



To: Members of Joint Finance

Date: March 18, 2015

Re: Proposed 2015-17 State Biennial Budget - **OPPOSED**

On behalf of the Kettle Moraine School District I thank you for the opportunity to express concern and offer recommendations regarding the Governor's budget proposal.

Over the past four years, we have diligently utilized the "tools" provided by Act 10. This year however, appears to be the most challenging, 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 public schools students statewide, I ask you to provide a sustainable model of funding that allows us to plan beyond the short term. I ask you to:

1. **Provide districts 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 comes at the expense of programming for all students.
2. **Remove the following provisions from the Budget Bill and provide for stand-alone legislation and public hearings:**
 - a. **School Accountability:** We believe that all publicly funded schools should be held to the same standards and assessments:
 - i. We support a single assessment system for all publicly funded students.
 - ii. We ask the State 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. We support flexibility in high demand / low supply curricular areas (example Tech Ed).
3. **Remove from the Budget Bill:**
 - a. **Taxpayer Supported Voucher Schools and Independent Charter Schools:**
 - i. **Financial Implications:**
 - We oppose voucher and charter expansion. It diverts taxpayer dollars to private institutions. How is this justified when the proposed budget includes severe per pupil aid cuts for traditional public schools?
 - We oppose the proposed expansion of taxpayer funded vouchers for all low income students in K-4, K-5, and 9th grade. This dramatic increase of funding private schools comes at the expense of public schools.

- ii. **Accountability Implications:**
 - We oppose the proposed increase of public tax dollars for private institutions. Taxpayers have no ability to participate in governance 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 charter accountability.
- c. **Required notification to parents regarding educational options:**
 - i. Districts should not be required to advertise any school options, other than their own district options, on school websites.
 - ii. Private voucher and independent charter schools are not required to advertise public school options. We oppose funding private schools and advertising for them with taxpayer dollars.

The proposed budget hurts the highest performing school districts across the state, reserving the most damaging impact for those districts that are most conservative and low spending. Kettle Moraine operates below the state average revenue limit so we have already made deep cuts. When personnel costs account for 80% of the budget, these cuts mean real jobs to real families of those who provide real services to real children.

If our goal is to attract business to Wisconsin we must provide high quality schools. We must prepare students for the increased demands of the competitive global economy. Our children and the economic vitality of our state depend upon making the critical decision to financially support education. Thank you for this opportunity and for your service to our state.



Patricia F. Deklotz, PhD.
Superintendent

Cc: Senator Farrow, Representative Kapenga, Representative Allen,
Senator Fitzgerald, and Representative Vos