



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NORTH FOND DU LAC

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April 24th, 2019

Testimony – Joint Finance Green Bay Meeting

Dear Co-Chairs Darling, Nygren and the Joint Finance Committee Members,

Living and serving in the state of Wisconsin is a blessing and gift – Public Education in Wisconsin is strong; the past investment in public education is appreciated and has been used judiciously; and now is the time to continue this investment to ensure the future of our great state. An increase investment in public education is an investment in students, communities, our future leaders, and the work force.

My name is Aaron Sadoff and I am proud to serve the School District of North Fond du Lac as superintendent; we are a growing district of more than 1480 students (up 130 over the last 2 years), the largest employer in our community (with a budget of over \$20,000,000) employing over 190 staff; and a partner with local business and educational institutions to make our community stronger. Our student body is made up of 18% Special Education students; 10% English Language Learner students; 54% of our students qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program and a 100% of students that deserve the best education we can afford, develop and implement.

Representing the Board Education, staff, students and community of the School District of North Fond du Lac here are some areas of investment in public education I believe would bring the most value:

1. Thank you for supporting at least a \$200/pupil general revenue increase in each year of next two years. Under current law, an the ability for an additional \$200 per pupil in revenue limit authority would increase our limit to \$9,700 (a \$103 increase per student) which correlates to \$135,167 additional resources, if we are allowed to utilize the entire \$200 per pupil authority, we would be able to raise an additional \$261,800. This increase will help us pay for some of the increased costs we know we will incur. The funding formula and the way monies are allocated to schools is very important to address. We would prefer to for the additional resources to be put in increased revenue limit, but would also support if maintaining current law allowing for increasing the revenue celling and receiving the additional resources in categorical aide, as it has been distributed in the past.
2. Thank you for considering increasing the investment in students that need more support and resources – special education students; students struggling with mental health issues; and students with limited resources (English Language Learners and students who qualify for free and reduced lunch). I am blessed that my three children are not that expensive to educate, but through my 21 years of being an educator, I have realized that students with different life variables require different supports (which many times equates to more money).
 - **Investing more into special education aide will help everyone! In our District, this would free up discretionary resources for investing in opportunities for ALL students. Our special education**

costs are over \$4,000,000 a year. Of those costs, 24.5% is aided from the state and this year our District will transfer over \$2,670,000 from our general fund to make sure our responsibility is met to serve these students in need. Here are some projections of the amount of resources we would receive, depending on your decision, all of which would allow us to have more discretionary resources:

- 24.5% (current rate) = \$996,101
- 30% = \$1,219,716 (+\$223,615)
- 35% = \$1,423,002 (+\$426,901)
- 40% = \$1,626,288 (+\$630,187)

Investing more in special education is one of the best ways to help all schools and all students.

- Thank you for considering allocating more resources for students that are not native English speakers and those with limited financial resources at home through exploring a 20% increase of funding to each student that qualifies for language services and the federal free and reduced lunch program. This would help to bring equity through resources to help these students overcome learning barriers that their life situations present.
 - Thank you for considering ways to allow for increased investments to help school-based mental health needs. When we have people and programs to support those most in need, we prevent future problems and costs. This could be done in many ways, including allowing for revenue cap exemptions for funding mental health providers and supports, much like Fund 80 does for our community services.
3. Please consider a model that funds state aide through 4 equal payments of 25% (currently all districts are funded in the state with 15% in the beginning of the school year, 25% each of the next payments and then the final payment in June, when school is over is 35%). This would allow us to not have to short term borrow and would increase our ability to innovate and invest in the programs and ideas presented in the “No Time to Lose” Report commissioned by the National Conference of State Legislatures, as well as look at saving on benefits through possibly utilizing a self-funded insurance model and exploring other wellness and usage initiatives.

In conclusion, a special thank you each of you and to my legislators, Representative Schraa and Senator Feyen. Even though we may not agree on every topic and way to solve problems, we share the same passion for our communities, state and our kids. Their, and each of your willingness work together to best invest our resources in our state is appreciated and applauded.

The state of Wisconsin is strong, public education in our state is strong and when we operate from a stance of strength and invest in the greatest natural resource, our children, we all improve and get better. Our success as a school and community is not predicated on the failures of others, actually, the better we support each other and invest in all our communities and children, the cap of our potential is removed and the sky becomes the floor not the limit! On Wisconsin!

Sincerely,



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