



March 11, 2015

Representative Dave Murphy
Room 304 North
State Capitol
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708

As leaders of school districts in and around the Fox River Valley, we are united in the mission of working for excellence for all of our children. We ask that you adopt a biennial budget, impacting the 2015-16 school years and beyond, that advocates both policies and the funding support necessary to both maintain and improve our already excellent schools. We are writing today to advocate our position on several of the key items impacting PreK-12 public education in Governor Walker’s initial budget proposal.

Estimated Per Pupil Aid Eliminated in the 2015-16 Proposed Budget	
Appleton	\$2.19 million
Freedom	\$245,250
Hortonville	\$531,000
Kaukauna	\$656,700
Kimberly	\$680,000
Little Chute	\$208,800
Menasha	\$558,900
Neenah	\$950,000
New London	\$366,000
Oshkosh	\$1.47 million
Seymour	\$369,150
Shiocton	\$113,850

We advocate for the following:

- **One assessment system that will measure achievement and growth with reliability and validity.** Comparing schools based on a very small amount of student achievement data is already limited in its value. Layering in an accountability system consisting of the achievement data from different assessments will create confusion, and not allow for relevant comparability. We must be accountable. One system will accomplish this.
- **An ungraded school report card** that does not label or denigrate a school based on a very narrow band of student achievement data. Just three years ago the present accountability system was developed with a very transparent process by a diverse stakeholder Accountability Design Team. This Design Team made the conscious decision to not adopt a letter grade rating system. Labeling a school with as an A - F school does not encourage a deeper analysis of all of the aspects of a school prior to assigning such a label.





- **Funding that minimally addresses inflationary growth in district operational costs.** We understand that state resources are tight, but the current proposal cuts will make it impossible to pay normal operating cost increases without directly impacting services provided to our students and their families. (See the table for the impact of the \$150/student categorical aid cut for Fox Valley School Districts.)
- **Funding for districts to provide cost of living increases to educators.** Retention of our excellent faculty and staff needs to be a top priority. Without great teachers, Wisconsin will not have great schools. We believe that our teachers and other staff deserve cost of living increases. In order to recruit and retain quality faculty/staff, wages need to be competitive and adequate. Under the initial budget proposal, few, if any districts will be able to offer staff raises over the next two years.
- **Taxpayer money supports public education.** Expanding vouchers take public tax dollars and disperse it to private, for-profit schools, or to religious institutions that are not held to the same high standards as public schools. Expanding vouchers will take resources away from public education. We believe that public money should be committed to public institutions.

Please join us in our effort to continue to provide excellent public education in Wisconsin. As the legislature works through the budget adoption process we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this letter or any other aspect of school operations in our respective districts.

Sincerely,

Superintendents from the Fox River Valley and Surrounding Areas

Lee Allinger – Appleton

Kevin Kilstofte – Freedom

Bob Mayfield – Kimberly

Mark Duerwaechter – Kaukauna

Mary Pfeiffer – Neenah

Chris VanderHeyden – Menasha

Dave Botz – Little Chute

Kathy Gwidt – New London

Heidi Schmidt – Hortonville

Stan Mack – Oshkosh

Nichole Schweitzer – Shiocton

Pete Ross – Seymour

