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My name is Jennifer Smith, and my name is Eric Gribble. We are from Florence High School. The question we'd like to ask you is: Why are some students "worth" more than others? Florence County Schools receive \$6,790 per student while a school of comparable size receives thousands more because this is all we are allowed to spend. You may argue that other communities pay higher property taxes to fund this larger percentage, but in our county the population is growing older and because these residents don't have children in school, they don't see a need to pay higher taxes. Plus, 66% of the land in Florence County is public, and cannot be taxed.

The state average per student is \$7,060. If we could bring our funding up to even the average, we could receive \$270 more per student and help our school immensely. At Florence, we pride ourselves on the great student-teacher relationships we have developed over the years. Most of us have remained in contact with our teachers from our grade school even. We are afraid this camaraderie will no longer be possible, with the cuts we have had to make, because we have lost good teachers. With the 3.8% increase needed for salary raises each year, it is impossible to keep all our positions open using the 2.8% provided by the State. How can we be expected to raise salaries and budget allowance by 3.8% if the money, which we receive to run our school, is 1% less? Florence Schools have cut elementary art, guidance, two Jr. High positions, a shop teacher, field trips, two-and-a-half secretaries, 1 maintenance, and one cook. Along with these cuts, we've had to eliminate a bus route, forcing the children to get up earlier AND have a longer bus ride to and from school. We already have kids getting up at 5:00 am and not returning home until 4:30 at night. That's a longer day than many adults! We have also lost teachers to other schools who can offer them more money. Of the one

Science teacher, two English teachers, one Chorus instructor, one Band instructor, two Elementary teachers, one Art teacher, all but one has left Florence for a better job in Michigan. Florence is only 10 miles from Iron Mountain and Kingsford, Michigan where these teachers can get an average of \$5,000 more per year, than in Wisconsin. The cuts we've had to make could eventually decrease the variety of classes we are able to offer; and with Michigan so close by, we will lose students to schools with more to offer. A decrease in student enrollment will lessen the funds we are already receiving from Gov. McCallum's budget; he's proposed to increase spending by \$525 per student and \$11,800 per prisoner. It is ridiculous to place value on someone who has broken the law than a child seeking a quality education. You cannot determine the worth of an individual, but we need to place our focus on the future- our children.

Jennifer Smith

Eric Grubbe

P.O. Box 244
Florence, WI 54121
715-528-3318

April 4, 2001

To Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

As a retired, seventy-three year old resident of Florence County, I have serious concerns about the negative effects revenue caps are having on the Florence County School District. I raised four children who all attended the Florence County School District and currently have four elementary aged granddaughters who attend Florence Elementary. I am fortunate in that three of my children have returned to live in Florence. However, I wonder how long two of my children and their families will continue to live in Florence due to the slow erosion revenue caps have reeked up our school district. Both of my daughters with school-aged children are giving serious consideration to moving into Michigan if the school district is forced to cut any additional programs. Since my granddaughters have enter elementary school the following programs have been eliminated at the elementary level because of revenue caps:

- ▶ Elementary guidance
- ▶ Elementary art
- ▶ Gifted and Talented
- ▶ Supply budgets have been cut each year

With the troubled youth present in society, it frightens me that my grandchildren's school does not have an elementary guidance program to offer preventative programs let alone counseling for those that are in need of it. It also saddens me when I hear one of my ten year old granddaughters talk about what she wants to be when she grows up; an artist. My granddaughter with the dream of being an artist does not have a certified art teacher to assist her in realizing her dream.

As a county that borders the state of Michigan, the Florence County School District has lost numerous outstanding teachers to Michigan school districts because of our districts inability to offer our teachers raises. Michigan school districts only 15 miles away offer \$5,000 to \$10,000 more in salaries than Florence does and loses teachers annually. The high turn over rate of staff caused by revenue caps is detrimental to the education of the children of Florence County.

As a retired single person, I understand what it means to live on a fixed income. However, I realize that the future of my community and the state of Wisconsin lays in the education of our youth. I can think of nothing I'd rather spend my money on than the education of children; our future. State imposed revenue caps have put a stranglehold on our youth, and they must be lifted immediately or the means of funding public education in Wisconsin must go through an immediate overhaul. Please consider removing the funding for public schools from property tax and imposing a statewide sales tax to fund education.

The future of the community of Florence County, the state of Wisconsin, and our children is in your hands. Please don't fail them. Lift revenue caps and fund public education.

Sincerely,



Claire E. Landry

April 4, 2001

Lynn A. Wahlstrom
Florence High School
425 Olive
Florence, WI 54121

To: State of WI Joint Financial Committee:

I am a 6-12th grade Family & Consumer Education teacher. I teach at Florence High School, and have for over twenty years. I am concerned about the continued decline in our schools due to the revenue caps and reduced school funding.

We are the only high school in the entire county. Because of that, we have more travel expenses than other schools. Florence is unincorporated, with miles of State forests and managed lands. Most residents live in average to modest housing according to their income.

Because of a few lakes, and large second homes, with the State's funding formula, we now have to pay back to the state funding rather than receiving it. This reduced funding, along with revenue caps, has caused our school to eliminate the elementary guidance counselor, art teacher, and when other teachers retire, they are not replaced.

Class sizes in the high school are at a 40% overload in some areas. Other advanced classes are being eliminated. Students daily are talking about their plans to move to relatives across the state border so they can attend schools, "that have more to offer them." We already have lost several students because of this.

Wisconsin is a great state, and has had productive schools that, according to Mr. Benson's "K-12 Education and the WI Economy" report of November, 2000, "stand at or near the top of national and world rankings." We need to do what we can to stay there.

Our children are the ones who will ultimately pay the price of these continued cut backs. They are the future of our state. Will we look back and be proud of what we gave them?



Lynn A. Wahlstrom
Family & Consumer Education Teacher
Florence County High School

My name is Amy Landenberger. My address is 912 Miller Street, Marinette, WI 54143. I have been teaching Kindergarten at Park Elementary School for the past 9 years. I have seen many children come into my class with early learning experiences from quality preschool programs. I have also seen many children that have had no prior learning experiences before entering my kindergarten classroom. As an educator it has been my experience that preschools vary their approach and the curriculum that is covered. It is imperative that children have quality teachers while they are forming the readiness skills necessary for kindergarten curriculums. This concerns me as a teacher, having children come to me from varied backgrounds, with some children ready to read and write while others are unable to recognize and write their own names. Our community is also struggling with two quality preschools that have recently closed. Lacking in our community is the quality of preschools for a parent to send their children to. This worries me as a teacher and as a mother. Where will my children and other children in the area find quality educational experiences before entering kindergarten? All children deserve to have a great teacher in a school setting to provide this very important educational start.

A four year old kindergarten class can benefit our school district by giving the children, especially from low-income families, an opportunity to have a "Great teacher" in a "Great school" as they begin their formal education. Teachers complete a bachelors degree to become an educator while many preschool teachers are not certified with a four year degree. Currently Marinette has a four year old Title 1 based program that serves children that score poorly using a district screening tool. All four year old children deserve to have quality teachers in a quality educational program.

Implementing additional funding for four year old kindergarten classes would allow the kindergarten teachers an opportunity to develop a more cooperative relationship with the child's previous teacher. The kindergarten teacher would have the opportunity to interact earlier with the upcoming students in his or her class before they enter kindergarten. The children would also have the wonderful opportunity of interacting in the building beginning a year earlier. This inclusion would benefit the students, teachers, specialists, as well as, the administration.

It is my opinion that we have families in our community who do not value education. These are the families that will not spend money on educational programing for their children. If additional funding is explored, it will allow the possibility that all children will be given the opportunity to be exposed to readiness skills and for all children who enter kindergarten to have a similar base of skills. Four year old kindergarten would be convenient and economical for working families and it would provide our community with a much needed service. This service could be an affordable alternative in addition to the few quality preschool programs that are already located in Marinette. Four year old

kindergarten would give kindergarten educators an alternate track to suggest to those parents that feel their child is not ready for five year old kindergarten.

In past years, I have had many children who have received Speech and Language services. In my present class I have two boys who have received speech and language services. One child was enrolled in a community preschool program and participated in our district wide Child Development Screening. Early Intervention services were started before the child entered kindergarten. This year he no longer needs these services. The second boy never attended a preschool program. His family did not participate in any screening, even after attempting to make second and third appointments. This child was unintelligible with his language skills in the beginning of this school year. He has since made great progress, and is becoming more understandable with communication skills. He deserved a quality teacher when he was four. He deserved to be identified earlier and he deserved to be given early intervention strategies while he was four to catch him up before he began his formal education.

It is my opinion that the teachers in Wisconsin are truly great teachers! All children, including our four year old children, deserve to have great educators in their lives. Governor McCallum's budget would benefit the city of Marinette greatly by providing additional financial support and funding for four year old kindergarten. I know that it would positively affect my profession and the children in all kindergarten classes for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy J. Landenburger



Cooperative Educational Service Agency No. 6

Anthony Evers, Ph. D., Administrator
P.O. Box 2568
Oshkosh, WI 54903-2568
Located at 2300 State Rd. 44
(920) 233-CESA
Fax: (920) 424-3478

To: Joint Committee on Finance
From: Tony Evers, Administrator, CESA 6
RE: Revenue Controls
Date: April 5, 2001

Thank you much for allowing me to address the Committee. I am here to address only one issue- **school district revenue controls.**

As a long time public educator, CESA Administrator, and recent candidate for state superintendent, I would like to offer a few observations on revenue caps. These observations are based upon first hand experience and listening to parents, teachers and other citizens throughout Wisconsin.

Up front you need to know that I oppose revenue caps and support their elimination. I believe they severely hobble local control, a concept I am very passionate about. Local control is what made our public schools the best in the country. Local board members are the "keepers of the flame". As superintendents, principals and teachers come and go, school board members assume the awesome responsibility of maintaining quality. At a "big picture" level, I oppose revenue caps because they prevent locally elected officials from doing their jobs.

What will happen if the present budget provisions stay in place? You have heard the litany of horrors:

- Scores of districts be forced to cut programs that are the core of the Wisconsin public educational experience.
- Many schools will further delay needed repairs that will cost more later.
- A small number will prematurely end school years when they run out of money.
- If not next year, then the following year, some districts will cease to operate.

None of these scenarios are "the Wisconsin Way". These are not "sky is falling" scenarios, but readily predictable occurrences.

Long term, we need to return decision-making to the local level, and eliminate caps. Possibly one quid pro quo to accomplish this would be to revisit the mediation-arbitration law to eliminate some of its perceived unfairness. As we know, our inability to address this issue a decade ago helped to bring us to this point. Let's finally tackle it.

I am also a realist. We need a short-term strategy. **I encourage legislators to provide revenue cap flexibility, thus allowing districts to at least maintain a status quo.** Failing to apply this band-aid (or more preferably seeking a long-term solution), will mean policy makers would later need to enact some sort of "Marshall Plan" to bail out financially-failing districts. Not only will this be bad policy-making, but it will further erode public support for state government and our schools.

Thank you.

Serving the School Districts of

Appleton	Fond du Lac	-Erin	-Rubicon	Kewaskum	Markesan	North	Ripon	Waupun
Beaver Dam	Freedom	-Friess Lake	Horicon-	Kimberly	Mayville	Fond du Lac	Rosendale-	West Bend
Berlin	Green Lake	-Herman	Hortonville	Little Chute	Menasha	Oakfield	Brandon	Weyauwega-
Campbellsport	Hartford UHS	-Neosho	Hustisford	Lomira	Neenah	Omro	Shiocton	Fremont
Dodgeband	-Hartford	-Richfield 1	Kaukauna	Manawa	New London	Oshkosh	Slinger	Winneconne

To the Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee,

April 5, 2001

Revenue caps the way they are currently enforced, are crippling the small school district of Niagara, WI.

We as parents and an educator are committed to giving our children the best possible education we can provide. But we are finding ourselves hand cuffed by the rising costs associated with mandated programs that are not receiving the necessary funding to compensate the Niagara School District.

As an example, in the 1992-93 school year, Special Education costs for the Niagara School District were \$398,512, which \$236,197 was funded by the State, leaving a deficit of \$162,315. In the current 2000-01 school year, our projected costs for Special Education Programs are \$856,524; which of that only \$367,763 is being funded by the State. This however is leaving a deficit of \$466,761 for the small Niagara School District.

No one is denying that this is not a worthy and just program, but is an example of how under funded mandated programs are financially strapping our small district, and forcing cuts that are showing up in our other basic education courses which benefit all of the non-EEN students. (Such as a business education program, a gifted and talented program, elem. guidance and counseling services, MS Spanish, our FACE Program, reduction in remedial services for elementary and middle school students, and the list goes on.)

While being committed to excellence in education and looking toward the future for our children, Niagara is having to make cuts in the very areas that will prepare our kids for future educational and job opportunities.

How can small school districts continue to operate under the imposed revenue caps when school costs increase at 3.8%, while funding at a 2.9% increase?

Also, why are state aids amounting to almost \$60,000 in the last 2 years being diverted to the large school districts of Milwaukee? This is money that is desperately needed in our small district.

As we are committed to excellence when it comes to the education and to the future of our children, we ask that you as legislators also be committed to the financial future of our small school district in Niagara, WI.

Thank You,



Betsy & Dave Shampo
W-7811 Ledge Street
Niagara, WI 54151

To Whom it may concern:

My name is Julie Butler and I am a mother of three daughters that attend Niagara Public Schools. Two of my daughters are in high school and my youngest child is in grade school. I am married and live in Marinette County.

I am very pleased that WSJFC have taken the time to listen to the taxpayers of the smaller size school districts. However it angers me of the time of day that was chosen. I am sure today is a paid workday for you. Taxpayers, such as myself, could not afford to take a day off from work to attend this very important meeting for my children's futures. An evening meeting might have been more convenient for others and myself.

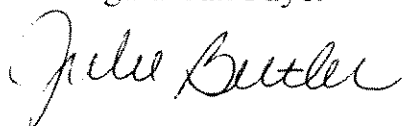
I am also displeased with the location you have chosen. Peshtigo is one of the larger schools north of Green Bay, and I am sure that they face financial problems as we all do. My point is the, smaller schools that are in financial difficulty at this time are farther north: Niagara, Florence, Pembine and many others. This is where the meeting should have been held. Perhaps more centrally located in Marinette County.

Another problem I would like to address is the special education program that are mandated by the State of Wisconsin. No one knows better than myself how much we need programs like these to meet the needs of these children. However, if these programs are going to be mandated, more money should be put in the public school system for financial help. Instead the mandated programs are putting a great deal of financial burden on the smaller school systems.

Because of the financial burdens, programs have to be cut to meet the demands of the budget at the expense of my children. I have a gifted child who was in the Gifted and Talented Reading program for four years. This program is no longer in existence because of budget cuts. Niagara also had to cut more advanced college prep classes to meet their budget. In short, to meet the needs of one child, the needs of another child are being ignored. We need more financial help for mandated programs.

I thank you for taking the time to hear my concerns. I only wish I could have taken part in a meeting, which concerns our future: Our Children.

Sincerely,
Julie Butler
Niagara Tax Payer



OCONTO FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Office – 200 Farm Road
Oconto Falls, WI 54154-1221
Phone: (920) 846-4471
FAX: (920) 846-4474

David Polashek
Superintendent of Schools

Candie Lehto
Asst. Supt./Dir. of Instr.

Memorandum

To: Members of Joint Finance Committee

From: Dave Polashek

Date: 4/5/01

Re: SAGE

I would like to thank the Joint Finance Committee for taking these hearings to land "Up Nort." Too often we get the impression that government business is being conducted in Madison with little thought of what is happening in out-state Wisconsin.

As the superintendent of schools in Oconto Falls I sat on the sidelines but watched with a lot of interest as the SAGE program was first implemented in Milwaukee and a number of low income districts around the state. Clearly, this was a visionary attempt to provide early intervention and break a cycle of low achievement for students who come from situations that were less than ideal. I was impressed as the first reports came in about the success of the program and appreciated the very positive comments from colleagues who appreciated the fact that additional staffing and new approaches could be applied in these lower elementary classrooms where children are most impressionable.

I sat on the sidelines because, even though the theory was good, my school district could not qualify for SAGE funding due to family income level. Even though we were viewed as a "non poverty" school district, we could not afford to provide the staffing ratios that are a part of the SAGE concept. You can understand the excitement I felt when the legislature expanded the SAGE program during the last biennium.

We shared the concept with our board, administration, and teachers and decided to move forward even though this would put a strain on our facilities. The provision to allow SAGE funding for expansion of facilities was also embraced and discussed

April 5, 2001

with the electorate as we moved forward with a referendum last April. The SAGE language was a part of the question on the ballot, which was approved by voters.

We moved forward this past fall with the implementation of SAGE K-1 at two school buildings with the understanding that this would be phased in over two more years with grades two and three. Then the bottom fell out of those plans with the Governor's budget, which would not support the continued phase in of the SAGE program in our school district.

I would raise the following points:

- Governor McCallum wants to stress accountability and getting children to read. SAGE does this. Benchmarks are established and met. This is not just about smaller class sizes; it is about teaching differently and moving students toward goals which were not in place previously. This is an important part of the SAGE program and powerful incentive for educational reform that may have been overlooked.
- Capping the SAGE program at grades one and two for schools that do not have at least a 50% poverty rate reneges on a promise made to schools that were willing to start the program last year. It is a take back on the trust that the school districts have with officials in Madison.
- Non-poverty schools are not fully funded for SAGE. The Oconto Falls District, like many others had to subsidize at least one third of the cost with local funds. Some of the comments in the media have suggested that these "non poverty" schools can afford to offer the smaller class sizes without the SAGE funding. I stand before you and state, that is not the case in Oconto Falls.
- 480 school buildings in the state were prepared to expand the SAGE program to second grade next year. Under the Governor's budget only 120 will be allowed to do so. This proposal has a wide spread effect rather than just in our school district.
- Rather than funding new initiatives with this budget, it makes sense to follow through on the programs we trusted would be funded next year.

In closing, I would thank the committee for the opportunity to testify before you. I would ask that you give serious consideration to maintaining the current legislation on SAGE and keep the hope alive for the schools that made a commitment to move forward with the full implementation of this very worthwhile initiative.

I would be happy to respond to any questions.

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARINETTE

April 5, 2001

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
Hollister G. DeMotts, *Superintendent*

Members of the Committee on Joint Finance

Thank you for this opportunity to address you and thank you for coming to Northeast Wisconsin.

Let me describe for you briefly our School District of Marinette:

- We have ratcheted up accountability. We have embraced standards based instruction. We have progressively done more with limited Fund 10 resources in a district that expends per member well below the state average. In spite of or possibly because of limited resources our efficiencies have grown.
- Our instructional strategies are changing, our curriculum is becoming more and more relevant, and our test scores are improving, but we must continue to climb the ladder. We will hold our own feet to the fire on behalf of our kids.
- We approved a significant referendum to upgrade dingy, drab, malfunctioning facilities. We failed, however, on two occasions to approve requests to exceed the cap for operational dollars.
- Here is the That's Us List:
 - Growing difficulty with teacher recruitment;
 - Health Insurance costs rising rapidly,
 - Categorical aids decreasing,
 - Low expenditure/member district,
 - =We have long been very fiscally conservative
 - S.A.G.E. Program potentially redefined out of the reach of our needy 2nd and 3rd graders,
 - Escalating special education costs for a growing special needs population,
 - Summer school unaffordable for elementary children in need,
 - Cutting programs and building allocation dollars by as much as 50%,
 - Reducing teachers, support staff, and administrators with people wearing progressively more multiple hats,
 - Fund balance in jeopardy in the not too distance future because our ability to generate revenue is increasingly exceeded by the essential expenditures that confront us.

And of Course

- Declining Enrollment
 - =from 3,021 students in 93-94
 - =to a projected 2,092 by 05-06
 - This includes from last year to 05-06 the loss of over 100-student members/year. After cutting \$550,000 to balance the current \$20,000,000 budget we will be cutting in excess of \$1,000,000 annually with the glimmer of hope of achieving annual budget balance. What will remain of programs for kids?

Everything is relative and maybe that's why I chuckled recently when some of my colleagues in Southeast Wisconsin expressed concern about staff and program cuts. They were lamenting losing things we've never had and can't even dream about. Education for kids is about teaching kids to believe, to problem solve, and to dream.

Everytime we turn a corner we seem to lose more ground and simultaneously feel like we have less local control. We have been increasingly more creative in our problem solving, but creativity can take us only so far.

We have no frills. In very short order we will begin whittling away the bone.

It's beyond crunch time. We have passed the point of critical mass.

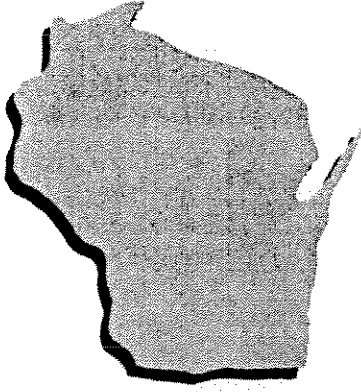
This is our plea.

We need your help.

Thank You!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hollister G. DeMotts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'H' and 'D'.

Hollister G. DeMotts
Superintendent of Schools



Report from the Statewide School Funding **SOLUTIONS COMMITTEE**

PARTICIPANTS:

Antigo School District
Association for Equity in Funding
Beloit School District
Brown Deer School District
Columbus School District
Greendale School District
Greendale School Board
Institute for Wisconsin's Future
Janesville School District
Janesville Joint Legislative Committee
Madison Metropolitan School District
Middleton School Board
Milwaukee Public Schools
Oconomowoc School District
Palmyra-Eagle School District
Superior School District
Superior School Board
Waukesha School District
Wisconsin Education Association Council
Wisconsin Federation of Teachers
Wisconsin PTA

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM:

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Legislative Fiscal Bureau

Report prepared by:
Institute for Wisconsin's Future
January 2001

PART I: SUMMARY

In 2000, a group of 40 school finance specialists representing 20 school districts and seven statewide education organizations, met six times to review the key financial problems facing school districts. This report summarizes the policy recommendations, which emerged from this effort.

Key Problems

- **Revenue caps** create a growing gap between school funding and the cost of school needs.
- Costs for **special-needs students** grow much faster than does state aid.
- **Declining enrollment** – in half Wisconsin’s school districts – worsens fiscal problems.

Proposed Solutions

- Increase revenue-limit flexibility.
- Increase state reimbursement for special-needs programming.
- Help districts with declining enrollment.

Estimated Cost

- Total maximum annual cost for all detailed proposals: \$407 million.
- Two-year phase-in would limit the first-year cost to a maximum of \$236 million.

Funding Source

- School levy tax credit is \$469 million annually.
- This is officially designated as “school” aid, and counts as part of the state’s commitment to fund two-thirds of school costs.
- But none of it has ever gone to schools.
- And because it’s already budgeted, redirecting it to schools would not increase state spending.

PART II: DETAILS

Background

In December 1999, school board members, district administrators, students, religious, labor and community leaders from diverse regions of Wisconsin met to discuss the financial problems facing schools and how to coordinate efforts to address the problem. Representatives from 17 organizations located in rural, urban and suburban districts – both property-rich and property-poor communities – convened at the Monona Terrace to find common ground in ensuring that Wisconsin schools provide children with a thorough education. Two working groups were formed. One coordinated forums in different regions of the state to compile information on the impact of funding shortfalls on the schools. The other group – known as the “solutions committee” – focused on defining policy solutions that would increase resource levels for all schools while minimizing conflict between districts of varying property wealth.

The solutions committee invited school finance specialists and other district representatives to participate with a final working group of 40 people representing 20 districts and seven statewide organizations, as well as advisors from the Department of Public Instruction. The group met six times over ten months to review key financial problems facing school districts as well as policy recommendations emerging from different sources.

Key Problems

A consensus emerged about the core fiscal problems facing the state’s 426 school districts:

Revenue caps are prohibiting the majority of districts from spending enough to keep pace with rising costs – especially for salaries and benefits, utilities and gasoline, building maintenance, and staff training. For many districts, this means new programming is out of the question and existing programming is slashed.

Special-needs students are those with disabilities, with limited-English proficiency, and those from low-income families, including those in 3- and 4-year old kindergarten. Many require special, more costly programs. But the share of extra costs covered by state and federal funds has fallen drastically. The result is that many districts must choose between serving special-needs students or serving other students.

Declining enrollment means declining revenue growth, because enrollment is a major factor in calculating state aid. When enrollments fall, costs decline much slower, because most fixed costs are unaffected by a drop in students across grades and across schools. Over half the state’s districts have falling enrollment, a proportion that will continue to grow because of demographic trends.

Proposed Solutions

Participating groups reviewed solutions developed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Task Force, the School Administrators Alliance, the Association for Equity in Funding and other funding specialists. While there was not complete consensus among the participants on a long-term and comprehensive funding reform package, there was general agreement that the following proposals were important, viable and would ease schools' financial distress if implemented in the coming budget cycle. The primary recommendations are to:

1) Increase Revenue Limit Flexibility

- Give school boards authority to exceed revenue caps, with a two-thirds vote, by up to 1% of state per-pupil spending average.
 - At the option of the school district, the additional revenue is aidable by the state, at the same percentage the district received the year before.
 - If the additional revenue is aidable, it becomes part of the base for subsequent years.
- Give school boards authority to exceed revenue caps, with a two-thirds vote, to fund debt payments on certain limited borrowing.
 - Borrowing is limited to \$350 per pupil (or a minimum of \$250,000 per district) to pay for building repairs and remodeling, new buildings, technology upgrading, and safety needs.
 - As loans are paid down, districts can re-borrow up to the same maximum.
 - At the option of the school district, the annual debt payments can be aidable by the state, at the same percentage the district received the year before.

2) Increase State Reimbursement for Special-Needs Students

- **Students with disabilities (special education):**
 - State reimburses 90% of expenses for high-cost, low-incidence students whose annual costs exceed three times the state average.
 - State categorical reimbursement increases to 50% (from current 35%).
- **Limited-English proficiency:**
 - State reimburses for all students (not just those where the current threshold -- 10 to 20 students in a single language group -- is met).
 - State reimburses at two-thirds of prior year's cost per student.
- **Low-income:**
 - New categorical fund paid based on 10% of the state average revenue per member for each student eligible for reduced-fee or free lunch.
 - These new funds can be used for class-size reduction in schools with high concentrations of low-income students, for early kindergarten programs, for support programming, and other purposes as determined by school boards.

3) Provide Assistance to Districts with Declining Enrollment

- At the option of the school district, it can use the highest enrollment attained in any one year since 1993-94 for revenue-limit calculations. Any additional revenue allowed for by this provision would come from the local levy.

Estimated Cost for Solutions

Maximum potential state costs:

Revenue cap/1% exemption	\$ 43 million (maximum cost if all districts make use of it as aidable)
Capital-cost exemption	\$ 27 million (maximum cost if all districts borrow the maximum – at 6% for 10 years – and use it as aidable)
Special Education	\$178 million
Limited-English proficiency	\$ 39 million
Low-income	\$120 million
Declining enrollment	\$ 0
TOTAL POSSIBLE MAXIMUM	\$407 million

➤ Immediate full implementation:

- Revenue cap exemptions;
- Reimbursement of 90% of special education costs that exceed three times state average;
- Declining-enrollment exemption;
- Reimbursement for all limited-English proficiency students.

➤ Potential two-year phase-in:

- Special education reimbursement goes in first year to 43%, in second year to 50%;
- Limited-English proficiency reimbursement goes in first year to 30%, in second year to 66.6%;
- Low-income reimbursement goes in first year to 5% of state average, in second year to 10%;
- Maximum first-year cost: \$236 million.

Source of funds

- The state school levy tax credit is currently funded at \$469 million annually.
 - This is officially designated as “school” aid, and counts as part of the state’s commitment to fund two-thirds of school costs.
 - But none of it has ever gone to schools.
 - And because it’s already budgeted, redirecting it to schools would not increase state spending.

 - (Note: using the school levy tax credit would require technical adjustments in the statutory language regarding the state’s two-thirds commitment.)

Participants

We would like to thank the following individuals who contributed many hours by participating in the Solutions Committee process:

- Lance Alwin, Antigo School District
- Ken Bates, Columbus School District
- Dave Branback, National Insurance Services
- Bob Borch, Elmbrook School District
- Bob Buchholtz, Waukesha School District
- Douglas Bunton, Janesville Joint Legislative Committee
- Michael Butera, Wisconsin Education Association Council
- Darren Clark, Waukesha School District
- Lauri Clifton, Janesville School District
- Bruce Connolly, Brown Deer School District
- Winnie Doxsie, Wisconsin State PTA
- Thomas Evert, Janesville School District
- Frank Finman, Hawthorne Elementary School PTA in Waukesha
- Erin Gauthier, Palmyra-Eagle School District
- James Germain, Greendale School Board
- Doug Haselow, Association for Equity in Funding
- Bill Hughes, Greendale School District
- Douglas Johnson, Oconomowoc School District
- Janet Kane, Middleton School Board
- Russ Kava, Legislative Fiscal Bureau
- Cheryl Maranto, Advocates for Education of Whitefish Bay
- Bruce Meredith, Wisconsin Education Association Council
- Jay Mitchell, Superior School District
- Michelle Nate, Milwaukee Public Schools
- Ron Nortier, Beloit School District
- Brian Pahnke, Department of Public Instruction
- Dick Peterson, Beloit School District
- Keith Pollock, Department of Public Instruction
- Joe Quick, Madison Metropolitan School District
- William Rehnstrand, Superior School Board
- Greg Weyenberg, Wisconsin Federation of Teachers



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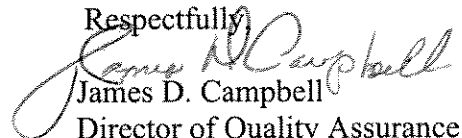
Date: April 5, 2001
To: Joint Finance Committee
Re: New Meat Science Laboratory

My name is Jim Campbell and I am currently the Director of Quality Assurance at American Foods Group in Green Bay Wisconsin. I believe that a new meat laboratory would be very beneficial not only for our industry but the state of Wisconsin as well. In this day and age there is a real need for people who are properly educated and can use this education to help our industry deal with the challenges of providing a safe and wholesome supply of meat to the public. A new meat lab with greater capacity and more up to date facilities would help to achieve this goal.

As a larger processor we have many avenues to pursue when looking for information regarding new technology or issues that need resolution. A new meat science lab would give us one more source of information. Many of our smaller counter parts do not have access to information, nor do they know where to go to gather this information in a timely manner, thus opportunities are missed and knowledge is lost. The smaller plants, both state inspected and federally inspected, would have a resource that was not only very credible but convenient as well..

As everyone is aware, there are challenges to our industry that must be addressed. BSE, hoof and mouth, and the array of pathogens that we must either eliminate or prevent from affecting the supply of meat to the public. We can only fight these challenges with education, not only of the students but of the general public as well. The need for accurate information that is without bias can only come through understanding and the ability of people to make sound decisions based on science and knowledge. Therefore I would ask that you give positive consideration to the measure before you.

Respectfully


James D. Campbell
Director of Quality Assurance
American Foods Group

Northland Pines School District
Eagle River WI 54558
Linda Kunelius, Superintendent

Senate Education Committee Hearing
January 24, 2001

Good Afternoon. I want to thank you for providing an opportunity for us to discuss the future of education in Wisconsin with you.

My name is Linda Kunelius and I am the Superintendent for the Northland Pines School District in Eagle River. Today I am representing the north central portion of the state that is comprised of 42 school districts with an enrollment of 45,000 students. This region has a high poverty rate of 31%, a minority enrollment of 10% and an enrollment level of special needs students of 14%. Sixty two percent (62%) of the districts in the region have declining enrollment and per pupil spending ranges from \$7,435 in Phillips to \$12,808 in Phelps.

The north central forum was held on October 11th in Rhinelander and approximately sixty citizens were in attendance. Twenty five (25) persons from twelve (12) school districts testified. Almost 30% of the speakers discussed staff cuts necessitated by funding shortages. A quarter of the speakers cited difficulties in attracting and retaining teachers due to regional competition and higher salaries in neighboring states. Over one in five persons described program cuts, staff cuts, insufficient and outdated textbooks and the lack of basic school supplies and how this has reduced learning opportunities for our children.

Speakers cited factors that when considered in combination with revenue limits, have produced further funding problems. Many of our rural districts face proportionately higher transportation costs due to rising fuel costs. For

example, Antigo encompasses 520 square miles and Northland Pines encompasses 450 square mile. If we reroute any more, children in K-4 and K-5 will spend 2 ½ hours on the bus. When gas prices went up in Antigo, there was nothing they could do but cut programs.

The challenges school boards, administrators, teachers and parents gave testimony to was gut wrenching. *30yr in educ. Never seen or exp. anything like this.*

Elcho – the business teacher will no longer be affordable. Key academic teaching positions and teacher aides will be cut. A desperately needed roof replacement will be put off. The janitor will continue to put larger buckets in the classrooms and in the gym to catch the leaks. Equipment replacement budgets and supplies have already been cut along with textbooks.

Northland Pines - cut 17 staff positions, the maintenance budget, all field trips, breakfast program, middle school co-curricular programs and staff development. Textbooks in core curriculum areas were on a five year replacement schedule, now it's ten. This is a below state average income area (think Appalachia with lakes).

*4 yr ago 6%
this yr 3.8%
next yr 2.7%*

*500,000 3.86% increase
200,000 2.72% increase*

13 mill. budget ~~feel~~ ^{new} Youth Options - not in place when rev. limits began \$50,000 12% @ nec.

Chart

Marshfield – a 30% increase in health insurance required a \$67,500 budget cut. The result – loss of instructional staff for programs like the gifted and talented, a reading specialist and other programs.

X Florence – Has a deficit this year of \$370,000 and next year it will be \$660,000. Michigan pays \$10,000 more per year and is actively recruiting its teachers.

Merrill – Lost 350 students and had to cut \$300,000 this year. They cut supplies, textbooks and maintenance. Next year, people and programs will be cut. Cutting transportation is not an option. This is a blue-collar district and a referendum will probably not pass.

Wisconsin has extremely professional and outstanding teachers. They have delivered quality education and a workforce that is better prepared than ever before. Quality teachers have delivered quality education. Math scores of students of all ages, science scores of 9 and 13 year olds and reading scores for ages 13 and 17 are at all time highs. And as state Supt. John Benson has declared, Wisconsin continues to win the “Academic Super Bowl” with the top ACT scores in the country for the 8th consecutive year. We should be celebrating – instead we are fighting for the very survival of public education and the worst is yet to come. Remember the old law of “supply and demand?” This year we had:

- One candidate for High School Math;
- Three candidates for High School science;
- Two applicants for High School Counselor;
- One applicant for elementary ED;
- Five applicants for Middle School LD;
- Sixteen applicants for two elementary positions.

*Met with St. Council
made display
asked to come
1 issue
NOT Dr. Ed. fee
NOT parking fee
"Baby Boomers"
WHO WILL BE OUR
TEACHERS?*

How are we going to attract quality candidates into a profession where they have to complete additional requirements just to obtain a teaching degree and will have to meet higher standards in order to maintain certification?

How are we are going to attract quality candidates into a profession where they will face a much lower salary in contrast to their counterparts going into the business world, and where they can look forward to a cap on their future earnings?

How are we going to keep the quality teachers we have when neighboring states are offering significantly higher salaries, signing bonuses and moving expenses?

Monday evening, Al Pacino received one of the highest achievement awards in the movie industry – the Cecille D. DeMille Award. The very first thing he did upon acceptance of the award was to give recognition and homage to his first drama teacher. He noted that she had gone the extra mile as good teachers are prone to do and he owed his success to her. Please pause with me and think about someone who has made a difference in your life. Chances are you are remembering a teacher.

The fiscal and staffing pressures converging on education in Wisconsin are setting the stage for chaos and will eventually impact the very foundation of our booming economy. Over 35% of our staff will be retiring within the next five years. WHEN WE RETIRE, WHO WILL BE TEACHING OUR CHILDREN? School districts must have adequate funding to pay competitive wage levels and maintain high skills among teaching staff. Thank you.

We must have adequate funding to maintain quality education.

There must be a balance between mandated exp & ~~mandated~~ revenue limits

*with options
miss.
QEO
of
Sp Ed.*

School
Northland Pines EI-St
Germain
District
Northland Pines

[Change school](#)

[Hide numbers](#)

[Read about the data \(coming soon\)](#)

[Glossary](#)

[Download Data](#)

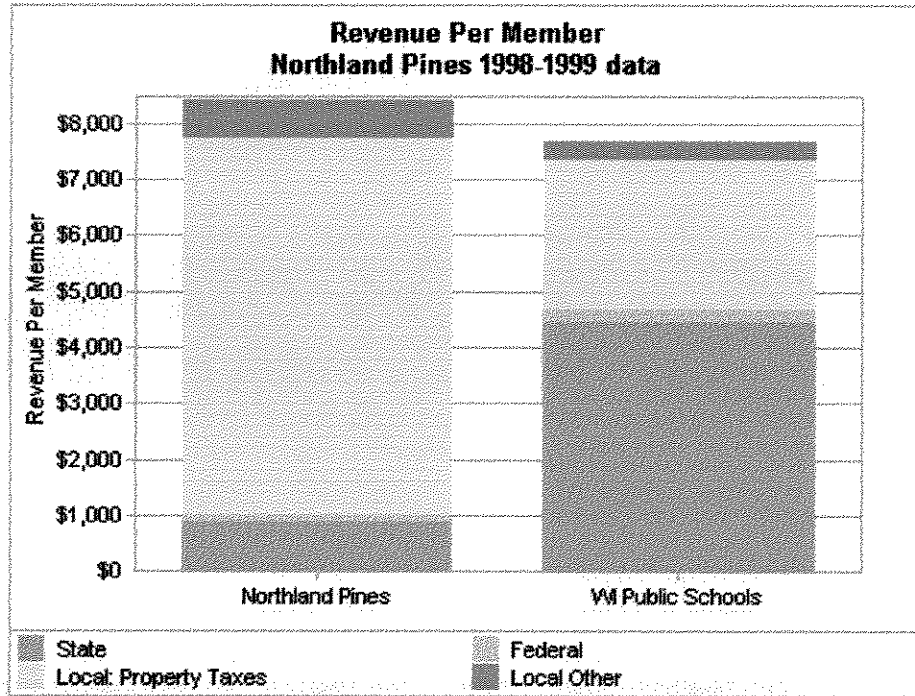
How much money is received and spent in this district?

View [Revenue Per Member](#) • [Expenditures Per Member](#)

Ratio of:

Compare [Prior Years](#) • [District/State](#) • [Selected Schools](#)

To:



School level data are not available.

Revenue Per Member - Northland Pines 1999 data					
	Membership	State	Federal	Local: Property Taxes	Local: Other
Northland Pines	1,640	\$1,479,080	\$194,096	\$10,988,771	\$1,113,212
	Ratio:	\$902	\$118	\$6,700	\$679
Total: \$13,775,159			Total Ratio: \$8,399		
WI Public Schools	867,969	\$3,870,896,991	\$183,763,615	\$2,327,630,706	\$258,806,906
	Ratio:	\$4,460	\$212	\$2,682	\$298
Total: \$6,641,098,218			Total Ratio: \$7,651		

What are some questions to consider when reviewing these graphs?

Go to:

Northland Pines School District
Eagle River WI 54558
Linda Kunelius, Superintendent

Submitted
by:
Patty Schoppe
Parent

The Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools
Public Hearing
October 11, 2000
Rhineland, Wisconsin

Testimony by:

Linda L. Kunelius
District Administrator
Northland Pines School District
Eagle River, Wisconsin

**Northland Pines School District
Eagle River, Wisconsin**

The Northland Pines School District has always been fiscally responsible. In fact, several years ago, the school board cut the budget in response to public concern over escalating property taxes. Unfortunately, that was the base year of the revenue limits – so our school district was penalized for its frugal and responsive action.

We tightened our belt and tightened our belt, but by 1998 class sizes had increased to a point we could no longer accept, including a special education class with 35 children and elementary classes that were approaching 30 children. When we reached the point of teachers vs. programs, the board made the decision to “take it to the voters.”

We heard it all:

- Live within your means...
- How come you're the only district struggling under the revenue limits?
- You've mismanaged funds...
- We don't need more teachers...
- Your holding us hostage....
- The District Administrator is making too much money....

Let's face it, revenue limits are popular – everyone wants to keep their property taxes as low as possible and in a district where the local community pays 88% of the school costs, the fear of escalating taxes is very real. Quite frankly, I am quite tired of the political rhetoric that the solution is simple – just go to referendum. A school referendum is the only time a citizen can say NO to rising property taxes. They may be angry with the tech school budget increase of over 12% or the county increase of over 5% or the fact the county built a \$10 million dollar jail. A public school referendum is the only opportunity they have to say NO to rising taxes. Not surprisingly, our community said no!

I have distributed a summary of the cuts we made so our district could provide sufficient instructional staff and still meet expenses under the revenue limits when our referendum failed. I am sure you will hear of similar sacrifices over and over again, so I am not going to go over the summary. I want to focus on an aspect that is being entirely overlooked and one that I am gravely concerned with.

I have worked with some of the most professional and outstanding teachers in the country – you will find many of them in the Northland Pines School District. We have delivered quality education and a workforce that is better prepared than ever before.

American nine-year-olds ranked second in the world in reading and third in science. Fourteen-year-old students had reading scores in the top third of tested countries.

The United States has the highest percentage of post-secondary and accredited four-year degree holders in the world.

Other industrialized nations only test their top students, whereas the United States reports scores of all students. When we compare “apples to apples,” U.S. students outperform their international counterparts.

Math scores of students of all ages, science scores of 9 and 13 year olds and reading scores for ages 13 and 17 are at all time highs.

And as State Supt. John Benson has declared, Wisconsin continues to win the "Academic Super Bowl" with the top ACT scores in the country for the 8th consecutive year.

We should be celebrating – instead we are fighting for the very survival of public education. Public schools were founded on the idea that all children deserve a chance to learn. Generation after generation of students from all backgrounds received their start at achieving the American dream in the public schools.

Wisconsin's fiscal policy on education pits teachers against administrators and school boards and regular education against special education. When districts go to referendum, it pits neighbor against neighbor and young people (parents) against retirees. The fiscal and staffing pressures converging on education in Wisconsin are setting the stage for chaos and will eventually impact the very foundation of our booming economy.

What will happen if education is no longer available to offer people hope that they can live out the American dream? Writer David Martin paints a bleak picture: "If failing support for schools results in significant numbers of the next generation being barred from entry to the middle class, there will be hell to pay. If events go badly, the next generation of Americans might even supply the fuel for revolutionary fury."

Remember the old law of "supply and demand?" This year we had:

- One candidate for High School Math;
- Three candidates for High School Science;
- Two applicants for High School Counselor;
- One applicant for elementary ED;
- Five applicants for Middle School LD;
- Sixteen applicants for two elementary positions.

Last week, CNN asked us to poll teachers and parents and what I found the most disconcerting was the anger, frustration and hurt that was evident in their comments. Our teachers and parents summed up the issues:

How are we going to attract quality candidates into a profession where they have to complete additional requirements just to obtain a teaching degree and will have to meet higher standards in order to maintain certification?

How are we going to attract quality candidates into a profession where they will face a much lower salary in contrast to their counterparts going into the business world, and where they can look forward to a cap on their future earnings?

How are we going to attract quality candidates into a profession where they will have to endure continuous bashing and disrespect by our politicians and communities.

Anger, frustration and hurt! We must give thought to the key question put forward by our staff for it underscores the devastating impact of the revenue limits.

WHEN WE RETIRE, WHO WILL BE TEACHING OUR CHILDREN?

STAFF COMMENTS:

The obvious personal effect is not only a monetary issue but an issue of pride. Why would or should a teacher work harder or be more productive when he/she is no longer allowed to negotiate for a better reward. Perhaps an even worse effect of budget restraints is the agony I feel as a teacher not being able to offer students some major activities simply because we do not have the facility to do so.

There is no money to fund field trips, both in the transportation aspect as well as having funding available to pay for substitutes for teachers. Budget issues have affected me personally because I spend a portion of my salary on supplies for my classroom.

The QEO is a slap in the face from legislators and the State of Wisconsin to teachers in Wisconsin. When test scores (SAT & ACT) from high school students have consistently been the highest in the nation, it means that the schools in Wisconsin are doing something correctly. Those responsible for consistently achieving acceptable scores ought to be rewarded just as people in private industry receive good salaries for jobs well done.

I don't think people realize the strain it puts on students when the funds are not available for them. Instead of just having to deal with getting through high school successfully, they are burdened with higher fees and the threats of their extra curricular activities being taken away. This is a shame!

Where are our priorities when we can vote to increase taxes to build \$100+ million stadiums or renovations and we can't get a referendum passed to replace rundown out of date schools and get money to keep the programs we have?

Building costs, textbook costs, maintenance costs, material costs are all going up. We now have outdated textbooks, poorly maintained buildings and even dangerous conditions in some classrooms. Can't fix the heating/cooling in an aging building.

Why is it that the expectation is so great that teachers assume multiple roles, perform numerous tasks beside that of teaching, are held accountable for more social ills when dealing with children and yet are rewarded with low pay, poor community support and respect and not treated as professionals within our field?

Why are teachers the only professionals that are subjected to a "cap" on their salaries? Why are educators being discriminated against?

Will our fiscal policy have an impact on the brightest and best entering the field of education?

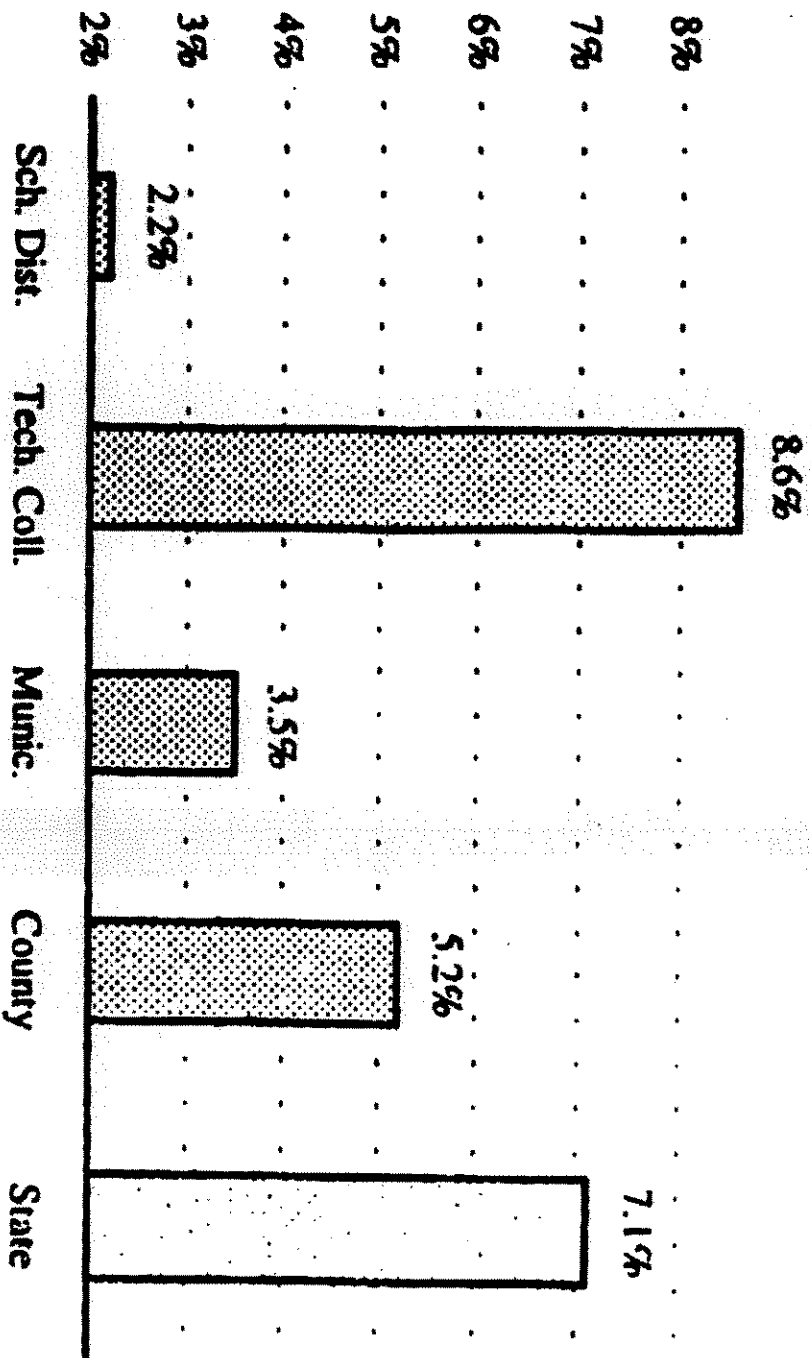
How can schools proceed into the next decade competing with the "world" market and implement up-to-date technology under such strict budget restrictions.

How are we going to attract quality candidates into a profession where they have to complete additional requirements just to obtain a teaching degree, meet higher standards in order to maintain certification, when they will face a cap on their future earning potential and will have to endure continuous bashing and disrespect by our politicians and communities.

When we retire, who will be teaching our children?

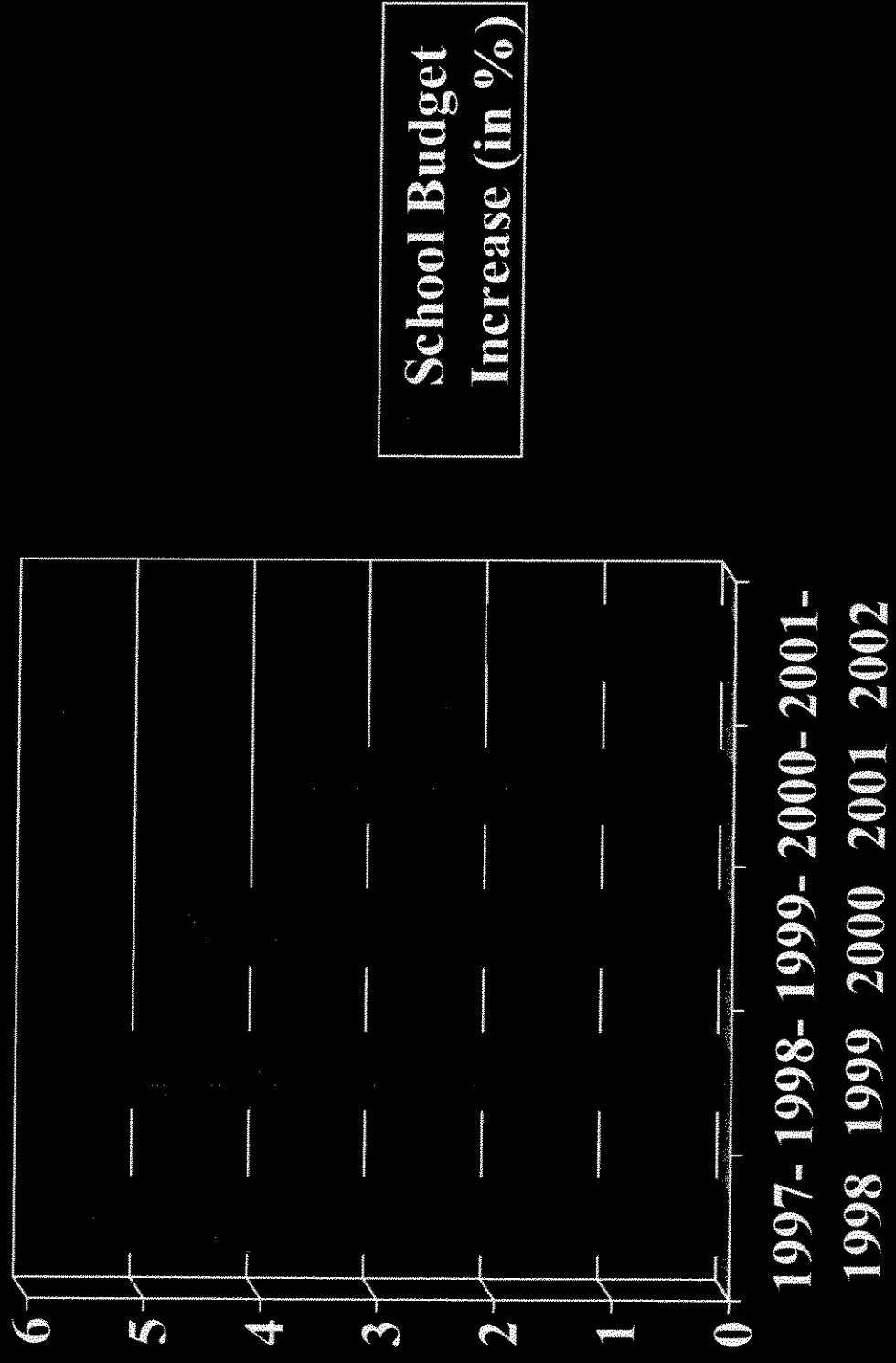
1999-2000 Property Tax Levies

Percent Change over 1998-99



Northland Times School District

Budget levy increase has been severely restricted by the revenue limit



Our decreasing increase!

fonteio lombo eñi lumbroff

Linda
Kundlin
715.479.6487

1 877 777 7777

H.C. 1, Box 577
Florence, Wisconsin
April 3, 2001

Dear Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

I recently joined the teaching staff at Florence High School, after one year of teaching in Beecher-Dunbar-Pembine Schools, and eight years with Green Bay Public Schools. In my years with Green Bay Public Schools, when people would ask me what I do, I would (with great pride and idealism) respond that I am a teacher. My experiences at Florence High School have changed my perception of what I do. Now when asked that question, I say (still with great pride, but now with a heart hurting for my students) that I am an "Educational Missionary".

The contrast in educational opportunities for students, supplies and equipment, and condition of the facilities between Green Bay Public Schools and Florence County Schools, as well as teacher pay, is heart wrenching and shameful. In my teacher training at St. Norbert College, I learned that public education in America was begun to allow equal opportunity to succeed through education for all citizens, yet this equal opportunity is unequally distributed in our state, which is ironically noted for its high quality education.

My own two children, now in college, were educated in DePere Public Schools, and the facilities, equipment, class selections and opportunities were far more abundant and of higher quality than what we are able to provide our students in Florence County.

Our high school building is getting shabby and is outdated in many areas. The equipment available to me as a physical science and chemistry teacher is old and rusty and there is nowhere near enough of it. When I left Green Bay, the chemistry classroom was equipped with hand-held data collecting devices that would feed data, such as pH, into a computer for analysis. Here I have one roll of pH paper and a collection of old and faded litmus paper.

There is no utility sink in my classroom or prep area to prepare reagents or wash glassware for student labs. The plumbing has been installed since the '70's and is poking out of the wall, waiting for a sink to be hooked up to it. My acids have been stored for years in a cabinet with the gas pipe running through it that delivers gas to my student stations. When I arrived I discovered the gas pipe was dangerously coated with a thick layer of rust from the chemical action of the acids over the years.

I have students counting on me to provide them with the opportunity to learn hands-on chemistry, so they are equally prepared for their college experience as students from wealthier districts. I am embarrassed and upset that I must rely on makeshift equipment and supplies that make me feel I have gone back in time.

Our high school is the only high school in the entire county, and most of our citizens are in a low socioeconomic status, with many parents having very basic education. Many of the freshman students I teach would be considered "at risk" in Green Bay, but they are the norm here. Many should be referred for special education, but we can't accommodate any more financially or physically, so I must try to adapt my lessons to serve the many struggling students, while the equally unserved high achievers must wait for the others to catch up to them. Many students need remediation in math, and other subjects, but our district cannot afford to hold summer school to provide that remediation.

Not only is our school the educational center of the county, it is one of the only places young people have for cultural, enrichment, and social experiences of any kind. The existence of this school is critical in the lives of children in our remote area.

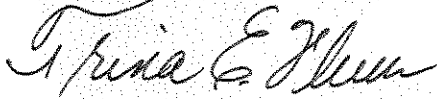
As I have gotten to know my dedicated colleagues here at Florence, who teach more classes per day than teachers in other areas, yet are among the lowest paid teachers in the state, I respect them deeply, because I see their excellence and dedication continue, in spite of their difficult swim upstream. Our teacher colleagues just across the border in Michigan have salaries several thousand dollars higher and the latest equipment is available to them and their students. A number of those Michigan teachers began their careers in Florence, only to leave for better financial opportunities a few miles away.

Several weeks ago I had one of the most memorable experiences of my personal and professional life - the image of which is permanently etched in my heart. To honor the Florence High School's girls' basketball team about to depart for the state tournaments, all the students of Florence County, including those from the county's two elementary schools and the adjacent middle school, were brought to the high school gym to help send off the team. Classroom by classroom the children from every grade filled in and squeezed between each other on the bleacher seats. Three past graduates got up in front of the students and shared their stories of pride in being athletes and alumni of Florence High School. A group of students, dressed in assorted parts of old cheerleading uniforms, prepared some impromptu cheers to lead the crowd in building spirit. The regular cheerleading squad no longer exists, due to budget cuts.

Well aware of the financial crisis facing our school, with the possibility of running out of money in 2003, my reaction to the sight of all of our 800 students from all the corners of Florence County, together at one time for this rare moment, was that of overwhelming emotion. The impact of these children packed into our gym so trusting and innocent, eager to enjoy and share the moment, with no thoughts that those entrusted with their education and their future might soon be letting them down, tore deeply into my heart.

The state of Wisconsin owes these children the very best in educational opportunities, as it owes all children. Please help us provide the best educational opportunities for our young people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Trina E. Fluor". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Trina E. Fluor
Physical Science and Chemistry Teacher
Florence County School District

My name is Linda Cahill. I was born and raised in Marinette, am a product of the Marinette Public Schools as is my daughter. Now I have a granddaughter in the Marinette Schools and I am worried about her future education because of the revenue controls, which have placed an undue burden on our school system. Soon our school system will not be the pride of our community. Already potential members of our community are looking at surrounding districts which have more to offer.

I have been a teacher for 31 years and have always taken pride in Wisconsin's schools. The revenue caps are putting our educational system in jeopardy. This year the revenue caps have resulted in fourteen Marinette teachers being laid off, programs being cut, budgets being slashed by over 50%. One lay off which will have long term effects is that of one of our elementary counselors. In this time of so much violence, substance abuse and family problems, our young students need programs and counseling to help them become emotionally healthy adults. We need prevention programs, programs that help them say no to poor choices, programs that teach them how to settle conflicts peacefully and we need to have counselors available to be advocates for our young students.

As the president of our local education association, I have worked with our school administrator to try to salvage jobs and programs. Many of these young teachers who have been laid off have families to support and educational loans to repay. These lay offs have created tremendous stress for these young people as well as shattering their dreams and those of their students. The revenue caps have been defended as a tax reduction but this is not true. Just as nature abhors a vacuum and weeds will fill a cleared area, city and county taxes have replaced any reductions in school taxes. I am also a taxpayer as are all of Marinette's teachers. Since our school district was very conservative with its spending we have been placed at an even greater disadvantage. Our district spends less than the state average and is prohibited from spending more due to the revenue caps while districts who spent more can continue to spend more. This is creating even greater inequities across our state. Our district is becoming poorer and poorer, losing teachers and educational programs while other districts who spend five or six thousand more per pupil than Marinette can continue to increase their budgets. This legislation is creating a permanent underclass of citizens. The governor's proposed budget will cause our school district even greater problems. We need relief from the revenue caps before our district suffers irreparable damage.

Linda Cahill
Marinette Middle School Counselor
Marinette Education Association President
1621 Pierce Avenue
Marinette, WI 54143

My name is Lou Hoby, I am principal of Oconto Falls Elementary School. I am representing the Oconto Falls School District in favor of funding Four Year Old Kindergarten the same as Five Year Old Kindergarten. I would like to thank the Joint Finance Committee for allowing me to express my view on this subject.

4-K History

The Four Year Old Kindergarten program was founded in the Oconto Falls School District in the early 1990s with *Learning Assistance Grant* funds. Need for such a program in the Oconto Falls area was based on three factors

- a lack of local Head Start programs
- a lack of affordable private preschools
- need for early detection and intervention for special needs and at risk students

The funding was provided in three phases over a three year period. The funds were used to defray many of the initial costs of the program

- portable classrooms were purchased
- staff salaries and benefits (one to 8 ratio)
- furniture
- educational materials (manipulatives, toys, books)
- educational supplies (paint, paper, crayons, glue)
- library books (learning play totes, & books for the public library)

4-K Philosophy

The Four Year Old Kindergarten program in Oconto Falls has helped students meet the Goals 2000 objective of **entering school ready to learn**. Four Year Old Kindergarten in Oconto Falls includes the following aspects.

- socialization based learning
- child centered learning
- literature (thematic unit) based learning
- success based learning
- experience based learning

A large part of the Four Year Old Kindergarten program in Oconto Falls centers on parent and community involvement in early education. We have adopted the philosophy *It takes a village to raise a child* and incorporated it with our curriculum to include

- early learning experiences enhanced by parent participation in the classroom, at home, and in the community
- involving local businesses and community leaders in the education of young children
- parent education on cognitive and social and emotional growth

4-K Curriculum

We achieve this by exposing the children to the structure and environment of school without the pressure of academic demands. The children experience the schools atmosphere and expectations and

become comfortable in that environment prior to the Five-Year-Old Kindergarten experience. There are no wrong answers in Four Year Old Kindergarten. Learning and projects are open-ended to foster creativity and successful self-esteem affirmation. Our goal is for students to become comfortable and confident with the structure and demands of academic learning.

Four Year Old Kindergarten in Oconto Falls was designed to provide exposure to the pre-academic skills that students will face the following year in Five Year Old Kindergarten. Students in Four Year Old Kindergarten are exposed to the following academic concepts

- colors and color words
- basic shapes and spatial qualities
- letters and phonemes
- numbers and counting
- identifying rhyme and rhythm in literature and music
- communicating in complete sentences
- thematic units covering a broad base of general knowledge concepts
- field trips whenever possible to provide hands on learning

Oconto Falls Four Year Old Kindergarten was designed to provide socialization experiences with peers in an academic setting prior to the Five Year Old Kindergarten experience. Our program includes the following socialization goals.

- students becoming familiar with the structure of a typical school day
- students learning how to take turns with peers during school related tasks
- students learning how to walk in a line throughout the school building
- students becoming independent and responsible with lunch trays and other belongings

Emotional development for students in Oconto Falls Four Year Old Kindergarten is taught through the use of our Guidance program and literature.

- students participate in several self-esteem building activities during the school year
- students participate in problem solving activities
- students develop self-help and independence skills
- students develop personal hygiene habits
- students learn to have empathy for others
- students learn civility and citizenship

Student enrolled in Four Year Old Kindergarten at Oconto Falls Elementary School develop their fine motor skills through the use of various materials that they will be expected to be adept with in Five Year Old Kindergarten.

- writing with pens, pencils, markers, crayons, and chalk
- painting with brushes, sponges, and a variety of mediums
- using scissors to cut paper
- modeling with playdough and clay
- using paste, glue, and glue sticks

Development of Gross Motor skills is facilitated in Four Year Old Kindergarten through the use of a wide variety of activities.

- hand and eye coordination
- kinesthetic awareness
- balance

- directional recognition (up, down, left, and right)
- creative expression movement with music
- muscle toning and coordination

Four Year Old Kindergarten in Oconto Falls has developed into an integral part of our education process. Students and educators are able to meet each other more prepared for learning because this program is in place. The majority of special services referrals (special education, speech and language therapy, occupational or physical therapy) are made during our students time in Four Year Old and Five Year Old Kindergarten. Educators are able to collaborate and provide a better beginning to the process of education because of our Four Year Old Kindergarten Program. Our program provides a means for early intervention when necessary and developmental growth for all of our students. Four Year Old Kindergarten students are apart of all school functions and deserve equal funding and opportunities in education.



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARION

1001 N. Main • Marion, Wisconsin 54950

Earl (Gus) Knitt, Jr., District Administrator 715/754-2511
Keary Mattson, 7-12 Principal 715/754-5273
Deborah Malueg, K-6 Principal/Athletic Coordinator 715/754-4501



TO: Joint Finance Committee
FROM: Gus Knitt, District Administrator
SUBJECT: Governor's Budget
DATE: April 4th 2001

I wish to highlight the following concerns the School District of Marion has on the 2001-03 state budget:

SAGE: The governor proposes that SAGE only be in kindergarten and first grade. This is a change from the way the program was originally planned and promoted. Plans were being made in Marion to implement SAGE in kindergarten, first and second grade. Now this is put in jeopardy by the budget. Resolution of this issue will come long after our initial budget process is completed.

The School District of Marion recommends that the original SAGE funding plan be continued for 2001-02. If budget constraints do not allow the funding plan to continue, begin that process in 2002-03, so that school districts have a year to plan.

SUMMER SCHOOL: The State of Wisconsin has put greater emphasis on accountability through the 4th grade, 8th grade and high school testing programs. One way schools can help students be successful on these types of tests is to offer remedial help through summer school programs. The governor's proposal to change the revenue control factor for summer school from .4 for each FTE to .25 for each FTE will severely cripple the summer remediation the school district will be able to offer. This will lead to our at-risk students having a greater chance of doing poorly in high stakes testing.

The School District of Marion feels that if accountability is important then the state should allow us the flexibility to offer remediation during the summer and allow us to recoup those expenses through an increase in the revenue control. Thus the School District of Marion wishes to have summer school FTE be counted at .4, as it was this past year.

The School District of Marion, in partnership with families and community, is committed to the continuous growth of every student. By ensuring a safe, respectful, and challenging environment; and by providing quality, comprehensive, educational opportunities, we will prepare all students so they can learn and contribute to society for a lifetime.

HEATING COSTS: As of April 1, 2001, with three months of natural gas bills still to pay, heating costs have increased 71 percent over last year (1999-00) over the entire 12 months. This increase coupled with a revenue control increase in 1999-00 of \$0 and a projected \$32,000 decrease in revenue control for 2001-02, has put the School District of Marion in a budget quandary. This issue has greater impact on smaller districts than on larger ones because numerous large districts were able to sign 3-year price freeze agreements in 1999-00 with natural gas companies because they were high consumption users. The School District of Marion did not qualify for such a plan.

Because the School District of Marion has revenue cap per pupil spending of \$6,532, the heating cost increase is even more devastating. Because of these factors, the School District of Marion requests an exemption to revenue controls for the increased cost of natural gas, and/or an increase greater than \$200 per year as a basement figure for low spending districts.

MILWAUKEE SCHOOL CHOICE: Part of the School District of Marion's equalized aid must go to support Milwaukee School Choice Program. Under the revenue control this loss of aid is then made up by property tax. For the School District of Marion, this means that an owner of a \$100,000 piece of property must pay an additional \$20 in property taxes to make up for the loss of equalized aid.

Under the governor's budget, Milwaukee School Choice will be expanded and this cost to the School District of Marion taxpayers will become greater.

The School District of Marion requests that Milwaukee School Choice be funded out of an appropriation especially for them.

CONCLUSION: Thank you for the opportunity to present this information to the committee. If I can be of further assistance, please contact me.

TO: Wisconsin State Joint Finance Committee Hearing (Peshtigo)

DATE: Thursday April 5th, 2001

Dear Committee Member:

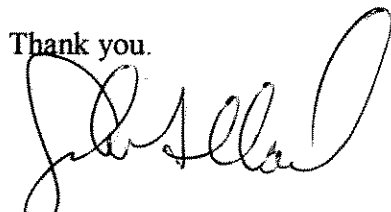
Hello, my name is John Allard and I live in Iron Mountain, Michigan. I own a lot on Cosgrove Lake, so I am a taxpayer in Florence County. I would like to express to you my feelings on the state of education in Florence County and why I will not be moving with my children into the Florence County School District.

I purchased a lot on Cosgrove Lake in 1985 with the thoughts of moving there. I was born and raised on a lake and have many fond memories of growing up living near water. Now as I look at the schools in Florence County and compare it to the schools in Iron Mountain, I am forced to reconsider our planned move to Florence County. We will begin building this summer, but I'll keep the kids in Michigan schools. My future wife and I both agree that we will not be moving our four children into the Florence School District.

Michigan Schools do not have a revenue cap on their spending and in Michigan the state is required to pay for their mandated classes. It appears as though Wisconsin Schools are slowly being strangled to near death. I often wonder why in a state like Wisconsin where test scores are so high at both ends of the student ability spectrum, the state seems to be punishing their successful schools? Why is Florence losing class offerings, and increasing class sizes? Why did they lose an elementary counselor and art teacher? Why did they have to cut two middle school teachers, along with high school Tech Ed? Why have they eliminated 4 and ½ support personnel while building and trying to run a new elementary school? Why is Florence losing some of their best teachers to the schools across the river in Michigan? Why is there a \$37,901 reduction in Florence's aid so that Milwaukee can have a Choice and a Charter or Voucher Program when Florence is projecting that the district will run out of funds in two years? Why is Special Education Funding increasing so rapidly? Why does the McCallum Budget cutting back on the SAGE program? But my biggest question and the one of most importance is why does the state not trust the locally elected school boards to act with financial prudence?

I feel you must take action soon to help the school districts that border other states. There is no possible way that Wisconsin can attract families with children when the school districts have been so badly damaged by your financial constraints. You need to find some way to help fund the Special Education needs of the schools. But, the real bottom line is you need to remove the revenue caps and let the locally elected school boards return to the business of running their schools.

Thank you.



John Allard
316 East "B" Street
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

Good Morning Representative Gard and members of the committee. I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you this morning about the importance of the UW System budget for the State of Wisconsin, and particularly for our local Community. My name is Amy Schwaba, I am currently the president of the University of Wisconsin, Marinette Foundation.

I want to talk with you this morning about the unique needs of our students. Over half of the students on our campus represent the first generation in their families to attend college. In terms of jobs, previous generations have not needed higher education, but the chance for this generation to obtain jobs which today require good communication skills and the ability to engage in critical thinking, will depend on the quality of their education. In most cases our students have neither the financial nor familial support to attend college. At the present time, of the thirteen campuses, Marinette has the fourth highest number of students who qualify for financial aid.

We are talking about students who are bound to this area by family, by a love for the beauty and natural resources of the area, but in many cases also by the lack of financial resources. They will be the citizens who will form the economic backbone of our Community.

I know that you will be hearing from others this morning about economic development; the need for a well educated work force and the role our University System plays in meeting those needs. I don't want to reiterate familiar themes, but I do want to emphasize that all of this hinges on meeting the needs of our students.

Increasing fees is absolutely counter productive. If the budget does not include funds from General Purpose Revenues to offset raises in tuition, to offer the support services that these students need, and to fund programs like the Milwaukee Idea, the state government has in effect locked the doors to higher education for our students and at the same time seriously hampered local efforts at economic development.

The package proposed by the regents is a cost effective investment which maximizes resources and applies funds directly to needs.

Please be aware that we are not asking the state to come in and solve our local problems. Our efforts at economic development have been focused and energetic and we are seeing results. At the same time our foundation contributes thousands of dollars each year for scholarships, talentships, returning adults grants, childcare subsidies,

and work study subsidies, and we will continue to be diligent in our efforts.

We ask only that you pass a budget that supports our local efforts and doesn't undermine the progress that we have made and continue to make.

It is not the mission of a great University to focus on economic development. It is the mission of a great University to focus on helping its students obtain their highest human potential. Happily in our situation these two forces are married.

We ask you to invest our citizens' money in helping our citizens reach their highest human potential, and we will all reap the economic rewards.

**SAGE Testimony
For
Joint Finance Committee
April 5, 2001
Peshtigo, Wisconsin**

**George Hayes
School District of Marinette
Marinette, Wisconsin**

School District of Marinette

Merryman Elementary School
611 Elizabeth Avenue
Marinette, Wisconsin 54143

Hollister DeMotts
Superintendent

George J. Hayes
Principal
732-7912

SAGE Testimony For Joint Finance Committee April 5, 2001 Peshtigo, Wisconsin

Thank you Chairperson Burke and Chairperson Gard for the opportunity to address the Joint Finance Committee on the SAGE (Student Achievement Guarantee in Education) program. My name is George Hayes and I am an elementary principal in the School District of Marinette. I am here to testify on the benefits of SAGE in our schools, that it must continue, and that it should be expanded to grade two next year and grade three the following year as the original plan had intended.

How SAGE Benefits Our Children

SAGE has allowed kindergarten and first grade teachers in our district to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio. A lower ratio allows the teacher to reinforce skills for the lower student, stimulate the middle student, and challenge the high student. SAGE allows the teacher to individualize assessments of the students. Some classrooms have been able to reduce the class size to as low as four students for each teacher for the teaching of some key reading skills. At Merryman Elementary School, our kindergarten and first grade teachers have scheduled reading instruction at a time when the Title I teacher is also available. This has allowed for some unique small group instruction to take place. The benefits of such grouping are obvious. Students are given the kind of individual attention that they need. We have many students who come to school with a very limited background. Many of our children have not been exposed to a preschool setting. Many of our children have not had opportunities to develop emotionally, socially, and academically, as they need to develop. The more individual or small group instruction that we can provide will result in more learning for our children.

A kindergarten teacher said that she is able to give every student more of her individual attention because the SAGE teacher is a member of the team. The SAGE teacher has been helpful in assessing the progress of the students and sharing the results of these individual assessments with the parents.

SAGE Accomplishments in Reading

One teacher stated that there were twelve Title I students in her school's first grade and others on the waiting list when the year began. She believes that, because of the implementation of SAGE, many of these students will not require Title I services next year. Teachers believe that student time on task has increased as a result of SAGE. The classrooms are better managed as a result of fewer children being assigned to each teacher. Obviously, any time a teacher has fewer children to supervise the teacher is going to be a more effective instructor and a better manager.

We have developed a team teaching approach in reading and math in our building. I believe that, because our teachers are working as a team, they are more accountable. Their planning requires them to be accountable to each other. The teachers are in direct and constant communication with each other and that results in an improvement of instruction. They share ideas, methods of instruction, and information about individual children that is used to benefit the children. The final result for all children is that more skills are taught in a more efficient manner.

One kindergarten teacher reported that all of her students know all of their letters and 95% of their sounds. These results are even more impressive because this is a group that was much lower than most others as they entered kindergarten. The teacher credits the addition of the SAGE teacher as being a critical reason for the growth of the students in this group.

A first grade teacher reported that the addition of a SAGE teacher has allowed her to spend more time with individuals who need the extra help. This increases the reading success of each student at a critical stage when the children are emergent readers and need close monitoring. She claims that she has seen more students succeed than in previous years when she had larger class sizes. Because of SAGE, she is able to diagnose problems, remediate the problems, and still provide quality instruction for the other students.

Budget Uncertainty Creates Problems with Planning

SAGE planning this year was extremely difficult for our school district and will be as difficult or more difficult next year. At the start of this school year, we had absolutely no idea how much money was available to our district and to each individual building. That is because funding is based on the number of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Many districts will simply go ahead and hire the necessary teachers because they know they will have the necessary funding if the SAGE dollars come up short. The School District of Marinette is one of the many that is suffering from declining enrollment. In addition to declining enrollments, we are further handicapped by the revenue caps. Our district needed to reduce the 2000-01 budget by over \$500,000 and will need to reduce the 2001-02 budget by more than \$1,000,000. As a result, we cannot afford to hire a teacher without knowing that SAGE dollars will pay for that teacher.

How does this relate to SAGE in the Marinette Schools? We could not hire teachers for our six elementary buildings this year until we knew how much SAGE money would be available to us. That meant waiting until we had received and processed our free and reduced lunch applications from parents of kindergarten and first grade children. After determining how much money we were to receive, we could begin the process of recruiting a SAGE teacher. Searching for a teacher with kindergarten certification after the start of the school year proved to be an impossible task. The end result was that we hired a long-term substitute teacher in our building to get us through this year with an eye to the following year when we would be hiring staff for kindergarten through second grade. Our other schools were only able to hire part-time teachers because of the amount of available funding. All of the SAGE teachers have been laid-off for next year as a result of school district budget cuts and the uncertainty of funding for the SAGE program

There needs to be a change in the system of determining how much money will be available to each school. Our district cannot afford to hire teachers because we cannot cover any additional cost that may result in a shortage of funding from SAGE. We ought to know prior to the start of a new school year just how much money we will receive. This will allow us to plan our program and hire the appropriate staff so that we can begin as soon as the new school year begins.

Continuation of the Program to Grades Two and Three

We must continue this program into grades two and three. Children at these grade levels need the additional help that SAGE can provide. Putting the money only into the schools with 50% poverty level will eliminate most of the schools outside of Milwaukee. Our state government cannot ignore the rest of the children in Wisconsin. We need help too and SAGE money can provide some necessary relief.