



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ELEVA-STRUM

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Dear Governor Walker, Joint Finance Committee, and Citizens of Eleva-Strum

As elected school board officials representing the children, parents, and taxpayers of the Eleva-Strum School District, we are compelled to inform Wisconsin's lawmakers and the citizens of the Eleva-Strum of the financial impact of Governor Walker's proposed biennial budget presented on February 3, 2015.

We appreciate that the Governor's budget considered the needs of small, rural school districts, such as Eleva-Strum, by including modest increases in Sparsity Aid and High Cost Transportation Aid. From these two categorical aids, Eleva-Strum is scheduled to receive an increase of \$43,600, which helps to compensate for the high cost of transporting students within our sizable, rural area.

However, the increases in Sparsity Aid and High Cost Transportation Aid, while appreciated, are completely offset by elimination of the \$150 Per Pupil Categorical Aid for the 2015-16 school year. Eleva-Strum received \$90,300 in Per Pupil Categorical Aid in 2014-15, and school districts were given every indication that this aid would continue into the future. By reducing this aid to \$0 per pupil, the net effect is a \$46,700 loss of categorical aids for 2015-16.

Another aspect of the Governor's budget that impacts our district's budget is freezing the school district revenue limit. While a freeze is not a reduction, in reality a budget deficit is created since prices will inevitably rise for fixed expenses such as heat, electricity, transportation fuel, water and sewer, insurance, supplies, and services. Considering a projected inflation rate of 1.62%, over \$100,000 is needed in additional revenue just to maintain Eleva-Strum's current facilities, programs and services. When combined with the \$46,700 loss in categorical aids, it will be necessary to reduce our budget by nearly \$150,000. This may not be possible without reducing programs for students. Freezing the revenue limit year after year, in essence, strangles our district financially. Without the support of dedicated employees and a community that has supported referenda to exceed the revenue limits, the recent school funding legislation would have certainly resulted in the demise of the Eleva-Strum School District, as we know it.

We, the Eleva-Strum Board of Education, believe that we have been good stewards of our taxpayer's dollars. Since 2011, we have reduced the district's budget while maintaining and even improving the quality of education for our students. We made

changes in our teacher compensation model, changed our health insurance benefit provider and plan to include higher deductibles and greater employee contributions, and terminated post-employment benefits. These savings, along with very supportive citizens who have passed two referenda since 2011, have allowed us to maintain educational programs that have received state awards and national recognition.

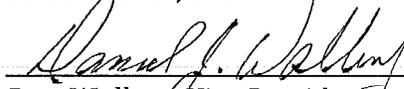
We understand the difficult job facing our lawmakers in Madison. We, too, are charged with wise use of taxpayer dollars, while providing a quality education to every student who walks through our school's doors. We strongly encourage Governor Walker and our State Legislators to prioritize public K-12 education and restore the Per Pupil Categorical Aid and allow for inflationary revenue limit increases in both years of the biennial budget.

Respectfully,

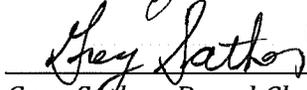
The Eleva-Strum Board of Education



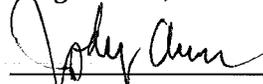
Lois Hayenor, President



Dan Wallery, Vice President



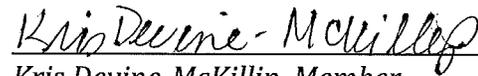
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