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**Joint Finance Committee Testimony 4/24/19**

I come to you today as a School Board Member, elementary school Principal, former teacher, small business owner, but mainly as a PARENT. Specifically, I stand representing the 6,000 students under the Howard-Suamico School District's care each year - 2 of which are my own.

Due to the method in which school funding is calculated, the Howard-Suamico School District has had less revenue to spend on a per pupil basis than most school systems in Wisconsin. As one of the lowest spending school districts in the state, **we respectfully request your support to restore funding by increasing equalization aid** - rather than forcing us to raise local property taxes.

We are also asking for a collaborative, **bipartisan, effort toward increased funding for students with special needs**. The Howard-Suamico School District, transfers about \$6,000,000 annually from Fund 10 to Fund 27 to provide equitable learning opportunities for over 700 students with special needs; that is \$6 million dollars diverted away from the needs of general education students - each year.

We also support **funding full-day 4K programs**. This will help us enhance early literacy, mitigate at-risk indicators, and start strong by building positive relationships with our families.

We are NOT standing idle at HSSD. We have also taken action, like we are here asking you to do. Some of our measures include:

- Partnering with our taxpayers to pass a 5.8 million dollar five-year operational referendum;
- Launching a capital campaign targeting resources for facilities and equipment improvements;
- Selling obsolete property to a residential developer to increase resident student enrollment;
- And more.

But we need your help! Please partner with us to ensure that we have the necessary funding to meet the needs of our learners so we can help them prepare for their future, not our past. Our students deserve it. ALL students deserve it.

Thank you, sincerely, for your time.

Vanessa Moran, Public Policy Correspondent  
Howard-Suamico Board of Education