and to restore pre-2013 Act 20 law to rehire annuitants to teach.**

Revenue Limit Adjustments

To continue our efforts to maintain the safety of our schools and to better prepare graduates; **PSD recommends revenue limit adjustments for mental health services and school safety expenditures.** The adjustment will provide local Boards the ability to provide stable and predictable financial resources (similar to Fund 80) that will allow districts to insure that students are safe. I am grateful for the last two rounds of safety grant money that was provided, but to develop and maintain a safe and positive school culture.....we need stable and ongoing funding to provide mental health support to students and their families.

Thank you for your time and all are invited to visit the Peshtigo Schools to learn how the state's investment in public education benefits our children.

Respectfully Submitted;



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