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To: Members of the Joint Finance Committee
April 4, 2001

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate with you regarding funding for the upcoming budget. I feel strongly that I articulate some concerns that I have regarding several aspects of the budget that involve library funding.

I can see no better use of state tax dollars than the investment in our extended educational efforts to the children and adults of our state. Currently libraries of all types have felt the sting of "deferred maintenance" for resources, buildings, and personnel. While several initiatives focused at alleviating this situation, long-term avoidance of necessary funding is hard to undo. Libraries have a history of networking with each other in order to effect optimal use of individual resources, but there is only so much that can be extracted from these efforts of economy. In a time when we experience the disparity between the information rich and poor and a malaise about the effectiveness of our government, it would be another blow to the public good to have educational/library institutions that serve so many left with so much less.

As a Reference Librarian in a health care system, I frequently depend on state governmental services for information that involves the health care and research that goes on in our organization. I rely on the State Law Library, Badgerlink, the Wisconsin Interlibrary Loan Service, the medical libraries at our state institutions, our local Marshfield Public Library and the South Central Library System for information resources. Without them in optimal working order, we cannot serve our patients and staff with the type of information that results in excellent patient care and research. Health care would be affected with higher levels of costs. By sharing these resources, we serve each other in a cost-effective manner.

I would encourage you to increase funding for those imperative services. Such investments go a long and immediate way in contributing to the daily welfare of our citizens.

Thank you.

Barb Bartkowiak, Reference Librarian
Marshfield Clinic
George E. Magnin Medical Library
1000 North Oak Avenue
Marshfield WI 54449

Joint Finance Committee Testimony

Marshfield, Wisconsin

April 4, 2001

Testimony Opposing the Continuation of Existing School Revenue Caps

My name is Renae Sheibley; I reside at 1396 Okray Drive, Stevens Point, WI with my husband Jim, daughter, Lauren a first grader and Samuel who is 5 and will enter kindergarten this fall. *My husband and I are taxpayers + voters.*

Everyone is for education and yes we all care about our future generation we just don't want to pay for their education. The gas tax has an automatic increase feature in place to cover inflationary costs and yet Governor McCallum wants to hold school revenue caps at the existing levels with no increase for next year. What message does that send to our children? We as a state ~~are~~ *build more* prisons without getting approval from the voters and yet school districts under the existing school revenue caps cannot maintain existing facilities. What will our educational history tell about the current state funding? What will the students tell us? What are they telling us now? My daughter has asked me when we were unable to pass school referendum after school referendum; "don't people care about the schools Mom?" What am I suppose to tell her?

The Stevens Point Public School district has run out of money and is rapidly running out of options. The taxpayers are unwilling to pass referendums that will increase their tax load for things the schools use to be able to cover in the years prior to school revenue caps. We cannot maintain our existing buildings, buy textbooks, keep existing programs in place and that is just off the top to say nothing about class size or teacher to student ratios. The administration and school board have done their best to maintain what we have and yet the years ahead look disatourous with a 4 to 5 million dollar deficit in the 2002-2003 school year after already cutting over 4 million dollars out of the operating budget. What are we really telling our children? When individuals run for office everyone talks the talk about the importance of good schools but are you willing to walk the walk and provide adequate funding to make it really happen?

We were disappointed to learn of Governor McCallum's plan to help trim or reallocate some of the school funding in the state budget. The SAGE program which provides 15 students to one teacher in the primary grades (K-3) for schools with low income populations may be dropped and the funding redirected to the school choice program for the Milwaukee Public School System. What is the message to out state Wisconsin? It is our understanding that school districts throughout the state have some of their funds diverted to help fund the Milwaukee Public School Voucher Program. Why? I am not opposed to the program just don't ask us to consolidate two of our elementary schools to reduce school expenditures because there is no money, put kids and teachers in closets and increase classroom sizes because we have no money to educate the way we use too. This proposal will save the school district approximately \$300,000 to \$350,000. Does that seem reasonable to you?

*Change to
SAGE req.
(i.e. 50% minint
\$4890) will
eliminate school
outside of Milwan.*

*} Which is approx.
the same amt. as the
Stevens Point School
district budget which
is allocated for
the Milwaukee Voucher...*

Renaë Sheibley testimony

(2)

We do not support the option of holding the current level of revenue without an incremental cost of living increase or of reducing the reimbursement for summer school enrollment from 40% to 25%. How do we continue to offer solid programs without the funding?

Say yes to kids and education. Pay the governmental promised funding for the mandated programs such as special education and English as a Second Language. The current funding levels are inadequate and pit special education against regular education, parents against administration and no one wins when the reality is you have not provided the necessary funds to provide the educational system our children deserve. Revise the current school spending limits and realize if school districts have declining enrollment it is difficult if not impossible to maintain current programs and buildings. Walk the talk, show you care about more than the structural infrastructure of this state and invest in the real resources, our children, and our schools and yes our future.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our concerns, I do hope you are listening and will be willing to walk the walk and not just talk the talk.

Julie Schneider
2700 Peck St.
Stevens Pt. WI 54481

Testimony to the Joint Finance Committee -- April 4, 2001

My name is Julie Schneider and I am a parent of an 8th grader and a 6th grader in the Stevens Point Public Schools. This is my 6th grader, Max. I brought him along so he could see who makes the decisions that affect him and his classmates. His older brother wanted to come, too, but decided he couldn't afford to miss his social studies test on the Russian revolution.

What we need to happen here in WI is a revolution when it comes to the funding of education in our state. The current funding formula is unfair and we are moving quickly to becoming a state of have and have-not school districts. The revenue limits that freeze spending at 1993 levels coupled with the inadequate state and federal reimbursement for students with disabilities and limited English proficiency have had negative, often devastating affects on WI schools: larger class sizes, academic and extracurricular program cuts, failure to replace outdated textbooks and technology and maintenance projects put on indefinite hold. School districts are forced to freeze their spending at 1993 levels, but someone forgot to tell the utility and textbook companies to freeze their prices. You can't pay 2001 prices with a 1993 budget. And when a district's funding is cut because they've lost students in every grade level, costs do not decrease correspondingly. And now Gov. McCallum has recommended to delete the inflation adjustment to the per pupil revenue amount that is provided as an annual increase to a school district's per pupil base revenue. That's like pouring salt in an open wound! Holding referenda to try and make up for budget shortfalls is also an unfair attempt to solve the problem. No other branch of government is required to go the taxpayers when it needs to raise its revenue. I've never been allowed to vote whether I want my tax dollars to go towards the Corrections Dept.

But I'm sure you are aware of all these problems. What I would like to speak to today is the affect the spending caps are having on our communities. I attended a public hearing last week in Stevens Pt. held by the School Board because one of the options for our district may be to close 2 of our neighborhood elementary schools. What I saw and heard was disheartening. People lashed out at the School Board and accused them of ruining their families and neighborhood. It's suddenly become an "us" against "them" situation. The community against the board, special and alternative ed programs competing with regular ed, elementary needs against secondary, academic against co-curricular, the 3 Rs against elective courses. We shouldn't have to make these choices. Please fix this funding formula so that we can get back on track to being a state that provides equitable funding for all school districts and gives each student in WI an equal educational opportunity. I am an academic advisor for undecided majors at UWSP and I see the results of what happens to those students who come from districts with few academic and co-curricular options. They appear less self-assured and have fewer experiences to draw from when making their choice of major decision. Students need all the opportunities we can afford to give them at the K-12 level in order to be well-prepared to enter the adult world. The current spending caps are eating away at these opportunities and creating much disparity between our state's school districts. For the sake of the upcoming generation, please do not allow this to continue.

April 4, 2001

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today on a topic that is important to the future of Wisconsin.

My name is Carl Coffman. I live and work in Stevens Point. I am an elementary school principal at Jackson School in the Stevens Point Area Public Schools.

When the revenue caps were instituted, it found our school district in a favorable situation. We had been a frugal district, but our enrollment was growing. Since then, we have seen a decline in enrollment of over 900 students. With this has come a drastic drop in our state aid.

Over the past six years, we have seen nearly \$ 4.5 million cut from our school district's budget. I have seen firsthand the effects of these cuts.

I would like to share some specific examples of these affects.

1. Our supplies and materials budgets have been frozen with little or no increase for several years. This means that our dollars buy less each year, as the cost of supplies increases.
2. Funds needed to repair our school buildings and replace outdated and inefficient equipment and building components have been cut from the budget. The windows and doors in our building are over 30 years old. In the winter, it is so cold in our rooms that we need to close the window cover panels and block out all natural light in order to keep the temperature reasonable. Our heating and ventilating system is sorely in need of replacement as well. This past winter, a frozen univent pipe burst, flooding three classrooms. The damage to the carpet as well as to teacher-owned and school district materials was in the thousands of dollars.
3. Funds to assist in the purchase and installation of playground equipment were cut from the budget several years ago. This means that our PTO has had to work all the harder to raise money from parents to replace the many outdated and unsafe playground structures on our playground. This should be the school district's responsibility – not the parent group's.

4. The funds usually available from our district's budget to purchase spelling texts has been cut. This means that in order to purchase these texts, our teachers have had to use general supplies funds, severely limiting the money available for basic classroom supplies.
5. Several schools in our district do not qualify for Title I funds. However, there are still students with significant needs in the area of reading at these schools. Unfortunately, the severe reductions in our district's budget mean that no funding is available to hire additional reading help. This has created an unfortunate and unfair inequity between the educational opportunities at the schools within our district.
6. Our district's staff development funds have been cut drastically. This means that the resources otherwise devoted to helping teachers learn and develop as professionals are very limited.
7. If things do not change very soon, our school district is facing either substantial cuts totaling \$4 million dollars in 2002-3 and \$5 million in 2003-4 or going to the voters for a referendum. It is interesting to note that our county government recently allocated millions of dollars to renovate our senior center. A worthy project, no doubt, but no voter approval was needed. Why do the schools need to seek a referendum while other local governmental agencies do not?
8. If a referendum were to fail, the list of possible cuts our district will soon consider includes:
 - Increasing elementary class sizes
 - Increasing secondary class sizes
 - Reducing or eliminating our Reading Recovery program
 - Eliminating textbook funds
 - Cutting library staff
 - Cutting athletics
 - Further reducing supplies and materials budgets
 - Reducing or eliminating capital expenditures
 - Reducing the number of high school credits students can take
 - Cutting educational support staff time
 - Cutting the ESL program
 - Closing a school to consolidate programs

I would like to recommend several ways to help school districts across the state provide adequate resources for the students we are responsible to educate each day:

1. Increase the % of reimbursement received for Special Education students. The notion that we are over-identifying students to avoid having them take the state assessments is ludicrous. We have many special education students in our school. They are in those programs because they qualify. In fact, our district is exemplary in its delivery of special education programs. As such, our district finds ourselves enrolling many special education students who have been identified by other districts, but whose families choose to move here because we have a sound reputation of being able to provide these programs.

However, these programs have a higher cost per student due to government limits on teacher – student ratios. When will the government keep its initial promise to the school districts and students of Wisconsin to provide the extra funding to address the increased costs of teaching these students?

2. Increase the ESL reimbursement rate to that initially promised.
3. Maintain Summer school aid reimbursement, rather than cutting it as proposed in budget
4. Maintain the annual increase per student, rather than freeze it, as proposed.
5. Provide local school boards greater control and flexibility in overriding of the spending caps.

Thank you very much for your time and attention, as well as your consideration of the students of Wisconsin.



Wisconsin Valley Library Service

A Multitype Library System

300 First Street • Wausau, WI 54403 • (715) 261-7250

April 4, 2001

TO: Legislative Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Linda Orcutt, Technology Consultant

RE: 2001-2003 Biennial Budget Proposal

Thank you for coming to Marshfield today to hold this hearing regarding the next Wisconsin state budget and thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before you.

I would like to bring to your attention the funding package for public library systems in Wisconsin. The Governor's budget proposal recommends a zero increase in funding to public library systems. Library system funding is based on an index level of the total operating expenditures for public libraries from local and county sources. For the current fiscal year that indexing level is below 10%. By virtue of the fact that the legislature has passed legislation requiring DPI to request a 13% indexing level, it appears to agree with librarians around the state that library systems should be funded at the 13% indexing level. Yet, when it comes to the budget proposal, the governor and the legislature always sidestep this fact. With no increase for library systems in the next 2 years, the indexing level for systems will fall even lower. In the meantime, costs continue to rise for all library systems.

Library systems all across the state have helped their member libraries join the information age by providing the means to efficiently use high speed telecommunications for both Internet access and for participation in a shared automation system. Without the assistance of the area library system and the encouragement of DLTCCL, many of the public libraries in Wisconsin would still be accessing the Internet via dial access at best. That is just one example of how a library system can help the local library and thus impact the entire area.

Apart from the specific funding level, the public library systems, the legislature, and DPI have agreed that the current funding formula is not fair. The law has been revised to address this issue, however the new, more equitable distribution formula cannot take effect until library systems are funded at least at the level of 11.25%. The index level of 11.25% was established so that the formula change would not adversely effect existing funding in any library system.

Librarians across the state and in all types of libraries continue to utilize BadgerLink and are pleased to see that funding for this program is included in the proposed budget. We are all concerned about adding fees to this program and we do not see this as a realistic means of expanding the BadgerLink program. We are also pleased that the language for the TEACH program includes allowing public library branches to have a high speed data line at the same rate as other public libraries across the state.

Again, I urge you to increase funding for public library systems to at least the 11.25% index level. While library related dollars are a very small percentage of this state's budget, they are among the most important dollars spent by government. No other tax dollars are allocated for the express purpose of providing access to the tax supported informational resources available in this state.

Thank you for your careful consideration of these requests.

Wisconsin Valley Library Service

**Testimony on the impact of Governor McCallum's
proposed budget on the Wausau School District**

April 4, 2001

Given By: Charles T. Skurka, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Wausau School District
415 Seymour Street
P.O. Box 359
Wausau, WI 54402-0359
715-261-2561
715-261-2503 FAX
cskurka@wausau.k12.wi.us

I want to thank the Joint Finance Committee for the opportunity to give testimony concerning the Governor's proposed state budget for 2001-2003. I am Charles Skurka, Superintendent of Schools for the Wausau School District. With me I have a delegation of parents, teachers, and School Board members. Wausau is the twelfth largest public school district in Wisconsin. Our District, like many others in the state, is experiencing some very challenging financial times. As a matter of fact, we have made \$2 million of budget cuts during the last two years and are projecting an additional \$11 million in cuts during the next five years. A combination of state mandated revenue limits, decreasing student enrollments, and increased financial demands for special education and limited English speaking students is creating an untenable situation for our District. Add to these financial challenges the fact that fixed costs for such items as fuel and utilities; supplies; and employee health insurance are growing exponentially and you have a system of public education facing financial crisis.

As we in Wausau look at the Governor's proposed budget, we applaud his resolution to maintain the State's pledge to provide two-thirds funding of public school revenues. This continues the promise made to Wisconsin's public school districts guaranteeing that they can provide the facilities required to sustain and enhance their instructional program rather than having inadequate facilities drive the program their schools are able to offer.

However, there are also many items that deserve great scrutiny. Items that may very well take one of the leading state public school systems in our nation and chisel away at its very core. I urge you to look closely at the following items proposed by Governor McCallum:

- By freezing the per-pupil spending cap at \$220.29, Wisconsin school districts will be left with no inflationary adjustment as the CPI rises approximately 2.5 to 3 percent yearly.
- Proposed changes in teacher licensing should concern us all. Allowing people, who may not have graduated from high school, to teach our children sets a dangerous precedent. To allow the changes in this proposal is tantamount to allowing a law clerk or bailiff with five years of courtroom experience to try criminal cases in Wisconsin's court system.
- The \$25 million increase recommended by the Governor in his biennial budget proposal is not sufficient to even maintain the state's inadequate 35 percent contribution to special education.
- Again the executive branch in Wisconsin is trying to usurp the State Superintendent of Public Instruction's role and responsibilities. The Governor has done this by attempting to remove the state superintendent's ability to supervise public school performance and student testing; seeking to supplant Department of Public Instruction authority by diminishing its ability to distribute federal funds; removing the power for review and oversight of the department from the state-elected superintendent as well as DPI jurisdiction over distance learning.
- At a time when the state has introduced new accountability measures through laws concerning student promotion and the high school graduation examination, the Governor is simultaneously recommending cutting support to the state's funding of summer school programming from 40 percent of total enrollment to 25 percent. This places an unfair burden on our schools and makes no sense while at the same time giving the Governor the power to allow summer school aid to Milwaukee charter schools.

- Other taxpayers throughout the state should no longer bear the burden of funding the Milwaukee Parental Choice program. Already this program costs Wausau School District taxpayers \$380,000 in property taxes each year. Expansion of this program will only create greater hardships throughout the state as districts work hard to retain their students and offer programs that make them a school district of choice.
- Allowing only those schools with poverty rates of 50% or more to expand the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program to 2nd and 3rd grades breaks a promise made to many schools filled with at-risk students. This move effectively eliminates many of Wisconsin's children from expansion of the program, leaving between 115 and 130 schools eligible for expansion, a majority of these are part of Milwaukee Public Schools. Districts such as ours that have participated in SAGE programming will be held hostage by the outcome of this budget debate. By the time this budget becomes law, districts will be past the prime hiring season and may well be unable to find qualified teachers.

I ask that you consider the following solutions to the problems plaguing public school funding in Wisconsin. The Legislature should:

- increase revenue flexibility by approving the "1 or 2 percent solution" proposed by the Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Association of School Boards. This would require a two-thirds vote of local School Boards. The one percent option would generate a state average revenue increase of \$71.19 per student. This would generate a much needed \$694,000 for the Wausau School District. The approximate cost to the state would be \$43 million.
- create a revenue limit exemption for costs incurred for educational lane advancements on the teachers' salary schedule as recent legislation removed these costs from QEO calculations.

- consider an exemption from the revenue caps for uncontrolled cost increases such as health insurance, property, casualty, and worker compensation insurance, and utility increases that exceed the revenue cap percentage.
- approve the Wausau School District's request for a one-time recurring revenue limit waiver for our intra-district Chapter 220 Program that began in 1993-1994. The impact on our operating budget would be an increase of approximately \$580,000. The Wausau School District is the only district that initiated Chapter 220 since the implementation of revenue caps. Therefore, our District has had to absorb all new support and transportation costs for this program from its annual revenue limit increment.
- increase state aid levels for special needs students by reimbursing districts for special education costs at a 50 percent sum sufficient level. The present 35 percent state and 15 percent federal reimbursements are grossly inadequate to meet the increasing needs of these students. The approximate cost to the state would be \$178 million for special education programming.
- increase the state's reimbursement for ESL programs from 17 percent to 60 percent of costs incurred. The Wausau School District's ESL budget obligation is \$4 million. The state needs to accept more of the burden for this educational responsibility. The approximate cost to the state would be \$39 million for programming for students with Limited English Proficiency.
- provide assistance to districts with declining enrollments by allowing them to use the highest enrollment attained in any one year since 1993-94 for revenue limit calculation. Any additional revenue allowed for by this provision would come from the local levy.
- establish a statewide task force for the study of public school finance. This task force should research a more appropriate and equitable method to fund the public schools of the state.

- become more aggressive in obtaining federal dollars to help finance infrastructure improvements. This could release more state revenue to be used to fund public schools.

Some of these funds can be obtained from the state school levy tax credit currently funded at \$469 million annually. This is officially designated as "school aid" and counts as part of the state's two-thirds commitment to fund school costs even though none of this money has ever gone to fund public schools. Because it is already budgeted, redirecting it to Wisconsin's public schools would not increase state spending at all.

In closing, please evaluate the Governor's budget proposal carefully and its catastrophic impact on the majority of Wisconsin school districts. Consider the solutions I have presented today. I am approaching the sunset of my career in public education. If no changes are made to the method used to fund Wisconsin's public schools, I will conclude my career by being forced to dismantle an exceptional educational program in one of this state's leading school districts. Our children, their families, and our community do not deserve this fate.

Joint Finance Committee Testimony
April 4, 2001

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am a middle school library media specialist in Wisconsin Rapids. With 23 years of teaching experience, I have learned to be many things I had not believed were in my job description as a teacher when I trained in the late 1970's. Changes in technology and in what we know about how students learn create dynamic change in the learning environment of schools. Social changes and increasing expectations of public schools have added even more to the task of teaching than anyone might have expected in 1981, when I became a school media specialist.

But most of these changes are in response to additional understanding about how students learn, the needs with which they come to school, and an expanding body of information it is necessary to command in order to live safely and responsibly in the twenty-first century. As a teacher, I make those changes to make life better for my students and my community, and they are essential to the work I love to do.

I always expected that work in schools would demand great energy. I received my Master's degree at a time when massive changes in technology were just beginning, and I expected that the definition of information services would change with it. I eagerly anticipated the research that helped define how learning takes place, and have been working with the staff at my school to implement those changes that help students learn better.

What I did not expect was that in addition to being a content expert, a professional with specific knowledge about the growth and learning behaviors of students and an effective manager of new technologies, I would need to develop a specialty in public relations and running public referenda in order to fund the very tools I need to teach my students effectively. There is a new commercial on TV that portrays a business meeting its postage bills by running a bake sale. Its humor value comes from the conflict with our sense that some things need to be built in as the costs of operation, and they should not be subject to something as unpredictable as the proceeds of a bake sale. And yet we ask many districts in the state to rely on referenda campaigns to fund their basic expenses.

Wisconsin Rapids has been very fortunate that we have not, until this year, experienced student enrollment declines, and that several years ago, we ran a successful referendum that provided resources for building maintenance and technology acquisition. Our enrollment decline, combined with the lack of inflationary adjustment in the governor's budget is of great concern to those who care about quality schools in Wisconsin Rapids. Our successful referendum did not provide for all that was needed, only basic repairs and additions, and an additional question that would have provided for the ongoing costs of maintaining these facilities and technology failed – twice. The successful referendum and the two that failed both demanded tremendous amounts of time away from the work that we need do with our students. The governor's budget would require that we schedule all referenda not when the need may be greatest nor when the schedule of time would allow us to provide quality information to the public while not distracting from the work we do each day in the classroom, but during spring and general election times, when in addition, we must compete with candidate messages for public attention.

Revenue controls damage our ability as teachers to provide students with classroom environments that work for them. Class sizes are up and materials budgets restricted when the cost of those materials consistently increases. At the middle level, where I work, the teaming programs that integrate content material to increase student application and transfer of learning are struggling to maintain their content-licensed staff and the strength of that diverse knowledge base. Allied arts classes like Technology Education, Art, and Family and Consumer Education struggle with how to teach hands-on lab courses with class sizes that make safe experimentation impossible and materials budgets inadequate. Labs for science are becoming overcrowded and therefore restrict what can safely be included in the curriculum. Foreign language classes with increasing numbers are concerned about the interaction necessary for quality learning of a new language. Courses for students to reinforce writing and reading skills are loaded with too many students to allow for the kind of attention the teaching of these skills require, frustrating our students, parents, and teachers. Our efforts to intervene for those who need extra attention are hampered by restricted budgets that cannot provide adequate staff and space for the learning resource center where students can get additional assistance

with their learning. Lowering the percentage of summer school students who can be counted for revenue calculations at the same time we will increasingly rely on these as additional alternatives to help students succeed with the high standards expected of them is counterproductive at best.

Revenue controls jeopardize the attraction and retention of quality staff.

Over the last five years, we have had unusually large staff changes each year. Some staff are leaving for retirement – many earlier than they thought they would retire, with skills and knowledge that we still need. But their economic reality is that after a career of dedicated service to their communities and children, they will lose significant dollars from their retirement for each year they remain in the classroom. Mid-career professionals are leaving to ensure their families' financial security. The skills they take with them are very difficult to replace in a competitive job market. Staff assigned overloads to cover for unfilled positions do quality work with the students they see, but their energy and their attention are spread beyond the workload we know makes for the best preparation and follow-up with students. Teaching out-of-field is stressful and a short-term solution at best, and it places extra pressure on staff who are already working hard to implement high-quality standards for student learning. Salaries that do not keep pace with inflation cannot keep experienced staff in our schools.

When we replace these departing staff, we find new and talented young teachers who are starting their careers. They come with great skills, heart, and enthusiasm for the profession, but these new teachers need mentoring programs to increase the likelihood they will stay in the classroom as their skills and enthusiasm meet reality. The mentoring efforts we have begun will need continual funding that may no longer be available as our district enrollments decline. Even with successful mentoring, the reality is that many new staff will not stay, finding that their skills and knowledge can command better salaries in less stressful occupations outside public education. And revenue controls add to their doubts about staying in the profession in other ways as well. This spring several new staff were issued non-renewal notices because of budget restrictions that eliminate their positions. At a point where they are working to establish their careers, seeing college classmates with higher incomes in more stable work environments is a strong

incentive to choose another path. And even if they stay in teaching, we lose the continuity and increasing skills that come with a stable teaching force.

In these and many other ways, **revenue controls endanger our ability as a district to provide the kind of education programs that keep our community attractive to our graduates** when they are looking for a place to raise their own families. We have had great community pride in our schools, and many graduates return to the area when they have completed their post high-school education and training. The economic strength of our community has depended upon high quality education K-WCTS to attract industry and professional businesses to the area. We serve a great diversity of students with needs that cannot be restricted to yesterday's curriculum, and who rely on you to advocate for them in your budget deliberations.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of children and public education.

Mary Bell
1521 Lily Lane
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494

Testimony submitted to: Joint Finance Committee
Of the Wisconsin State Legislature
April 4, 1908
Given by : Michele Bjella
1908 Lynda Lane, Stevens Point, WI. 54481

I am a concerned taxpayer living in the Stevens Point area and my husband and I have a son who is enrolled as a seventh grader with the Stevens Point Public Schools. Our school district is one of the many in financial trouble. The fundamental problems in our current school funding system in Wisconsin have caused growing financial shortfalls. As you know, multiple and complex factors have put us here. Stevens Point's property tax places us below the state average for funding our schools, we have a declining enrollment, but still need to provide full programs under the state and federal mandates, for which we receive inadequate reimbursement, people move to our area when they have a special needs child who could better be served here, due to a diagnosis of, for example, Autism and the revenue limits froze our budget at their 1992-93 levels with an approximately 2.5% increase per child, unless public referenda are passed. Stevens Point has an extensive history of referenda efforts.

For five years prior to our 1998 referenda proposals, the Stevens point school District made measured cuts in textbooks, staff development, E.S.L. programs, transportation, maintenance support, administrative positions and a host of other program-related areas totaling more than a million dollars. A November, 1998 referenda asked for \$4,000,000 for construction of additions and repairs to facilities in all elementary schools, the high school and a new building to replace the Emerson Alternative High school. It was turned down. I served on the citizen's task force that did the legwork for the effort and saw a diversity of opinions and poor voter turnout regarding the issue. A second effort in spring, May 1999 was attempted by a true coalition of community members, parents, labor and civic groups, administrative and school personal, working again even harder to make the case for overriding the revenue caps and meeting our students needs. Community forms were held, outreach civilities conducted; a phone call campaign by taxpayers done, and a great deal of community education were completed. These vital funding requests were turned down. Recently, after a fall passage of a near three million dollar operating referenda proposal was passed to keep things afloat, future budgetary shortfalls were announced. There is currently a proposal by the district to consolidate and elementary school with students of the high school alternative school program. The public is outraged that local elementary students' schools might be fractured and that students of such discrepant ages and stages should be placed together for fiscal reasons only. These problems make ill will in an otherwise strong community. The dilapidated Emerson School, with it's ceiling held together with chicken wire, continues to be the worry and stumbling block of the Stevens Point community as it struggles to know how to deal with an aged building that has outlived in cost-effectiveness.

We have already suffered loss of programs at the state level that enable children to grow and develop as citizens. We have reduced our ability to maintain and repair our facilities in an appropriate way, with children having closets as classrooms. The severe limits of

reimbursement for special education and revenue limits don't enable us to meet our fixed costs. It is time for the legislature to adequately fund our schools, adjusting the state formula to meet the real needs of children in Wisconsin Schools.

To summarize, Wisconsin Public Schools must be adequately funded. These revenue limits have impacted our children across the board, in special education and at the same time, those in regular educational programs, but keeping class size high, freezing the textbook fund on a ten year cycle, limiting any real growth in computer technology, freezing staff development funds and therefore stifling the professional growth of our teachers and staff, halting provision of consumable supplies and derailing the possibility of attending to much needed building and grounds needs in all elementaries and our high school, which is overcrowded.

Thankyou for the opportunity to address the JFC.

Michele A. Bjella



April 4, 2001

To: The members of the Joint Finance Committee in the matter of the new Meat Science Laboratory at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

From: Bruce Armstrong of Alferi Laboratories a supplier of spices and seasonings to the processed meat industry.

There are three points I would like to state to you today. First, there are over 25 suppliers to the processed meat industry in the state of Wisconsin. These suppliers include one of the major smokehouse manufacturers and one of two national producers of liquid smoke, a very important component for processed meats. Several other companies are major suppliers of their product line. A modern meat laboratory within Wisconsin allows us as suppliers to support more rapid product improvement for the meat industry.

Secondly, meat protein has an important dietary function. A modern laboratory is important to develop new functional products using meat protein as a source, such as reduced fat products and animal protein and vegetable protein combination products. Animal protein is important to this state through the meat and dairy industries. A continual growth in new markets and utilization of animal proteins is necessary for the economic growth of this state. The growth of agriculture to feed more people with less farmland is a continual struggle. This challenge would be aided by new facilities to develop new utilization of available sources. The new meat lab is necessary for this challenge.

Thirdly, food safety is literally a life and death battle. Many of the current food safety challenges such as Listeria and E.coli 0.157 were unknown when the current meat lab was last expanded, let alone when it was originally built. The problems of foot and mouth disease that we thought were long dead have reappeared after 70 years. The battle for food safety is lead by the universities such as UW-Madison. There is no way to put a price on the saving, though it is not a dollar value we want to deal with in a disaster situation. A new meat laboratory at UW-Madison will allow Wisconsin to continue as a leader in the food safety battle.

These are but a few of the reasons that a new meat laboratory at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is important.



April 9, 2001

American Education Reform Foundation
2025 North Summit Avenue, Suite 103
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

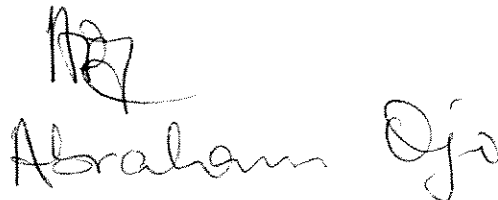
This letter is to encourage you to support the proposal to raise the entry-level income the parents seeking to participate in the choice program. We also encourage you to endorse and support the efforts to ensure that parents using the MPCP aren't dropped from the program for minor increases in income.

Moving a child from one school to another greatly reduces the chances of success for that child. Forcing parents to choose between the best school for younger children and college for a high school graduate is an unfair policy. Some families have had a child move on to college and the younger children have had to leave the program due to current income guidelines.

Some parents have received a promotion or slight salary increase and then no longer qualify for the choice program. Situations such as these result in a net loss of income for parents who are working hard to improve their conditions.

These situations are unjust and can be partially remedied by passing the proposal before you. You can be the hero of many children and parents by remedying this today. Thank you for taking the time to read our letter of concern. We are hopeful as we await the outcome of this hearing and final votes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Abraham Ojo". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and address.

Mr. and Mrs. Ojo
7164 N. 42nd Street #1
Milwaukee, WI 53209

April 9, 2001

American Education Reform Foundation
2025 North Summit Avenue, Suite 103
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

By way of this letter, I encourage you to support the proposal to raise the entry-level income the parents seeking to participate in the choice program. We also encourage you to endorse and support the efforts to ensure that parents using the MPCP aren't dropped from the program for minor increases in income.

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Sincerely,

Kimberly M. Manikowski
Pat Manikowski

Mr. and Mrs. Manikowski
2972 N. 60th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53210

April 9, 2001

American Education Reform Foundation
2025 North Summit Avenue, Suite 103
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

By way of this letter, I encourage you to support the proposal to raise the entry-level income the parents seeking to participate in the choice program. We also encourage you to endorse and support the efforts to ensure that parents using the MPCP aren't dropped from the program for minor increases in income.

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These situations are unjust and can be partially remedied by passing the proposal before you. You can be the hero of many children and parents by remedying this today. Thank you for taking the time to read our letter of concern. We are hopeful as we await the outcome of this hearing and final votes.

Sincerely,



Jeanette Smalley
2939A N. Pierce Street
Milwaukee, WI 53209

April 9, 2001

American Education Reform Foundation
2025 North Summit Avenue, Suite 103
Milwaukee, WI 53202

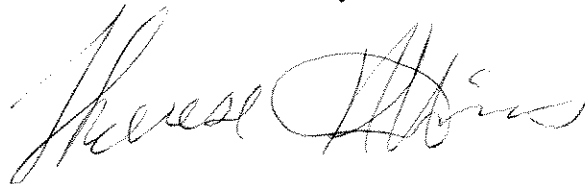
Dear Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

I am very much in support of providing protection for parents with children in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. I would like you to pass the proposals for removing penalties related to increased income and to raise the lower limit for admission into the choice program from 175% of poverty to 185%.

Neither proposal will cost more in the long run because there is a cap on the number of participants who may take advantage of the MPCP. Both proposals make sense because they encourage parents to improve both their financial situation and the education of their children. Both proposals encourage parents to move up the economic ladder by ensuring that they will be able to choose the best school for their children and the job that pays the best.

Thank you very much for considering my opinion. I will be eagerly watching the outcome of this debate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Theres Atkins".

Mr. and Mrs. Atkins
5919 N. 67th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53218

WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

*Every kid
deserves a
Great School!*

DATE: April 10, 2001

TO: Senator Brian Burke, Co-Chair
Representative John Gar, Co-Chair
Members, Joint Finance Committee

FROM: Tricia Yates, Legislative Consultant
Wisconsin Education Association Council

RE: Testimony from the April 3, 2001 La Crosse hearing,

Ms. Kealy Connor Lonning testified at the April 3, 2001 La Crosse hearing on the importance of four-year old kindergarten. Ms. Connor Lonning did not have a written statement with her at the hearing, but has subsequently asked us to share this written testimony with you.

Cc: Bob Lang, Director
Legislative Fiscal Bureau

Terry Craney, President
Michael A. Butera, Executive Director

Dear Joint Finance Committee Members,

Hello! My name is Kealy Connor Lonning, and I teach 4 year old kindergarten (preschool) for the School District of La Crosse. I have a Master's Degree in Education, and have been involved in education professionally for almost 18 years.

I was asked to speak to you about the importance of 4 year old preschools. Do I think preschool should be available at no cost to every family that chooses it? Yes. I not only teach preschool, I am the mother of 4 children, including 4 year old twins, who all attended or are attending preschool. I think it is a necessary part of their development, and they were excited to go to preschool! All children deserve and need quality early childhood programs. Statistics show a correlation between family income and children's participation in pre-K programs. Only 42% of those children whose parents earned less than \$15,000 attended preschool. Study after study indicate that the academic benefits from good preschools are particularly pronounced for children from poor, ill-educated families. There are social benefits as well. Those in the program were less likely to be parents in their teens, and to have gotten into trouble, both in and out of school.

From observing my students, and my own children, from conversations with preschoolers' parents, and with kindergarten teachers, I must say that my experiences correlate with these studies. Children who attend high-quality pre-K programs are better prepared behaviorally and academically for school. Some of my preschoolers' parents have said things like: "Oh, my son, with his June birthday, would not be going to kindergarten if he hadn't been in preschool this year." or "It's amazing how my son's attention span has improved." or "Oh, my daughter has made some great, little friends at preschool." or "My son was never interested in writing or books before preschool!"

I think preschool is prevention—it is investment in our future! Early brain research tells how crucial these early years are. I am wearing a ribbon that says, "Shaping lives is my business." It makes me think about the power I have in shaping lives of children. It makes me think about the role everyone has in raising our children—the children of America. Yes, I believe it takes a village to raise a child. This is exemplified in the Community Collaboration Committee formed in La Crosse to create 4 year old preschool programs that work for families, schools and childcare providers. With talk last year of the upcoming free preschools, most response was very positive. But I was disappointed in the few people I heard say, "I don't want my tax money giving those people free daycare!" Oh, since they did not have their own 4 year olds at the time, they figured it sure didn't have anything to do with them. Well, they figured wrong!! That 4 year old sitting there could affect you all someday. Maybe that 4 year old will be your lawyer, or your brain surgeon, or the one who finds the cure to cancer that your grandchild has. Or maybe that 4 year old becomes the person who breaks into your home and rapes your grand-daughter. Maybe that 4 year old becomes the firefighter who rescues you, or the snowplow operator who clears your alley. Four year olds are a big concern of ours—they are our future citizens!

We need to implement preschools without skimping on quality, and reflect the way that 4 year olds learn most fully through active play and exploration. My 4 year old students have learned to make friends, and have a strong sense of community. They share, take turns and problem-solve. They have learned routines, how to follow directions, and have become more independent. My 4 year olds develop a love for books, and can dramatize stories. They can cut, glue, draw and count. They can read their friends' names, and know "M" in Michael is like the "M" in Monday. They learned that painting red and blue together makes purple. My 4 year olds can be scientists and explore magnets, make vapor, and found the secret in a seed. They visited a hospital, a pumpkin patch, an apple orchard, and a grocery store and nature center. They collected leaves, nuts and rocks. They dressed as doctors, wrote prescriptions, and checked heart rates. My 4 year olds sold flowers using a cash register, planted grass, sat in a fire truck, and dialed "911."

I know what I do with preschoolers is powerful when I hear them say things like, "Me and Will did teamwork!" and "I shared my legos!" and "Hey, Cassidy, you used your imagination!" and "Preschool is fun!"

Thank you!

Abril 10 - 2001

A quien corresponde.

La presente es con el fin de expresar nuestra opinión acerca de el programa "Choice School," ya que para nosotros representa la libre opción de elegir una escuela y educar, según nuestros criterios, de la mejor manera, a nuestros hijos, pudiendo elegir así una escuela privada y por consiguiente la ayuda para cubrir los gastos, pues nuestros ingresos son limitados.

Sin mas por el momento y esperando se sirvan prestar atención a la presente queda de Ustedes ~~su~~ servidores: Juan Carlos Chiez.

tel: (414) 384-0159

Dirección: 733 S. 24th. ST
M:1 W: 53204

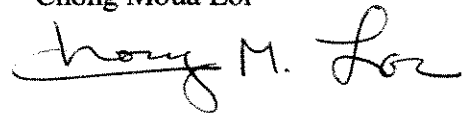
April 10, 2001

Dear Joint Finance Committee;

School choice program is a very good program to help the lower income families to prepare their children to go to a school where they chosen. Especially my children I want them to go to a religious school, a place where they can have the opportunity to learn about human nature and God. I believe that as children grow they need a strong education and spiritual together to be successful.

Thank you,

Chong Moua Lor

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chong M. Lor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke under the first name.

April 10, 2001

Dear Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

I am writing you as a single father raising 3 young boys at St. Raphael. Being raised in the Catholic faith and living in this neighborhood for 15 years, I've wanted my children to get the same opportunities I got as a child. It wasn't until the creation of the Choice program did I begin to investigate more options in the futures of my sons. Even though I work money to send my boys to a good catholic school was also an issue. But after some tough times I was able to enroll my boys and have found the experience very satisfying. The teachers and administrators have been very supportive and professional. Therefore I am in support of providing protection for parents with children in the Milwaukee Parental Choice program. I would also ask that you pass the proposals for removing penalties related to increased income, and to ~~raise~~ ^{raise} the lower limit for admission into Choice from 175% of poverty to 185%. I believe these 2 points make sense only because they encourage parents to work at improving their financial situation. And therefore improving the education of their kids too. Maybe parents will be encouraged to find better jobs and will choose the best schools for their kids. Thank you for hearing me out. I will be watching the outcome of this debate.

Sincerely Yours,

Carlos Pena
70112 1 21 25 2001

April 10,2001

Dear Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

I would just like to express my concern over the decisions made about the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. I have a daughter who receives assistance from this program. She has excelled from being enrolled in a fine school where she gets special attention when she needs it and has plenty of opportunities after graduation.

Education is very important and I do not think that people actually realize what the Choice program does. I am very happy to give my daughter every opportunity she deserves but I cannot always do that on my own. With the help of choice she will hopefully succeed in whatever it is that she chooses.

I just want you to know how much the choice program is appreciated and how much concern I have for the outcome of the debate at hand. Thank you very much for reading my letter.

Sincerely,

Karen Berndt
1747 s 29th
Milwaukee, WI.
53215

Thank You

Karen Berndt

April 10, 2001

American Education Reform Foundation
2025 North Summit Avenue, Suite 103
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

By way of this letter, I encourage you to support the proposal to raise the entry-level income the parents seeking to participate in the choice program. We also encourage you to endorse and support the efforts to ensure that parents using the MPCP aren't dropped from the program for minor increases in income.

Moving a child from one school to another greatly reduces the chances of success for that child. Forcing parents to choose between the best school for younger children and college for a high school graduate is an unfair policy. Some families have had a child move on to college and the younger children have had to leave the program due to current income guidelines.

Some parents have received a promotion or slight salary increase and then no longer qualify for the choice program. Situations such as these result in a net loss of income for parents who are working hard to improve their conditions.

These situations are unjust and can be partially remedied by passing the proposal before you. You can be the hero of many children and parents by remedying this today.

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter of concern. We are hopeful as we await the outcome of this hearing and final votes.

Sincerely,



Angela Okonta
8500 W. Fond du Lac
Milwaukee, WI 53225

April 10, 2001

American Education Reform Foundation
2025 North Summit Avenue, Suite 103
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

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Sincerely, *Mrs. Patricia Millunzi*

Mr. and Mrs. Millunzi
1518 W. Lawn
Milwaukee, WI 53209

WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

33 Nob Hill Drive • P.O. Box 8003 • Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8003
(608) 276-7711 • (800) 362-8034 • WEAC FAX (608) 276-8203
TDD (608) 276-7793 • (800) 362-3834

Number Called: 267-0274

Date: April 11, 2001 Time: 11:30

To: Senator Burke

From: Anna Landmark, Staff Assistant

Number of Pages (including cover page): _____

RE: Testimony from 4/5/2001 LaCrosse hearing

Special Instructions: A constituent asked us to forward a copy of her testimony to you. A copy has been mailed to you as well, however there is a type in the memo that is included. My apologies for the error. Here is a corrected version with the testimony attached.

WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

*Every kid
deserves a
Great School!*

DATE: April 11, 2001

TO: Senator Brian Burke, Co-Chair
Representative John Gard, Co-Chair
Members, Joint Finance Committee

FROM: Tricia Yates, Legislative Consultant
Wisconsin Education Association Council

RE: Testimony from the April 3, 2001 La Crosse hearing

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Cc: Bob Lang, Director
Legislative Fiscal Bureau

Terry Craney, President
Michael A. Butera, Executive Director

Dear Joint Finance Committee Members,

Hello! My name is Kealy Connor Lonning, and I teach 4 year old kindergarten (preschool) for the School District of La Crosse. I have a Master's Degree in Education, and have been involved in education professionally for almost 18 years.

I was asked to speak to you about the importance of 4 year old preschools. Do I think preschool should be available at no cost to every family that chooses it? Yes. I not only teach preschool, I am the mother of 4 children, including 4 year old twins, who all attended or are attending preschool. I think it is a necessary part of their development, and they were excited to go to preschool! All children deserve and need quality early childhood programs. Statistics show a correlation between family income and children's participation in pre-K programs. Only 42% of those children whose parents earned less than \$15,000 attended preschool. Study after study indicate that the academic benefits from good preschools are particularly pronounced for children from poor, ill-educated families. There are social benefits as well. Those in the program were less likely to be parents in their teens, and to have gotten into trouble, both in and out of school.

From observing my students, and my own children, from conversations with preschoolers' parents, and with kindergarten teachers, I must say that my experiences correlate with these studies. Children who attend high-quality pre-K programs are better prepared behaviorally and academically for school. Some of my preschoolers' parents have said things like: "Oh, my son, with his June birthday, would not be going to kindergarten if he hadn't been in preschool this year." or "It's amazing how my son's attention span has improved." or "Oh, my daughter has made some great, little friends at preschool." or "My son was never interested in writing or books before preschool!"

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I know what I do with preschoolers is powerful when I hear them say things like, "Me and Will did teamwork!" and "I shared my legos!" and "Hey, Cassidy, you used your imagination!" and "Preschool is fun!"

Thank you!

WHO SAID, "BUT ALL THEY DO IS PLAY?"

By Janice Thorson

WHEN I PLAY "LET'S PRETEND," I LEARN...

new words
how it feels to be someone else
self-confidence
respect for others' feelings and property

sharing
eye-hand coordination
independence
cooperation

cleaning up
problem solving
self-reliance
expressive language

WHEN I PLAY WITH ART MATERIALS, I LEARN...

colors
creativity
problem solving
shapes
independence

color mixing
new words
cooperation
textures
self-reliance

properties of matter
eye-hand coordination
how things work
pride in my work

WHEN I "READ" A BOOK OR AM READ TO, I LEARN...

new words
creativity & imagination
expressive language
reading readiness

sentence structure
a love of books
logical thinking
sequence (left-right progression)

listening skills
new information
eye-hand coordination

WHEN I PLAY IN THE WATER OR SAND, I LEARN...

new words
effects of gravity
buoyancy
weights
using five senses

properties of matter
measuring
textures
expressive language
eye-hand coordination

problem solving
sorting
cooperation
sharing
creativity & imagination

WHEN I PLAY ON LARGE MUSCLE EQUIPMENT, I LEARN...

coordination
taking turns
confidence
rules of the road
position

sharing
sequence
how things work
creativity
direction

new words
time
first-last
imagination
common traffic signs

WHEN I PLAY WITH BLOCKS, I LEARN...

balance
size
creativity
number
self-confidence

gravity
eye-hand coordination
new words
pride

position
shape
problem solving
design

WHEN I PLAY WITH GAMES AND PUZZLES, I LEARN...

eye-hand coordination
colors
spatial relationships
counting
sharing

problem solving
sizes
new words
positions

shapes
sorting
number
cooperation



Salam School

Islamic Society of Milwaukee

4707 South 13th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53221, 414-282-0504

April 11, 2001

Dear Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

We, the under-signed parents, encourage you to support the proposal before you to raise the entry-level income for parents seeking to participate in the Choice program. We also encourage you to endorse and support the efforts to ensure that parents using the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program are not dropped from the program due to minor increases in their income.

Moving a child from one school to another greatly reduces the chances of success for that child. Forcing parents to choose between the best school for younger children and college for a high school graduate is cruel, and is not a good policy. Some families have had a child move on to college and the younger children have had to leave the program due to the current income guidelines. Also, some parents have received a promotion or slight salary increase and are then no longer qualified for the Choice program. Such situations result in a net loss of income for parents who are working hard to improve their conditions.

Situations such as these are unjust and can be partially remedied by passing the proposal before you. You can be the hero of many children and parents by remedying this today.

Thank you for taking the time to read our petition. We are hopeful as we await the outcome of this hearing and the final votes.

Sincerely,

Salam School Parents

Encl: Petition

Christiana B Ehirim
1409 n 48th Street Apt 3
Milwaukee
WI 53208

Center for Parent Alternatives
2025 N. Summit Avenue Suite 103
Milwaukee WI

April 11, 2001

Dear Sir or Madam:

Center For Parent Alternatives

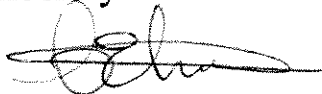
I am a parent with my daughter in the Milwaukee School Choice Program.

I read about the two main proposals for the choice program and I am delighted about the proposals. I am definitely supporting the proposals.

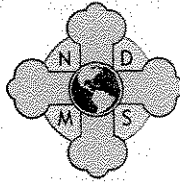
As a single parent, the program is of importance because my daughter is achieving her educational goal in life.

I thank you for the program and all proposals.

Sincerely



Christiana B Ehirim



NOTRE DAME MIDDLE SCHOOL, INC.

1420 West Scott Street, Milwaukee, WI 53204-2269 • Phone: 414.671.3000 • Fax: 414.671.3170

April 11, 2001

Dear members of the Joint Finance Committee:

As President of Notre Dame Middle School, I very much support several provisions for the 2001-2003 budget.

Maintaining the "once you're in" policy is very important for the students of our school. Not only does it ensure our students receive a quality education, but it also provides educational continuity and mobility. Furthermore, it reduces the administrative roles for schools and the Department of Public Instruction. Keeping the cap at 15 percent is essential to the success of school choice programs and our students and parents should not be penalized for trying to improve their income levels.

I also support raising the limit for admission into the choice program from 175 percent of poverty to 185 percent. By raising the limit, more students would qualify to participate in the program.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my opinions. As you can see, these provisions encourage parents to increase their economic levels, while ensuring the opportunity to choose the best school for their children. I am hopeful these provisions will be supported.

Sincerely,

Alvaro Garcia-Velez
President
Notre Dame Middle School

Rhinelanders District Library

106 North Stevens Street
Rhinelanders, Wisconsin 54501

(715) 365-1070 Adult Dept.
(715) 365-1050 Children's Dept.
(715) 365-1076 FAX

April 12, 2001

Senator Brian Burke
Room 316 South, State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Burke,

Please find enclosed a copy of a letter to 12th District Senator Roger Breske concerning budget issues relating to libraries which has been signed by members of the Oneida County Library Board, Rhinelanders District Library Board and Rhinelanders District Library Foundation Board.

It would be much appreciated if you would consider their joint effort in lieu of testimony at the Joint Finance Committee hearing held at Marshfield on April 4.

Thank you!

Sincerely,



Kris Adams Wendt
Associate Director

April 12, 2001

Senator Roger Breske
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Breske,

We the undersigned members of the Oneida County Library Board, Rhinelander District Library Board of Trustees, and Rhinelander District Library Foundation Board are writing in concert to urge your support for five biennial budget items of vital interest to citizens who use libraries. The no increase recommendations in Governor McCallum's budget will have a serious effect on the library community's ability to maintain and strengthen the quality services our customers have come to rely on.

As a proven friend to libraries who has come through for us time and time again, you will find no surprises in the list below. Once again, we are pushing state funding for library services uphill like an ancient bookmobile with too many miles on the odometer and not enough maintenance. It's even tougher with when the Governor is standing on the parking brake!

(1) Increase Public Library System Aids to full funding at the 13% index.

DPI/DLTCL request: an increase of \$12,130,000 added to base over a two-year period.

Recommendation in Governor's 2001-2003 budget: NO INCREASE.

If the governor's recommended no increase is enacted, state support for public library services (currently around 10%) will fall to less than 9.5% in 2002 and less than 9% in 2003. To make matters worse, the present aids formula works against library systems like NWLS and WVLS in Northern Wisconsin where there is low per capita spending among many small local public libraries covering a large area. As you are aware, the fairer formula for the distribution of state aid to library systems enacted into law two years ago won't kick in until Wisconsin funds its library systems at a level equaling at least 11.25% of the previous year's municipal expenditures for public library services.

(2) Continue full funding for *BadgerLink* from the Universal Service Fund.

DPI/DLTCL request: an increase of \$223,700 added to base over a two-year period.

Recommendation in Governor's 2001-2003 budget: Continue to fund at the base amount from the Universal Service Fund; *with the requested increase to come from fees assessed to school districts.*

While we appreciate the Governor's approval of continuing to fund *BadgerLink* at the base amount from the Universal Service Fund, we are astonished at his recommendation that an assessment of user fees on schools be used to cover the additional \$223,700 requested by DPI/DLTCL. Unfortunately, it would be very difficult and cost-prohibitive to implement the sort of fee-based system proposed by the governor, due to the nature of the technology involved. In addition, as your knowledge of 12th District school expenditures will underline, existing revenue limits make it extremely difficult for schools to pay additional fees for these types of services. All citizens and businesses in Wisconsin enjoy the benefits of free access to *BadgerLink*, not just schools.

(3) Increase the four state resource contracts.

DPI/DTLCL request: Increase of \$222,300 added to base over a two-year period. An additional \$161,600 is earmarked for automated system replacement at the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in 2002-2003.

Recommendation in Governor's 2001-2003 budget: Provided for the RLBPH automated system replacement, but budgeted NO ADDITIONAL INCREASE for these relatively small, but vital services. Modest funding corrections are needed to cover these agencies' increased cost of doing business for the next two years and maintain quality service.

The four statewide resource contracts supply unique services that cannot be duplicated locally from four agencies; the Madison-based Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC), the Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (RLBPH), Wisconsin Interlibrary Services (WILS), and Milwaukee Public Library/Interlibrary Loan (MPL). While all four contracts are important to Oneida County libraries, we are most mindful of the way in which state funding enables the CCBC to present an annual children's literature conference in Rhinelander. Children's Book Fest brings 300 parents, librarians, teachers, reading specialists and booksellers from 25 northern counties together for the purpose of "separating the best from the rest" of children's books and spending their book budgets wisely. Thanks to contract dollars, CCBC librarians travel to the northwoods instead of waiting for northwoods educators to come to them in Madison. Children's Book Fest boosts our area economy as well as the buying power of local school and public library dollars.

(4) Additional funding for Reference and Loan Library Materials.

DPI/DLTCL Request: an increase of \$80,000 added to base over a two-year period.

Recommendation in Governor's 2001-2003 budget: NO INCREASE.

The Reference and Loan Library supplements local library collections by providing specialized materials and information sources not readily available or affordable in individual communities or accessible from other state-level resource providers. The R&L budget for library materials is currently \$50,000, which is less than half of what was expended for materials in the 1980's. At the same time, the nature of both referred requests and resources necessary to answer them has changed. By acquiring print, video and sound materials that few other libraries possess, the Reference and Loan Library will be able to efficiently answer a broad range of reference questions.

(5) Essential collection building for U.W. System Libraries.

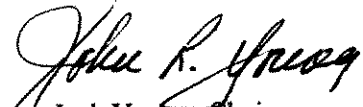
Board of Regents' Proposal: An additional \$9.4 million GPR/fees for library acquisitions (\$4.7 million per year).

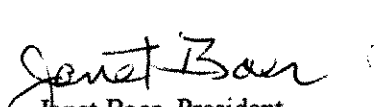
Recommendation in Governor's 2001-2003 budget: NO INCREASE.

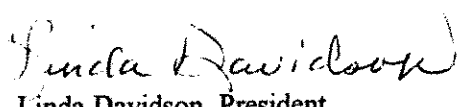
In the 1999-2001 Biennial Budget the Board of Regents requested \$12 million GPR/fees to provide UW System libraries with additional electronic information resources, expanded document delivery services, and additional print resources that are shared throughout the state. The final budget provided \$7.3 million for library acquisitions. The 2001-2003 request includes the balance of the 1999-01 request, an additional \$4.7 million per year for library acquisitions.

Looking forward to working with you again as we push that bookmobile up the hill together! Your relay of our concerns to Joint Finance Committee co-chair, Senator Brian Burke would be much appreciated.

Sincerely,


Jack Young, Chairman
Oneida Co. Library Board
of Trustees


Janet Baer, President
Rhinelander District Library
Board of Trustees


Linda Davidson, President
Rhinelander District Library
Foundation Board

Jim Schultz

J. Schultz
5831 Musky Bay
Rhinelander, WI

William Brisse

W. Brisse
5431 Manor Rd.
Rhinelander, WI
54501

Carol Boron Carol Boron
4235 7th View Drive
Rhinelander, WI 54501

Jane R. Binkley Jane Binkley
7648 Ciner Lane
Lake Umbagog 54539

Sandra Bergman Sandra Bergman
118 N. Baird Ave.
Rhinelander WI 54501

Deanna Evensen Deanna Evensen
Deanna S. Evensen
1301 N. Big Lake Loop
Three Lakes WI 54562

Corinne Durkin Corinne Durkin
PO Box 68
Mc Maughan WI 54543

Howard Lovestead Howard Lovestead
115 N on side
Rhinelander W.I., 54501

Elmer Goetsch Elmer Goetsch
7524 Island View Rd
Three Lakes, WI 54562

Marion L. Dreger Marion Dreger
8615 Spruce St. Rd.
Minocqua, Wis.

Diane L. Burns Diane Burns
4099 N. Shore Dr.
Rhineland, WI 54501

Dean Wilkinson Dean Wilkinson
4847 A Jimmy Lane
Harsham, WI 54579

Ced Vig Ced Vig
919 Birch Lane
Rhineland, WI 54501

Donald A. Anklam Donald Anklam
356 Highway Pkwy.
Rhineland, WI 54501

Christine Honig Christine Honig
5333 Lakeview Lane
Rhineland, WI 54501

Rose M. Nelson Rose Nelson
209 Highway Parkway
Rhineland, WI 54501

Jaqueline M. Davis Jaqueline Davis
4099 North Bay Road
Rhineland, WI 54501

Karen Kenworthy
106 E. Anderson St.
Rhinelander, WI
54501

Karen Kenworthy

Michelle Gobert
6961 W. School St.
Three Lakes, WI 54562
(Director, Three Lakes Public Library)

Michele Gobert

STEVE KENWORTHY Steve Kenworthy

DIRECTOR, RHINELANDER DIST. LIBRARY

106 E. ANDERSON

RHINELANDER, WI 54501

CONSTANCE DONAHUE Constance Donahue

Member, Rhinelander Dist Library
Rhinelander District Library
Board Trustees
Foundation

Aldeperson, 4th Dist Rhinelander

446 Abner ST

Rhinelander, WI 54501

Swapna Patel Swapna Patel

4141, Birch Point Lane

Rhinelander, WI-54501

NANCY TESCHENDORF Nancy Teschendorf

PO BOX 692

RHINELANDER WI 54501

Kris Adams Wendt Kris Adams Wendt

4817 Apple Dr.

Rhinelander WI

Rhinelander District

Library

Karen J. Augitto Karen Augitto

10029 Lower Kaubastine

Hazellhurst, WI 54531

(Director, Minocqua Public Library)

**Preliminary Wisconsin Public Library System Aid Estimates
for 2002 and 2003 with funding at statutory 13% index***

System	2001 System Aid	2002 Aid at 13% Index	Increase 2002 over 2001	2003 Aid at 13% Index	Increase 2003 over 2002	Percent Change 2001-2003
Arrowhead Lib. Sys.	\$430,913	\$559,200	\$128,287 30%	\$591,200	\$32,000 5.7%	37%
Eastern Shores Lib. Sys.	\$568,398	\$689,200	\$120,802 21%	\$731,200	\$42,000 6.1%	29%
Indianhead Fed. Lib. Sys.	\$1,105,382	\$1,636,300	\$530,918 48%	\$1,736,700	\$100,400 6.1%	57%
Kenosha County Lib. Sys.	\$391,685	\$508,700	\$117,015 30%	\$543,200	\$34,500 6.8%	39%
Lakeshores Lib. Sys.	\$626,531	\$952,100	\$325,569 52%	\$1,011,300	\$59,200 6.2%	61%
Manitowoc-Calumet Lib. Sys.	\$306,639	\$429,400	\$122,761 40%	\$455,700	\$26,300 6.1%	49%
Mid-Wis Fed. Lib. Sys.	\$741,190	\$1,049,700	\$308,510 42%	\$1,116,500	\$66,800 6.4%	51%
Milwaukee Co. Fed. Lib. Sys.	\$2,630,054	\$3,564,000	\$933,946 36%	\$3,744,400	\$180,400 5.1%	42%
Nicolet Fed. Lib. Sys.	\$1,050,657	\$1,541,800	\$491,143 47%	\$1,638,400	\$96,600 6.3%	56%
Northern Waters Lib. Ser.	\$519,826	\$743,400	\$223,574 43%	\$786,900	\$43,500 5.9%	51%
Outagamie Waupaca Lib. Sys.	\$596,859	\$811,300	\$214,441 36%	\$863,400	\$52,100 6.4%	45%
South Central Lib. Sys.	\$2,021,285	\$2,617,200	\$595,915 29%	\$2,780,600	\$163,400 6.2%	38%
Southwest Wisconsin Lib. Sys.	\$356,970	\$544,000	\$187,030 52%	\$576,400	\$32,400 6.0%	61%
Waukesha Co. Fed. Lib. Sys.	\$941,823	\$1,201,600	\$259,777 28%	\$1,282,700	\$81,100 6.7%	36%
Winding Rivers Lib. Sys.	\$754,237	\$1,065,800	\$311,563 41%	\$1,132,300	\$66,500 6.2%	50%
Winnefox Fed. Lib. Sys.	\$870,348	\$1,131,100	\$260,752 30%	\$1,198,200	\$67,100 5.9%	38%
Wisconsin Valley Lib. Ser.	\$837,003	\$1,163,600	\$326,597 39%	\$1,231,800	\$68,200 5.9%	47%
Total	\$14,749,800	\$20,208,400	\$5,458,600 37%	\$21,420,900	\$1,212,500 6.0%	45%

*Final estimates will be made based on 2000 public library and system annual reports.

Note: Estimates based on 1992-99 public library expenditure data, 1996-2000 population estimates, and 2000 statement of estimated payments under s.79.015. The aid formula factor percentage are: 7.5% square miles, 7.5% payments under s.79.015, and 85% population. Each system receives its proportional share of each factor percentage multiplied by the state appropriation for that year.

April 12,01

Dear Chairperson of the State Finance Committee:

I deeply regret that I am unable to be present in the hearing where the subject of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program will be discussed. I trust that you will take the time to hear the voices of those who cry for a "fair chance for our children."

I have been involved with this program for only years now and I am deeply committed to it and the principles of CHOICE for low-income families in Milwaukee. I am personally disappointed when I hear voices, mostly from those who do not strive to educate our children, against this movement. I am in contact with people weekly; parents, administrators, children, community workers, volunteers, all who are seeing the "difference" that is being made when parents have options for their children.


Choice is not an anti-public school movement, it is a pro-student, pro-education movement. This program offers an opportunity for people who earn "little" to send their children to another kind educational institution. This has tremendous advantage for our community. Parents again are involved in their children's education, parent are more involved with the school they have chosen, parents are one measure of accountability for this program.

There is no such thing as public verses private. We all serve the public interest, we all should exist for the public good -the education of our children. If the public schools serve the public well parents would more and more choose to remain with it, if it does not then parents who are poor should also have an option for their children. If an optional institution does not, parents can choose another place.

If this hearing is about our children, then the answer is clear. Ask the parents ! Seek to understand the true nature of why public schools are now failing our children and parents are choosing another solution. Then, we can make a decision.

CHOICE is just one alternative that works for many parents. I strongly urge and recommend a continuance of the program and expansion of the program.

Sincerely,


Dr. Annie Oliver
Educator

4300 N. Green Bay Ave
Milwaukee WI 53209



DR. CORA LOUISE PARCHIA
7TH GRADE INSTRUCTOR
40 YEARS TEACHING EXPERIENCE

4300 N. Green Bay AVE
Milwaukee WI 53209

"Acknowledge Him in all thy ways and He shall direct thy path."

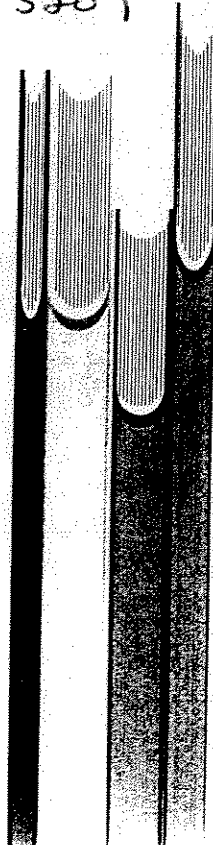
This has been an exciting year! My students have finally realized that success is the result of earnest, dedicated, focused practice and study; in other words "plain ol' work!"

Through opportunities and experiences gained in the preparation for tests, performance on the African Heritage Program, Grand Parents' Day, written and oral presentations in class, field trips and the EVAE Steppers and Drillers, they have experienced, "Practice makes perfect."

Their high energy level has been transformed into disciplines that are commendable as shown by the honor roll, EVAE certificates and trophies earned at the Marquette University Academic Olympics. One of our goals is to assist in the development of Christian character and values. This is part of our teaching program. We are thankful for the sanctuary where we can enter, sing, pray and show respect for God's House. Our 7th grade theme song is: "Jesus Be a Fence Around Me Every Day." We thank God for his protection.

I know the PURPOSE of EVAE!
I have the PASSION to teach!
I look for PROGRESS each day!
Our students WILL PRODUCE!

I thank the administrative staff and all the parents who entrust their students to



4/11/01

4300 N. Green Bay Ave
Milw, WI 53209

Dear Senator Burke,

My name is Lynn Hawkins I am a parent of children involved in the choice program. I believe that the choice program is an excellent way for parents and teachers to work together to improve the quality of education. It gives me an opportunity to be a part of what values I want for my children to learn. In this day many schools do not support the values that many parents desire for their children to understand, but I feel that through the choice program the school that I have chosen will uphold the values that I am for. Please continue to keep the door of the choice program open for all the parents who are looking for quality and diversity in ~~an~~ education system.

Thank you.
Lynn Hawkins.

April 2, 2001

Dear Senator Burke

My name is Rosalind Kyles. I ~~have~~ am writing in support of budget provisions for the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. I have seen great improvement in my two grand children since they have entered this wonderful program. My grandchildren attend Early View Academy of Excellence. I have noticed the teachers are qualified and dedicated to the improvement of education. This particular choice school has many different programs ^{that} they have implemented. One particular student I noticed was a very troubled student and was well below grade average. This year, which would be the 2nd year, this student is very well behavior and on the honor roll. They never gave up. Many teachers at this school was instrumental in this change. So, Please support the Parental Choice programs There are many other stories, but I just wanted to mention this particular one.

Thankyou in advance, 4300 N. Green Bay
Milw WI 53209