

May 15, 2017

Legislator
P.O.Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Legislator,

As members of the Waunakee Community School District Board of Education, we are writing to encourage increasing the per pupil revenues by a minimum of \$200/student preferably through the equalized aid formula rather than as a categorical aid.

As you may be aware, we are one of the top school districts not only in Dane County but in the entire State of Wisconsin. Our test scores and graduation rates are in the top 10% in the State. We have a total enrollment of 4,188 students (2016-17).

We are grateful to the Legislators and the Governor for proposing increased per pupil spending in this biennium budget. After losing \$1,014/student from 2008-2015 (according to the Wisconsin Budget Project), and a freeze in revenue caps (2015-17), all Wisconsin public schools are in great need of an increase in state funding.

A key funding area where we lack is in recruiting, retaining, and rewarding our employees. Since Act 10, the market has become more fluid. Yet, we lack sufficient funds to adequately reward an outstanding staff. Additionally, our aid was cut or frozen the past two years. Since the 2008-09 school year, our equalization aid has averaged \$1.3 million less per year (over \$10.5 million over the eight years.) We need more revenues (without going to referendum) to meet the fast growing educational needs of our students, needs such as makerspaces, new technologies, professional development, curriculum advancements and enhancements, expanded operational costs, facility maintenance, and more. We appreciate and support your effort to restore stronger financial support for public schools. The proposed increase in \$200 per pupil aid would be a great start.

We urge you to work with the governor to make this \$200/per pupil increase in school funding a reality. Ideally, this would be distributed through the equalized aid formula vs. being distributed as a categorical aid.

Protracted negotiation and delayed passage of the state budget makes it very difficult for school districts to plan staffing levels and implement responsible budgets at the local level. We are hopeful a meaningful increase in state funding for public schools will pass before schools open again in the fall.

We look forward to partnering with you in support of legislation that allows local school boards to demonstrate stewardship and reflects local values. Lengthening the debate hinders these efforts.

With respect,

Waunakee Community School District Board of Education

Joan Ensign, President _____

Julie Waner, Vice-President _____

Gary Epping, Treasurer _____

Peggy Hill-Breunig, Clerk _____

Jack Heinemann, Director _____

Dave Boetcher, Director _____

Mark Hetzel, Director _____