

Erin Green, Greendale Schools Director of Business
* Comments to the Joint Finance Committee

If this administration is truly about business and jobs, then let's fund K-12 education and higher education like we mean it.

K-12 is educating the workers of today and tomorrow for our Wisconsin economy. Business, educators and politicians need to come together- its time! Let's get on the same page and adequately fund K-12 (and higher education) because it is the building block on which it all rests.

For starters, reinstate the \$150 per pupil categorical aid for WI schools. While we all appreciated the tools that Act 10 brought and use them, we are challenged recruiting and retaining great teachers in a growing economy. Further cuts in pay or benefits impede this goal. Wisconsin teachers are not getting rich on their salaries, trust me. Having a career ladder of some sort for teachers is imperative. In order to fund this and meet other inflationary increases the revenue cap should be increased at least by the rate of inflation- about \$160 per pupil.

In Greendale the budget shortfall we are planning for without changes to the proposal is about a cool \$1 Million dollars, due to the lack of an adequate revenue cap increase and the removal of the \$150 per pupil categorical aid. This will mean elimination of positions probably in music, guidance, support staff, and curriculum, among others, along with salary freezes and benefit cuts. Where else can we go to make these kinds of large dollar cuts?

There are many other areas of the budget to offer comment on, but in the interest of brevity, one stands out. Greendale School District won the national Green Ribbon Award last year with the resources and assistance of the position dedicated to Green and Healthy Schools, and the excellent resources through the WAEE (Wisconsin Association of Environmental Education). Operating sustainably, promoting health and wellness and offering environmental education within our curricula will save money and more importantly, offer an antidote to the overtesting environment so prevalent today, which stresses students' emotional, mental and social health. Maintain the great legacy Wisconsin has in environmental education and help every district to realize sustainability by maintaining the state resources to fund Green and Healthy Schools, WAEE and the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board. As Treasurer of the Green Schools National Network, I can tell you Wisconsin has a great reputation in this area.

We implore the legislature to reflect carefully on the 2015-2017 budget and realize what is at risk if the Governor's budget proposal is accepted.