



## KETTLE MORaine SCHOOL DISTRICT

### DISTRICT OFFICE

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March 17, 2015

To: Members of Joint Finance, Senator Farrow, Representative Kapenga, Representative Allen, Senator Fitzgerald, and Representative Vos

Re: Proposed 2015-17 State Biennial Budget

The Kettle Moraine Board would like to express concern and offer several recommendations regarding the Governor's budget proposal.

Over the past four years, we have diligently utilized the "tools" provided by Act 10. However the district faces budget challenges each and every year due to inadequate and inconsistent funding of public education.

Here we are again, fighting to maintain funding for the education of our students and students across the state. On behalf of the 4,200 students at Kettle Moraine and the 870,000 students in traditional public schools statewide, we offer the following concerns and recommendations:

1. **Kettle Moraine (KM) recommends funding that provides an increase in the revenue limit equal to the increase in the rate of inflation.**
  - a. KM opposes the proposed \$150 per pupil aid reduction in the first year of the biennium which will require **cutting an additional \$600,000 from our budget.**
  - b. KM opposes the proposed freeze of revenue limit over the entire biennium. A 0% increase in revenue limit results in an **additional reduction of \$1,300,000 over the biennium.**
  - c. KM recommends supporting the educational needs of students with disabilities by providing a reimbursement rate at **30% in the first year and 33% in the second year of this biennial budget (current funding is 26%).** The current budget bill does not provide any additional funding for students with disabilities. Funding for these students has continued to decline and makes it difficult to maintain programming for all students.
2. **Kettle Moraine (KM) opposes the following provisions and recommends immediate removal from the Budget Bill:**
  - a. KM opposes the expansion of Taxpayer Supported Vouchers Schools and Independent Charter Schools:
    - i. **Financial implications:**
      - KM opposes the diversion of taxpayer dollars to private institutions. How is this justified when severe per pupil aid cuts are proposed for traditional public schools who educate 88% of children in the state?
      - KM opposes the proposed expansion of taxpayer funded vouchers for all low income students in K-4, K-5, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade. This dramatic increase of funding private schools comes at the expense of public schools.
    - ii. **Accountability implications:** KM opposes the proposed increase of public tax dollars for private schools. Our school board receives input from taxpayers and is held accountable to them and by them. Taxpayers have no ability to participate or obtain information from private institutions.

- b. **Charter Board:** KM opposes an appointed state-level chartering board. Elected local school boards understand their community needs and ensure that charters are used to benefit all students.
  - c. **Required notification to parents regarding educational options:**
    - i. KM should not be required to advertise any school options, other than our own district options, on our school website.
    - ii. Private voucher and independent charter schools are not required to advertise public school options. KM opposes the proposal that we fund private schools and advertise for them with taxpayer dollars.
3. **Kettle Moraine (KM) recommends removal of the following provisions from Budget Bill and requests stand-alone legislation and public hearings:**
- a. **School Accountability:** KM believes that all publicly funded schools should be held to the same standards and assessments:
    - i. KM supports a single assessment system for all publicly funded students.
    - ii. Retain the previously agreed upon state report card system (without the use of letter grades for schools) designed by a committee co-chaired by Governor Walker and State Superintendent Evers.
  - b. **Alternative Teacher Licensure**
    - i. KM supports flexibility in high demand / low supply curricular areas (example Tech Ed).

This budget proposal damages the highest performing school districts across the state. Nearly 88% of Wisconsin's children attend public schools. We must do everything we can to prepare our students for the increased demands of our state and the competitive global market. Our children and the economic vitality of our state depend upon making the critical decision to financially support education.

We welcome any questions you may have and look forward to continuing these very important discussions.

Sincerely,

Kettle Moraine Board of Education



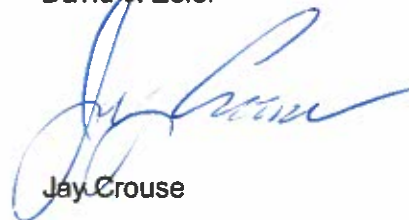
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