



June 4, 2015

Dear School District of Beloit Parents and Families:

As we wrap up this year's Points of Pride, we find ourselves grateful to our students and staff for their hard work in making "Beloit Proud" a true reality. Graduation rates are increasing, performing arts and sports flourishing, and we continue to host visitors from the state, nation and world (most recently, Azerbaijan!) to find out how to replicate our successes. However, we need your help in continuing the source of pride that public education is in Wisconsin.

Just as a household budget reflects a family's priorities, the state biennial budget, as proposed by the state's Joint Finance Committee, sends a clear message to Wisconsin's residents that public education is no longer of importance. Some of what the proposal includes:

- Wisconsin has seen a 15% decrease in per pupil spending for public education since 2008. **Now, for the first time, Wisconsin will fall below the national average in per pupil spending with this budget.** Public schools will have less state general aid than in 2010.
- While other states have been increasing public education at an average rate of 4%, **we are one of only five states** that have been keeping public education flat or decreasing.
- We would be the **first state to allow licensing of individuals without a degree** to teach students.
- Dollars are being diverted to **expanding the voucher program**, a program with unproven results and without the same accountability required of public schools.
- The proposal would **allow non-public school students to participate on our school teams** in certain sports, regardless of the WIAA's firm stance against this move.
- **Schools do not have to take the same state test**, making accountability and comparisons impossible.

I encourage you to take time to review this budget and the Joint Finance Committee's proposed changes. If you would like to make your voice heard about the budget needing to make public education a priority in Wisconsin, please contact your local legislators.

Beloit Legislators:

<u>Senator Janis Ringhand</u>	608-262-2253	Sen.Ringhand@legis.wi.gov
<u>Senator Stephen Nass</u>	608-266-2635	Sen.Nass@legis.wi.gov
<u>Representative Amy Loudenbeck</u>	608-266-9967	Rep.Loudenbeck@legis.wisconsin.gov
<u>Representative Mark Spreitzer</u>	608-266-1192	Rep.Spreitzer@legis.wisconsin.gov

If we all stand together, we can make a difference. Thank you for the privilege of educating your children.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas Johnson
Superintendent of Schools