

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF BELOIT TURNER

1237 Inman Parkway, Beloit, WI 53511

DENNIS McCARTHY, Ed.D.

Superintendent
(608) 364-6372
(608) 364-6373 fax

CHRISTINE BROWN

Director of Pupil Services
(608) 364-6372
(608) 364-6373 fax

BRAD BOLL

Director of Business Services
(608) 364-6372
(608) 364-6373 fax

CHRISTOPHER KOEPPEN

Principal
F.J. Turner High School
1231 Inman Parkway
(608) 364-6370
(608) 365-4768 fax

CORY EVERSON

Principal
Turner Middle School
1237 Inman Parkway
(608) 364-6367
(608) 368-3148 fax

MATTHEW BRIGHT

Assistant Principal
High School / Middle School
1231 Inman Parkway
(608) 364-6370 HS
(608) 364-6367 MS
(608) 365-4768 fax

RYAN BERTELSEN

Principal
Townview Elementary School
2442 West Beloit Newark Road
(608) 364-6365
(608) 365-7549 fax

VICKIE SMITH

Principal
Powers Elementary School
620 Hillside Drive
(608) 364-6360
(608) 364-6362 fax

May 21, 2021

Representative Loudenbeck:

We feel strongly that education funding must be a top priority in our state's next biennial budget. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown just how crucial public schools are to local communities and the impact that school district decisions have on local economies. It is imperative that the state legislature invest in our communities and in our children to encourage economic development by investing in our public schools. We need annual increases in spendable resources in order to maintain our facilities, retain our staff, and provide safe face-to-face instruction to our students.

Please support and encourage others in your caucus to support the inclusion of the following items in the 2021-23 biennial budget – they are crucial to our efforts to maintain and improve the quality of the education our students receive.

- Provide a \$200 per pupil inflationary increase in the revenue limit in 2021-22, and a \$204 per pupil inflationary increase in the revenue limit in 2022-23 so local school districts can continue to meet their ongoing financial obligations, including utilities, maintenance, salaries, and benefits. As the cost of materials and services continues to increase due to inflation and COVID-19 related delays and shortages, school districts end up with fewer resources to educate our students. The increase in our costs continues to exceed the increase in the state revenue limit.
- All school districts in Wisconsin are obligated to provide a "free and appropriate education" (FAPE) in the "least restrictive environment" (LRE). We need the legislature to increase support for special education services so we can offset at least some of the \$2 million that we currently transfer from our General Fund in order to meet the needs of our most vulnerable students. Increasing the special education reimbursement rate benefits every public school district in our state by freeing up dollars to invest in educational programming that benefits all students.
- Expansion of the Governor's proposed Mental Health Categorical Aid Program. Schools across Wisconsin have seen an increase in student mental health needs over the last decade and the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly exacerbated this trend. We continue to struggle to meet the growing mental health needs in our schools and community. These funds will allow us to better address the challenges we face in

Representative Loudenbeck
Page 2
May 21, 2021

order to make sure our students come to school ready to learn. Our students are demonstrating a need for significantly more mental health support. We have trained some of our staff members to provide mental health "triage" as necessary, but this is not an issue that can be solved by investing in additional professional development. A significant funding increase for school-based mental health services to students (and staff) is long overdue in our state. We need a commitment from our legislators to help fund this growing need.

The School District of Beloit Turner serves over 1600 students in a very diverse community. In order to operate safely in our hybrid model during the 2020-21 school, the District invested over \$180,000 in COVID-19 related expenditures to protect the health and safety of our staff and students. These expenses included face masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE), hand sanitizer, plastic barriers and shields, providing and delivering meals to families, regular sanitizing of hard surfaces throughout the District, and signage for floors and walls for social distancing. Additionally, we made investments in our technology and infrastructure to maximize the efficiency of virtual instruction. With some exceptions, based on recommendations from our county health department, we have offered our families a face-to-face instructional option since the start of the 2020-21 school year.

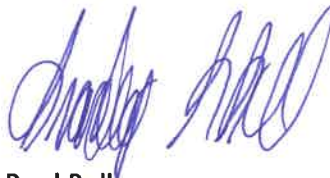
We are grateful for the federal support we have received in the form of one-time ESSER funding. These dollars have been used, and will continue to be used, to offset the increase in costs that resulted from COVID-19. Unfortunately, these dollars are one-time funds and cannot be relied upon as a sustainable source of funding to maintain our operations. We need the state legislature to invest in public education so that we can continue to educate Wisconsin's students beyond 2023.

We appreciate your hard work and service to our State and encourage you to stand up for our children as you balance different demands from various constituencies. If we can help in any way, please feel free to contact us at (608) 364-6372.

Respectfully,



Dennis McCarthy
District Administrator



Brad Boll
Director of Business Services



Christine Brown
Director of Pupil Services