

Joint Committee on Finance Testimony

Valders Area School District

March 18, 2015

Senators and Representatives, thank you for taking the time to listen to the testimony I am sharing today. Over the next few weeks, you will hear from many school district personnel. You will hear that the overall \$135 per student decrease in categorical aid within the biennium will be devastating to each school district. I will share what it means for the Valders Area School District.

Since 2009 our school district has cut approximately \$1.5 million from a previously, nearly \$14 million budget. That is an 11% reduction. Typically, over six years other entities see a budgetary increase of some sort within their budgets. However, we carry on, and have reduced personnel and other resources to balance the budget. Each year we, meaning the staff, School Board, parents and community work together to ensure that our students continue to receive a quality education to allow all students to achieve the best of all their abilities.

It has been asked that if our school districts are struggling why are we not showing failure? Failure is not possible for any of the school districts. We are responsible for building the foundational learning experiences for our children. We have teachers, educational assistants, and other staff who have been professionally trained to help students succeed, not fail. Staff

continue to receive less compensation in total salary and benefits, and they continue to tirelessly meet the needs of the students in school and each grade level. However, now they are receiving fewer resources/materials to work with their classes of students. To be future productive members of their communities and society as a whole, students need authentic and meaningful instruction, including appropriate materials, to learn and practice.

I am requesting that you consider the health of each school district throughout our great State by maintaining the current funding as well as providing a modest inflationary increase in per pupil revenues. We need to invest in our children, our Wisconsin people.

Thank you.