

WAUWATOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT

• Your Educational Community •

School Board

June 8, 2015

Dear Families, Staff and Community,

The 2014-2015 school year has provided many reasons for our community to celebrate and support the success of the Wauwatosa School District. We achieved significant gains in our literacy performance, we honored an unprecedented 11 Wauwatosa high school students who were recognized as National Merit Scholarship Finalists, and our Superintendent, Dr. Phil Ertl, was one of 100 superintendents across the nation to be recognized by President Obama at the White House for his exemplary leadership in integrating technology into the classroom.

These are just a few outstanding District accomplishments. We know that we have a multitude of everyday successes that contribute to our high performance and continuous improvement. HOWEVER, today we are facing State budget proposals that will jeopardize our District's ability to maintain the programs, professional educators and staff, and material resources that provide the foundation for this successful educational organization.

The following are some of the proposals made by our Governor and the Joint Finance Committee (JFC). THESE PROPOSALS WERE ADOPTED BY THE JFC AND HAVE A VERY GOOD CHANCE OF PASSING THROUGH THE SENATE AND THE ASSEMBLY.

- Under the proposed funding, Wisconsin will fall below the national average in per pupil spending for the first time.
- Under current statute, public school students can open enroll to other public school districts. A total of \$6,635 follows that student to their new school. Under the proposed new legislation, students can also enroll in a voucher school (a non-public school approved by the state.) A voucher in the amount of \$7,210 for K-8 students and \$7,856 for high school students follows that student to their voucher school, allowing non-public students to be eligible for more funding than public school students to attend the school of their choice.
- We recognize that the quality of the teacher in the classroom is the most important school-based factor in improving student achievement. Current practice requires educators in middle and high school to have a bachelor's degree related to the subject they teach, complete intensive training on skills required to be a teacher, and successfully pass skills and subject content assessments. The changes adopted by the JFC would allow anyone with a bachelor's degree to teach English, Math, Science, or Social Studies courses in grades 6 through 12. There would be no requirement that a teacher's bachelor's degree be related to the subject he or she intends to teach. For all other subjects in grades 6-12, any individual could obtain a teaching permit, making Wisconsin the only state to license

persons who lack a bachelor's degree to teach subjects other than technical education. With this one legislative change, students could have undertrained and ill-prepared educators without the prerequisite knowledge to meet the many needs of our students.

- The proposed law allows students in special education to use \$12,000 in publicly funded annual vouchers to attend private and parochial schools. This amount is completely arbitrary, as actual costs vary drastically from student to student. At the same time the legislature is allocating money for special education students in private/parochial schools, it has not increased funding for public school special education students in eight years.
- The Committee's proposal mandates that public school districts provide students residing in the district who are not enrolled in the district schools access to district co-curricular activities. Athletics and other extra-curricular activities offered in public schools are, as the name suggests, intended to supplement the school curriculum. In this regard, athletics, drama, forensics and other activities are viewed as an extension of the classroom and of the school day and are specific to each respective school or district.

We urge you to learn more about the proposed 2015-2017 state budget. Learn how it will impact our school district and education in the state of Wisconsin. If you agree that supporting traditional public education is important, please let your voice be heard in Madison by contacting your elected representatives in the Wisconsin State Legislature and the Governor.

Governor Scott Walker
(608) 266-1212
E-mail: govgeneral@wisconsin.gov

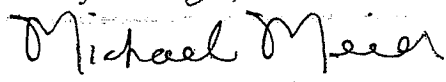
Senator Leah Vukmir
(608) 266-2512
Fax: (608) 267-0367
E-mail: Sen.Vukmir@legis.wi.gov

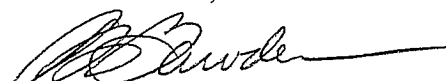
Representative Dale Kooyenga
(608) 266-9180, Toll free: (888) 534-0014
Fax: (608) 282-3614
Email: Rep.Kooyenga@legis.wisconsin.gov


Representative Rob Hutton
(608) 267-9836, Toll free: (888) 534-0013
Fax: (608) 282-3613
Email: Rep.Hutton@legis.wisconsin.gov

Sincerely,


Mary Jo Randall, Board President


Michael Meier, Board Treasurer


Brian Bawden, Board Member


Philip Kroner, Board Member


Sharon Muehlfeld, Board Vice President


Kristy Casey, Board Clerk

Annè Fee, Board Member


Phil Ertl, Superintendent