



School District of New Richmond

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June 23, 2021

Dear Senator Stafsholt and Representative Moses,

First and foremost, I am very proud to say our STUDENTS, our Board of Education, our team of staff members, our administration, our parents, and our community **DID IT**. The School District of New Richmond provided 171 in-person learning days for SDNR Elementary students, 143 in-person learning days and 28 remote learning days for NRMS students, 139 in-person learning days and 32 remote learning days for NRHS students along with offering a majority of our extra-curricular activities. In addition, we are very proud that 205 Tigers accepted their high school diploma on Friday, May 28, 2021. Please check out the [SDNR News Spring Edition 2021](#) for individual graduation pictures or check out the recorded version from Just In Live Stream [HERE](#). These opportunities were realized through teamwork, collaboration, sacrifice, and most of all care for our students, staff, families, and community.

However, despite these great feats, we are still dealing with academic and social emotional GAP concerns and fall out. As you can see this is not a stock letter from a state organization but our story here in New Richmond. With the JFC decision, we again find ourselves trying to meet the needs of our students with little financial assistance to support our District from the state legislators. Respectfully, I would like to ask the following questions:

- How is the current JFC bill good for students?
- How well does the current budget support all staff member's well being? These dedicated hero's continued to serve our community every day and persevered through a pandemic?
- How well does the JFC budget address staff retention as we continue to lose great staff to MN where-
[Minnesota legislators agree to give \\$250M in bonuses to workers on pandemic's front lines](#)?
- Keeping the revenue cap at zero when salaries, health care, and inflation on supplies consume our revenues is not in the spirit of 'emergency relief' funding.

Based on our past individual meetings, I think you would agree, that education is and continues to be a major part of our shared community. Please urge your colleagues to support a revenue limit increase. We can provide historic levels of tax relief and provide schools with spendable resources that will lessen the need to go to referendum. It is a win-win. Furthermore, please consider the following points:

- Thank you for providing the funding necessary to capture our share of one-time federal relief funds (ESSER) for schools. However, the freezing of school district revenue limits continue to hamper our ability to move our District's forward especially after a pandemic.
- I understand New Richmond Area residents will get a tax break but am concerned that this move will increase the continued need for school districts across the state to go to referendum. Thus, negating the property tax relief.
- By modestly increasing revenue limits, the \$408 million that has already been allocated by the committee for K-12 purposes could help schools meet ongoing school costs while still holding property taxes flat statewide. It would also mean the state would still be providing a tax cut of nearly \$3 billion - more than seven times the size of the K-12 investment we are asking you to make.

We ask for continued engagement in finding a better third option than what is currently proposed for the Wisconsin school districts by the Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee .

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on our community's physical and mental health. Like you, we have all learned a lot about how to adapt on a daily basis. Our country, state, and community need resilient schools, resilient educators, and resilient students. As a District, we are fortunate for the collaboration and contributions of so many to make this last year possible. As we reflect on the challenges that we all endured, we owe it to one another to keep looking forward. For the past fifteen months, we grappled with fluctuating health rules and guidance, all while trying to keep our students and staff safe! Our focus from the start was to provide continued education for all students at each level that is effectively communicated and **TOGETHER WE DID IT!** However, our work is not done and we need your help! Please urge your colleagues to support a revenue limit increase.

Respectfully,

Patrick B. Olson
District Administrator