

Committee Name:
Joint Committee on Finance – Budget Hearings (JCF_BH)

Appointments

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Clearinghouse Rules

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Committee Hearings

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Record of Committee Proceedings

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K-12

GLENDALE-RIVER HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT
2600 W. Mill Road, Glendale, WI 53209

Preparing Today's Children to Succeed in Tomorrow's World

MEMORANDUM

April 15, 1999

TO: Members of the Joint Finance Committee
FROM: Bob Kattman

SUBJECT: Declining Enrollment, Revenue Caps, and the Impact on the Glendale-River Hills School District

Honored members of the Joint Finance Committee.

My name is Robert Kattman. I am the District Administrator of the Glendale-River Hills School District.

Thanks you for allowing me to testify today on the impact that the present revenue controls are having on the Glendale Schools.

The enrollment of the Glendale School District has significantly declined since the 1994-95 school year. Since that time, as shown by Chart #1, the District has lost 155 students or 13% of its student population. Further, this decline will continue into the foreseeable future. The District will loose 146 eight graders this year and is expected to take in only 80 four year old kindergarten students.

The decline relates to the fact that Glendale is an aging, inner ring suburb with no ability to expand. As shown on Chart 2, the population of Glendale is significantly older than the population of Milwaukee County.

Since 1994-95 the district has taken extreme measures to attempt to address its financial problems.

Expenditures for non-instructional areas have reduced to the point where they represent only 70% of the amount spent by our neighboring districts for these items.

The District Administrative Team is shared with the Maple Dale-Indian Hills School District.

Student attendance patterns have been reorganized in order to place all students in the same grade in the same school. This resulted in the reduction of six and one half teachers and one administrator between the 1996-97 and 97-98 school years.

Altogether, thirteen teaching positions and two administrative positions have been eliminated during the four year period.

The District's recreation department was eliminated during the 1998-99 school year.

Building and site maintenance has come to a halt.

Funds for instructional supplies and equipment have been held constant since 1994-95.

Class sizes have increased at all grade levels.

Minimum QEO contracts have been implemented with the Teacher's Association.

These measures and many others have only slowed the impact of the financial problem.

As shown by Chart #3, financial forecasts indicate that the imbalance between expenditures will continue into the foreseeable future. In fact, as shown by Chart #4, unless the District dismantles its educational program, the District will be bankrupt by the year 2002-03.

IT MUST BE NOTED THAT THE FORECAST INCLUDES THE 75% HOLD HARMLESS AS PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET.

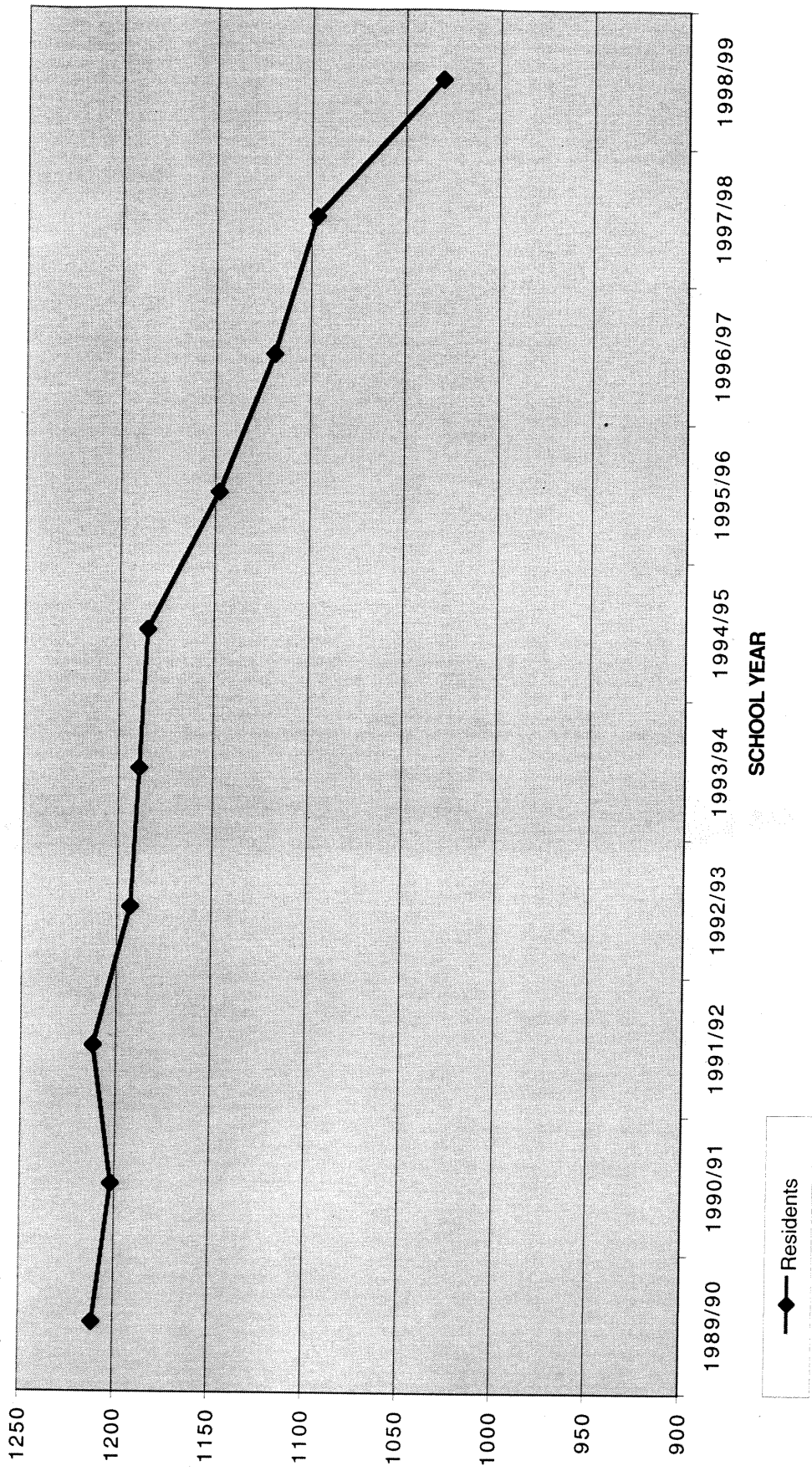
Simply stated, we need help. We are in the process of dismantling one of the finest school districts in the state. Each cut that we make creates fear on the part of our parents. This causes more families to leave the district and fewer to move in. Thus, the problem only gets worse. **CORRECTIVE ACTION MUST BE TAKEN.**

Suggestions:

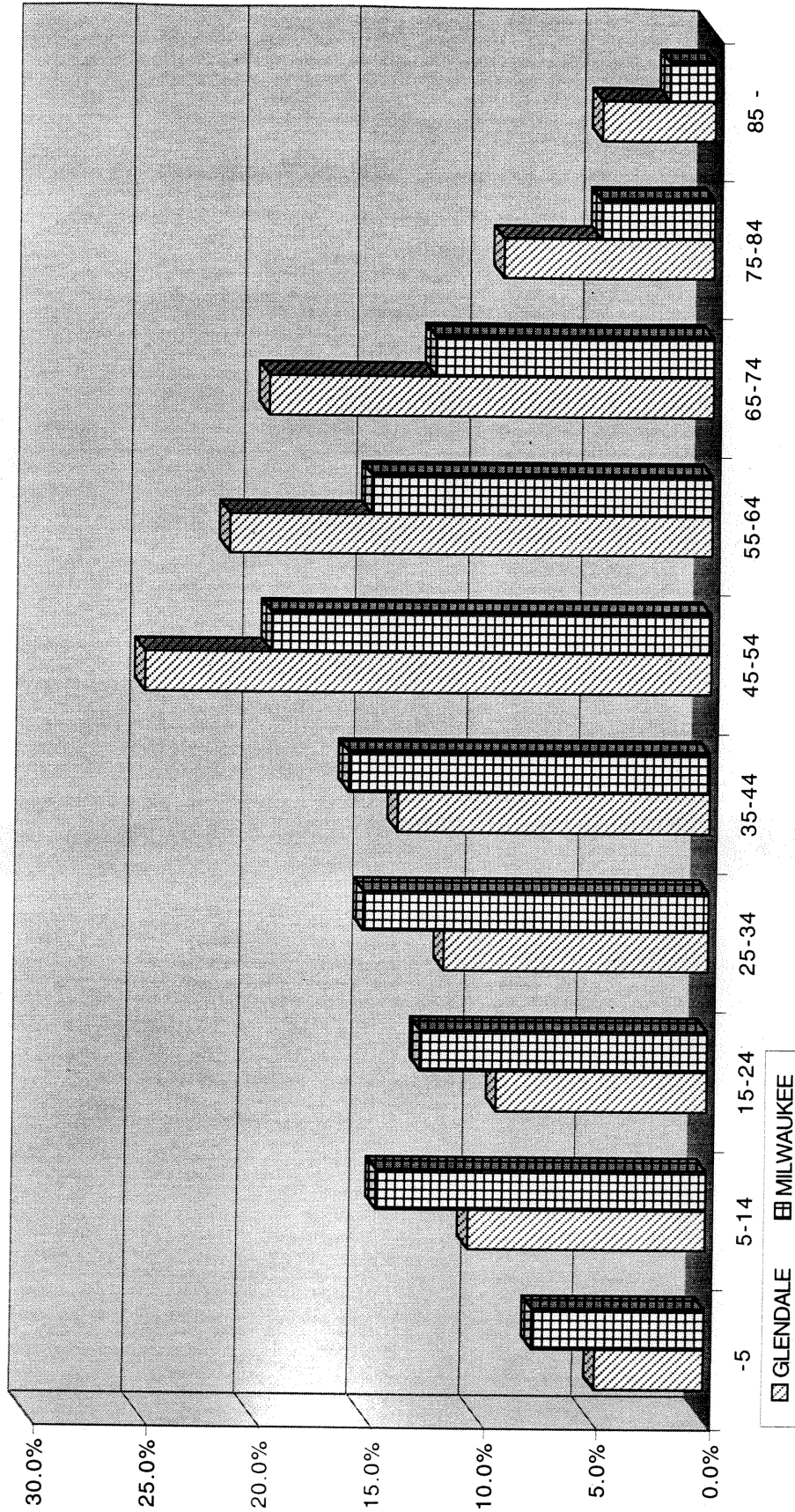
1. Approve a 75% recurring hold harmless provision for declining enrollment districts.
2. Allow districts to recover any funds not levied under the revenue cap since 1994.
3. Control compensation so that it is in line with the district ability to increase revenue.
4. Exclude building maintenance from revenue caps and allow district to increase the levy to meet building needs.
5. Increase funding levels for special education programs.

Please do not allow our school district and many other fine school districts throughout the state to be dismantled.

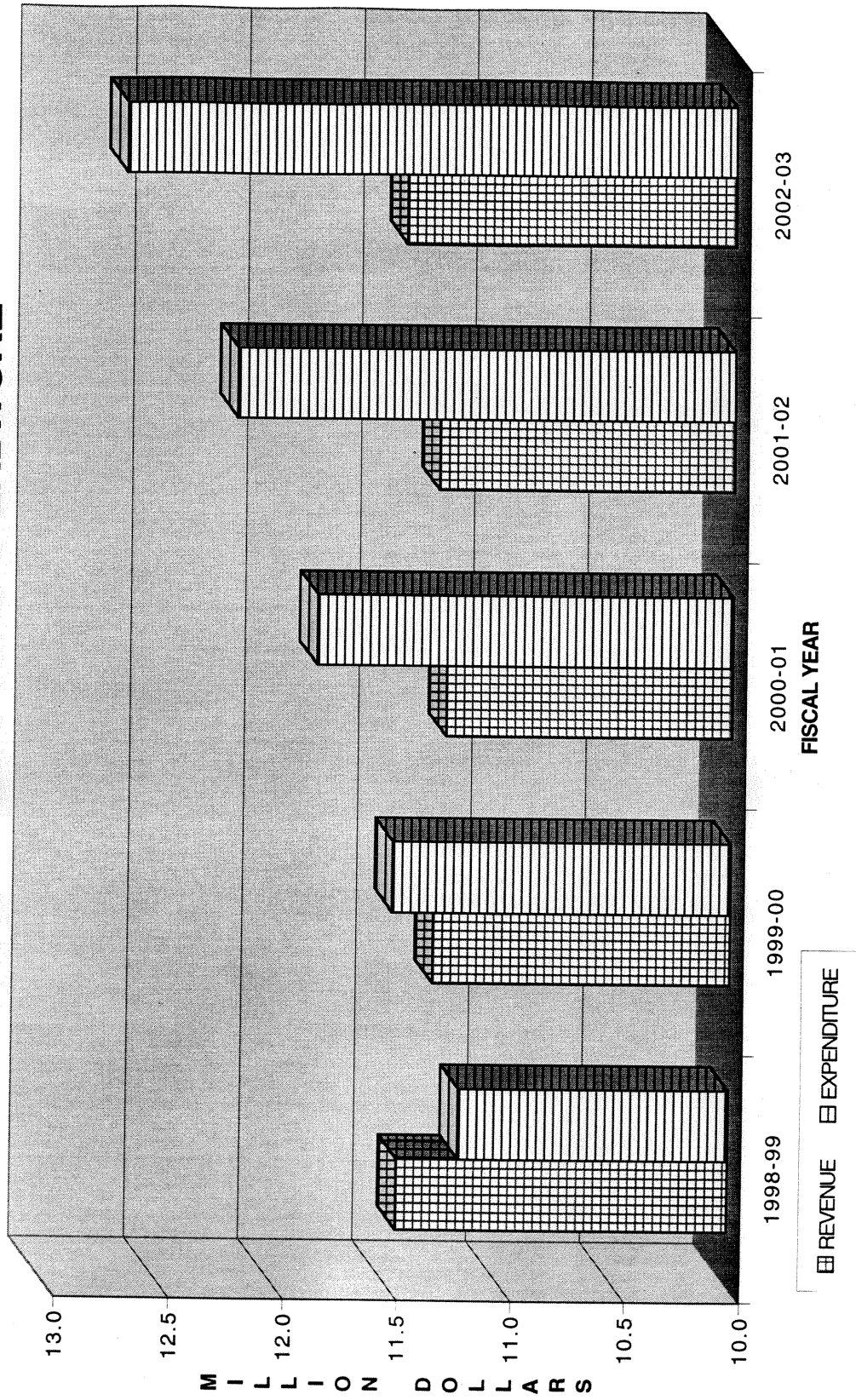
GLENDALE-RIVER HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT RESIDENT STUDENT ENROLLMENT



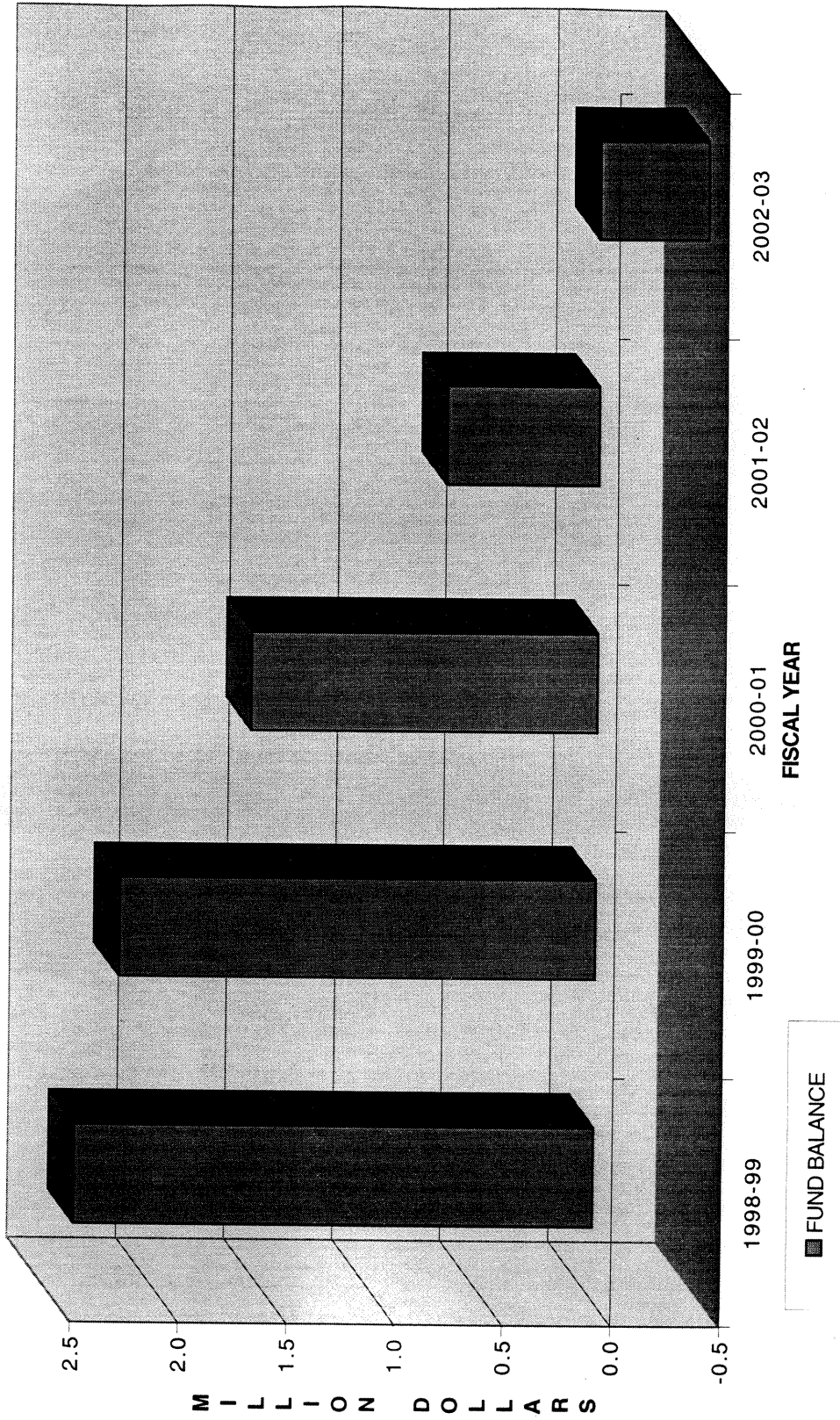
GLENDALE-RIVER HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT AGE COMPARISON GLENDALE VS MILWAUKEE COUNTY



GLENDALE-RIVER HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT PROJECTED REVENUE/EXPENDITURE



GLENDALE-RIVER HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT PROJECTED FUND BALANCE



WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

**Joint Finance Committee
Testimony on 1999-2001 Budget Bill (1999 AB 133)
April 15, 1999
by
Terry Craney, President
Wisconsin Education Association Council**

Thank you Co-chairpersons Burke and Gard and members of the Joint Finance Committee for holding this public hearing on the 1999-2001 biennial budget bill. My name is Terry Craney, I am President of the Wisconsin Education Association Council.

The biennial budget bill has grown in complexity and size over the years. It contains many issues of interest to educators throughout the state. I would like to provide some brief comments from the perspective of educators in Wisconsin.

We are enthused by the budget's support for lowering class sizes. The proposed expansion of the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) class size reduction program is a welcome addition to the budget. Research has established that lowering class sizes improves student performance, especially among the most needy students in low-income districts.

The SAGE program is a proven success. Now let's expand the program to all eligible schools in the state and make sure as many children as possible benefit from the program. We also encourage the Legislature to keep the 50% low-income eligibility rate for SAGE schools.

In addition, we applaud the governor's continued commitment to investments in

educational telecommunications and technology through the TEACH program. We are pleased to see that a solution has been offered to continue the BadgerLink program. We also support funding levels in the budget for standards and testing as requested by the DPI and favor the efforts to get more teachers certified through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

There are, however, some other issues in the budget bill that cause concern for educators in Wisconsin:

Removal of Non-fiscal policy:

We would like to commend efforts made by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau to compile a list of non-fiscal policy items in the budget. We would also like to thank the co-chairs of the Joint Finance Committee for agreeing to remove items that relate to bargaining over the creation of charter schools, approving alternative waivers for teacher licenses, starting school after September 1st and the closing of schools.

A few of the Fiscal Bureau items remain in the budget. We call upon legislators to do the right thing and remove these items from the budget so that they may receive a full and fair public review by the education committees of the Legislature. Specifically, we request the following items be removed from the budget bill. (Note the pages listed correspond with the LFB summary of the governor's budget bill):

WEAC Supports Removal of These Remaining Non-fiscal Policy Items In the Budget Bill:

- **School Contracting Authority** (p. 505, item #3), (p. 215, item #7 (in part)). This item allows school boards to contract out for education services and the impact of such a decision on wages, hours and conditions of employment would be a prohibited subject of bargaining. WEAC opposes this policy.

- **Charter Schools -- Instrumentality of the School District** (p. 499, item #8). This item repeals the requirement that for-profit charter school established by the Common Council in Milwaukee be instrumentalities of the school district. WEAC opposes this policy.
- **Charter Schools -- Petition Process Modifications** (p. 499, item #9). This item allows those denied a petition to create a charter school to appeal that decision to the Department of Public Instruction. WEAC opposes this policy.
- **Milwaukee Charter School Academic Standards** (p. 499, item #7). This item requires charter schools in Milwaukee to administer the same tests as regular public schools. WEAC would support this item as a separate bill.
- **School District Referendum Scheduling** (p. 503, item #1). This item requires school districts to limit referendum elections to spring and fall. WEAC opposes this policy.

Relief from Revenue Caps:

While we applaud the governor for extending temporary relief from the revenue caps for declining enrollment school districts, we believe the time has come for the Legislature to repeal state-imposed revenue caps. Legislative proposals are now pending before both houses of the Legislature to provide much needed relief from revenue caps. Short of absolute repeal, WEAC supports revenue cap relief measures dealing with issues such as school security measures, debt service costs, special assessments, technology, four-year-old kindergarten and summer school pupil counts just to name a few. These are all examples showing that revenue caps are not working and are harming the quality of our public schools.

Funding Special Education:

The revenue caps force school districts to pit programs that support the most needy students against other educational programs. Districts are forced to make the choice between funding special needs children or cutting back on other general education programs or extracurricular activities. The governor's decision to freeze special education aid and to repeal the state's

commitment to fund 63% of those costs will only make matters worse. WEAC calls upon the Legislature to live up to its commitment to fund special education programs. We also ask that you allow school districts to raise revenue outside of the revenue caps to bridge the gaps caused by increasing costs in special education.

WTCS Funding:

WEAC believes that the Wisconsin Technical College system (WTCS) works effectively to train Wisconsin's workforce. WEAC also believes that the Wisconsin Technical College System ensures that Wisconsin's businesses have highly skilled workers. The Wisconsin Technical College System has a long, although largely untold history of being a strong, stable system that helps maintain Wisconsin's strong and stable economy.

WEAC urges you to support the general state aid increase requested by the WTCS for a 4.4% and a 4.8% increase. This request represents approximately a \$5 million and a \$6 million dollar increase in each year of the biennium, and reflects what the technical colleges need to meet the requests for training and re-training coming to them from Wisconsin businesses and workers. Under current funding conditions, the WTCS is forced to meet its funding needs by "taxing to the max." Many WTCS districts are close to reaching the maximum 1.5 mill rate allowed by law. This will further erode the state's commitment to property tax relief.

One thing is absolutely certain. WTCS graduates, over a short period of time, return more state income tax dollars than the state invests in the Wisconsin Technical College System. Funding the Wisconsin Technical College System should not be considered an expense, but a wise investment in the health of Wisconsin's present and future economy.

Children's Health and Safety -- Prevention of Smoking by Minors:

The governor's budget shows improved commitment for early childhood excellence and Head Start programs. We also have a strong belief that an unhealthy child is a poor learner. WEAC is a participant in the Tobacco Free Coalition and the TRUST Campaign for the use of the tobacco settlement funds. The TRUST group, headed by the efforts of Senator Judy Robson and Representative Frank Urban, is calling for \$50 million of the settlement funds to be used for comprehensive prevention and education programs.

Organizations participating in the TRUST campaign are working together in support of funding for statewide, comprehensive programs and services that will reduce the addiction, disease, disability, and premature death caused by the use of tobacco. It is time to prevent children from beginning a lifelong addiction to tobacco products.

Repeal of the Qualified Economic Offer Law:

Finally, let me end by appealing to the members of this committee, the Legislature and the governor to bring an end to the Qualified Economic Offer law.

Between 1966 and 1977, the Wisconsin Education Association Council and Wisconsin Federation of Teachers members went on strike in 50 school districts throughout the state. The most famous was the 1974 Hortonville strike, where 84 teachers lost their jobs.

Twenty-five years ago this spring the Hortonville School Board fired almost all of the district's teachers after they went on strike because the board refused to reach a fair settlement. Twenty-five years ago, the schools in Hortonville reopened with replacement teachers. The strike and its aftermath threw the lives of the "Hortonville 84" into stress and turmoil.

The mass firings provided a dramatic example of how a flawed collective bargaining law

led to an abuse of power by an unreasonable school board. The firings contributed to a political climate for change by showing the people of Wisconsin how much disruption a bad law can cause. The Hortonville experience so energized WEAC members that, over the next two years, they mobilized to win a new, fair law through intensive political action and lobbying efforts.

From 1978 to 1993, school employees and school boards in Wisconsin peacefully settled labor contract disputes by referring impasses to neutral third-party arbitrators.

Teachers' voices are once again ignored at the bargaining table. The QEO law unfairly singles out teachers and destroys their collective bargaining rights. When combined with the revenue caps, this law is forcing school districts to make painful decisions to cut or reduce programs that affect the quality of education in their schools. Employers are hiding behind the law rather than bargaining. These laws need to be repealed. The Hortonville strike highlighted the unfairness of the laws in the 1970s and led to the Legislature adopting a bargaining system that worked well until the QEO was imposed in 1993. Now we need a new legislative solution to correct this unjust situation of the 1990s.

Therefore, the Wisconsin Education Association Council supports full repeal of the Qualified Economic Offer law.

The QEO is unfair

- The QEO singles out and penalizes one group of public employees, a majority of whom are women.
- The QEO penalizes employees who are planning to retire by giving them a life sentence of reduced pensions.

The QEO destroys collective bargaining

- Employers are allowed to unilaterally impose a QEO forcing employees to "take-it or leave-it." The employees only recourse for dispute resolution is to engage in job actions.

- The QEO blocks discussion of creative solutions to the challenges facing public schools (such as proposals dealing with class size and teacher preparation).
- The QEO discourages consensus bargaining.

QEO harms the quality of public education

- The QEO reduces collaboration between labor and management resulting in increased tension in the workplace which interferes with educational quality.
- The QEO discourages the best and the brightest from entering and staying in the education profession.
- The QEO contributes to lower employee morale.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today.

Testimony on School Funding

15, April, 1999

Dr. Peter L. Settle
5413 Montgomery Drive
Greendale, Wi 53129
email: psettle@carroll1.cc.edu

Thank you Senator Burke and members of the committee. It is an honor to be able to go to the seat of one's government and contribute to the deliberation of important issues.

My name is Dr. Peter Settle. I am a resident of Greendale along with my wife and my two children. I am in my 25th year at Carroll College in Waukesha where I had the singular honor of serving Assemblyman Antonio Riley as a Professor of Communication in his freshman year. My youngest daughter will be entering high school as a freshman in fall. My oldest daughter is a Greendale graduate who is currently finishing her Junior year at the University and traveling these hallways as a Senate Page. I am proud of them both. I am also proud of what my school district has achieved and would not see that educational experience endangered needlessly. The people in our district have high expectations and accept difficult responsibilities.

My neighbors and I see school finance as an important issue. I like to think of myself as a fiscally responsible person. I really do not want to spend so much as a nickel more for education than is necessary. I do, however, want to spend every nickel that is necessary. Greendale is a "third tier" district and nickels are becoming very hard to find.

Others, including Dr. Hughes, a number of our School board members, and a residents' Legislative Committee have outlined the data on the difficulty we face. My intent is to put that data in somewhat more human and personal terms. When we seek funding for education many of us squirm and fear new taxes. What we sometimes forget is that school funding, just like teaching, is about kids and their future.

Greendale is a district that has embraced revenue and spending guidelines in a comprehensive and active way. We have trimmed and slimmed, followed sound business practice and generally made our district expenditures fall in line with our allowable income. In short, we have done what we are supposed to do.

In my judgment, there is now nothing left to cut and substantial needs remain. The choice is often between supporting educational programs and providing buildings and equipment that work. As we painfully learn time after time, expenditures for the maintenance of capital equipment, buildings, and infrastructure that are deferred too long become major and expensive projects. We ask that we be allowed to generate income for such as maintenance and infrastructure without paying the severe penalty that follow the referendum or borrowing processes.

It would cost our district \$1.62 to raise an additional \$1.00 in referendum generated funds. As a taxpayer, it is nearly inconceivable to me that anyone would accept that burden. Debt service alone on the limited borrowing authority reduces money for educational programs. This effectively shrinks the size of operational budgets, unnecessarily increases burdens and adds little to the educational process. Present funding procedures force up class size, often reduce curricular offerings, reduces the acquisition of educational materials such as textbooks and other educationally valuable expenditures. The impact on students is pervasive and subtle but deep and real nonetheless.

Amazingly, my district has, to my satisfaction, trimmed all of the fat. In fact, I am rather proud of the budget our administrators and board members have constructed. What we face are cuts in critical educational muscle and bone.

I want to pay for my children to have an educational opportunity where they can grow and prepare themselves for an educationally intensive 21st century. If we fail to provide our children with the education they need to succeed personally and professionally in their adult years, we will have failed indeed. I want to pay for class sizes that are reasonable and prudent, buildings that work, classrooms equipped with appropriate technology, teachers that aren't burnt out by constant overloads, co-curricular programs that are essential to individual and community

growth, textbooks that reflect current knowledge . All of these things and more are essential educational muscle and bone. They are not free.

If Politics is the "art of the impossible" then Budget Politics must be the "art of the truly unimaginable". It must seem to you that the entire state believes you can provide a free lunch. Our district and similar districts are not here with our hands out. I am most decidedly not here looking for a free lunch. We will happily pay what we must and we will continue to accept the requirements of fiscal responsibility with open arms.

Let school districts raise moneys for non-operational maintenance and improvements up to \$1,000,000 without paying the hefty referendum or borrowing limit penalties. With appropriate controls such as eliminating new construction or large capital projects and a required supermajority, the interests of our various districts are protected. There is nothing special or tricky, unusual or devious in what we ask. It makes for good fiscal policy, for good educational policy, and frankly, carries little political risk. Re-visit this issue in this budget. The benefits to the children of "third tier" districts are tangible and substantial. I would like to leave this meeting with agreement on at least one thing: **education is about preparing children to meet the future.** Every day we fail to provide a superior education is a day that will cost us all a lot more later.

Madison Metropolitan School District

4711 Pflaum Road
Madison, WI. 53704
608-221-6619
Fax: 608-221-6743

April 15, 1999

Frank Kelly
Food Service Director
Madison Metropolitan School District
4711 Pflaum Road
Madison, WI. 53704

Dear Joint Finance Committee Members:

I am Frank Kelly, the Food Service Director of the Madison Metropolitan School District. My purpose for testifying today is to gain financial support from the State for the Child Nutrition Programs. I have had my present position for twenty two years.

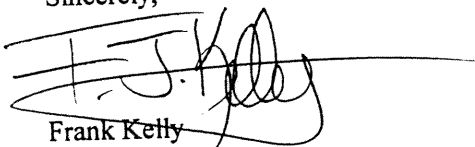
During that time the Food Service Budget for the District has gone from approximately \$1.2 million to \$ 5.5 million. The State reimbursement was \$61,000 and it is now \$ 67,000. While revenues from the Federal Government and parents in the District have risen 350%, reimbursement from the State of Wisconsin has increased 10%. If you would look at the data on a per meal basis you would actually see a decrease in state reimbursement, per meal.

Today, I am here to promote a 10 cent per breakfast state reimbursement. We offer the School Breakfast Program (SBP) in 32 of the District's 46 schools. The program offers a great advantage to students in preparing them for learning. Our neighboring state of Minnesota has recently completed a study which clearly documented a link between students eating breakfast and academic performance. The SBP can help students performance in school.

The problem which faces school districts is finding the money, to implementing and maintain a program that requires local tax dollars to operate, while staying within revenue limits. D.P.I.'s data for the 1997-98 school year show that averaging together all public schools, District's lost 42 cents per breakfast served. Madison is also losing money operating it's SBP. This makes it extremely hard to fund new programs or expand an existing programs into new schools. Wisconsin has the lowest participation in the nation in the SBP. I believe that additional state funds would allow greater access for the students of this state. Remember also that each of these meals includes a half pint of milk one of this state's finest products. The funds added to the SBP therefore would not only add value to the young people of the state but would also support the Dairy industry.

Please feel free to contact me at 221-6619 if you need clarification or additional information on any of the points above.

Sincerely,



Frank Kelly
Food Service Director

April 15, 1999

To the Legislators of Wisconsin and Governor Thompson

I would like to speak on behalf of all regular education students concerning your budget proposals. I would like to speak for this group of students because it feels to me that they and their parents have lost their voices in the battle over the limited funds in our public schools. The school revenue caps passed in recent years by the Thompson administration, coupled with the myriad of unfunded and underfunded special education mandates, have negatively impacted the education of the majority of students which we refer to as 'regular ed kids'.

My name is Nancy Roth and I have a son who attends Lodi Middle School. I understand and support the idea that special needs students deserve an appropriate education, but not at the cost of taking money from the 85% or so of regular education students. All students are special, and the state has no right to force schools to choose between spending money on one group of students over another. Right now the State of Wisconsin is forcing public schools to serve the needs of those labeled special ed by literally taking money out of regular ed or school building/maintenance. The State does this by not fulfilling its legal, statutory obligation to pay 63% of special education costs. Now the Governor, in his budget, is proposing to remove even that hollow promise to pay those costs, just as the Federal Government has increased its special education mandates. This logically results in more commitments for public schools, with the implication of ^{absolutely} no funding. Where does Mr. Thompson think the money will come from? The answer is fairly clear to me, the Regular Education Program.

My son is a regular ed kid, and he is special too! He also deserves an education tailored to his needs, just as much as any special ed labeled student does. To illustrate my point, 4 years ago in Lodi, money was already becoming scarce due to the revenue caps. Our school was forced

to choose between lowering class size for all 5th graders, or cutting our one, part-time Gifted and Talented Coordinator. In this instance, our administrator chose to address the needs of the many over the needs of the fewer gifted kids. Our Gifted and Talented Coordinator was shifted to regular ed. My son just happens to be a student whose gifted needs were determined not to be special enough to warrant attention. If my son were deemed in need of special education services through an IEP, in our small school district he would have found 14 teachers ^{and 11 educational assistants} to meet his needs. Our 1 school psychologist told me today that 95% of his time is spent on special education tasks. That example is only one of many that could be told. This took place when that state came at least a little closer to meeting its special education obligations. Now you fund only 35 % of your responsibility, force us to operate under revenues you froze in 1994-95, and all the while, the costs carried by the individual schools increase with each new federal mandate. Schools have no choice but to meet special education needs first, ^{because the law demands this,} and they must get the money from somewhere. The good of the few has taken precedent over the good of the many. . . a situation created by the government under the Thompson administration. It seems to me that this clearly translates into larger class sizes and less services for my and many other people's "regular ed" children. This is clearly NOT FAIR!

As my representatives, I beg you to consider the education of all of Wisconsin's children, and care enough to pay your statutory share of special education costs, so that we don't pit child against child and parent against parent. Strike any suggestion in the budget that the state will renege on its duty. Fund special education in the way that you promised, and while you are acting for the good of future generations, free public education from those repressive spending limitations that are destroying our ^{public} schools!

Thanks for your consideration
Nancy L.G. Roth
7625 Bonetti Rd
Dane WI 53529

Some written responses about Reading Recovery from parents, teachers, and principals

From Parents:

- I only wish that every child got the opportunity to be in the program.
- This program seemed to be exactly what my son needed to keep up with his class and boost his confidence and learning.
- If this program is ever in danger of not being continued in the Madison School System, we'll be the first in the picket line at the school district's doors to battle them to the better end!! My husband and I were both educated through Madison schools all the way from K-12 and both graduated with above-average grades, but neither of us could "get through" to our daughter to help her discover reading. This program probably saved her before it was too late!!

From Classroom Teachers:

- There is no substitute for one-on-one instruction nor a "specialist". Reading Recovery has helped my students gain comprehension and fluency. Mostly, it has helped them gain self-confidence.
- I see reading recovery as the most effective intervention I have been involved with. I feel disappointed other children with needs could not be serviced through Reading Recovery this year. I hope we will have two Reading Recovery teachers next year.
- I am convinced that some children need 1 on 1 instruction in order to learn to read, Many of these children are unable to focus in small groups and certainly not in large group work.
- I feel that Reading Recovery is an essential part of the elementary school curriculum. The students who are involved in the program become confident readers and successful students.

From Principals:

- Reduced number of students experiencing failure in reading
- We don't have Title I, it has allowed us to avoid several retentions and probable special education placements.
- We are using some consistent language with students, attaining some consistent methodologies, and introducing and integrating the same in the regular classroom.
- Reading instruction has changed as a result of the program, more coordination between classroom teachers and Reading Recovery Teachers.



Wisconsin School Food Service Association

My name is Renee Beauchamp, I am the Director of School Nutrition for the Sun Prairie School District and President - Elect of the Wisconsin School Food Service Association. I am here to testify in support of an initiative that was not included in the Governor's Budget and which is needed. It is the state reimbursement for school breakfast of at least 10 cents per breakfast, which was included in DPI's Budget Proposal under the Early Learning Initiative.

The Wisconsin School Food Service Association and its 1600 members are very appreciative of Governor Thompson's increased funding for the Wisconsin Morning Milk Program and for the Elderly Nutrition Program. We would also like support for the proposed state 10 cents per breakfast meal reimbursement. The association believes school food and nutrition programs deserve adequate funding and reasonable regulations to help maintain financial integrity and nutritional quality of meals provided to Wisconsin's children.

Approximately 184,000 Wisconsin children are at risk of not having enough to eat. For many of these children the food served at school may be the only meal they have eaten all day. Children need breakfast to learn. Studies show that students who eat breakfast have better test scores in math and reading, have better behavior in class, and are absent and tardy less when breakfast is offered at school. During testing weeks I am often asked to provide breakfast to students in an effort to increase test scores as many students are coming to school without breakfast.

During the 1997-98 school year the Sun Prairie Breakfast Program served 37,000 school breakfasts. Of those breakfasts served 56% were served to economically disadvantaged students. I would like to expand our breakfast program but we are currently running at a 23-cent per meal deficit. The state average is a 42-cent per meal deficit.

Currently Wisconsin has the lowest number of School Breakfast Programs and serves breakfast to the lowest percentage of students eligible for free and reduced price meals in the nation. With the proposed state breakfast reimbursement and the anticipated increase in participation from this proposal Wisconsin would capture more federal dollars – approximately one dollar per breakfast served)

We are asking you to support the School Breakfast Program Reimbursement proposal by making a motion to include it in Governor Thompson's 1999-2001 budget. We feel the children of Wisconsin deserve every educational opportunity and School Breakfast is one of those opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration and time,

Renee Beauchamp, R.D., C.D.
President – Elect Wisconsin School Food Service Association
Director School Nutrition – Sun Prairie School District

School Breakfast Program Legislation

April 15, 1999

My name is Denise Bolduc. I am the Food and Nutrition Services Coordinator for the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District. I also serve on the legislative committee for the Wisconsin School Food Service Association.

I would like to register my support for DPI's budget proposal under the Early Learning Initiative for a \$.10 per meal reimbursement for breakfast's served under the National School Breakfast Program. I am very appreciative of Governor Thompson's support for increased funding in his budget for the Wisconsin Morning Milk Program and for the Elderly Nutrition Programs.

Many research studies exist which well document the integral link between good nutrition and how well students perform in school. Children need breakfast to learn. Studies show that students who eat breakfast have better test scores in math and reading, have better behavior in class, and are absent and tardy less when breakfast is offered at school. Nearly 70,000 Wisconsin children under age 12 are hungry. Another 184,000 Wisconsin children are at risk for not having enough to eat. While hunger in Wisconsin is not as visible as it is in third world countries, hunger does exist. Unfortunately, despite the affluence of Dane County, pockets of hunger do exist in the Middleton Schools. The National School Lunch and Breakfast programs play a critical role in alleviating those pockets of hunger.

The Middleton-Cross Plains School District has a very low percentage of free and reduced students. We do not now offer the National School Breakfast program in our District. Typically, students receiving free or reduced meal benefits are the ones who have the greatest need and would be the most likely candidates to participate in a breakfast program. School districts in Wisconsin who now offer a school breakfast program reported an average \$.42 per

breakfast loss in revenue this past school year. The additional funding would help us to develop a cost effective program for the students in our District. Without some assistance, our District will not be able to offer this worthwhile program to those who really need it.

Please consider making a motion to include funding for the \$.10 breakfast reimbursement in Governor Thompson's 1999-2000 budget and please support the additional funding for the Wisconsin Morning Milk Program and Elderly Nutrition Programs.

Denise Bolduc, M.S., R.D.
Food and Nutrition Service Coordinator
Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District
1659 Pleasant View Road
Middleton, WI 53562

608-828-1613 Phone
608-828-1595 Fax

1999-01 BUDGET PRIORITIES

Fiscal Issues

- Allow district costs associated with Handicapped Aid to be *outside the revenue limits*, unless state meets its statutory reimbursement commitments.
- Restore statutory reimbursement rates for special education (63%) and psychologist/social workers costs (51%).
- Create "hold harmless" provision for districts with declining enrollments.
- Oppose budget item that uses equalization aid to finance Milwaukee voucher program and non-MPS charter schools
- Maintain inflation allowance using Consumer Price Index for annual revenue limit adjustment (budget freezes allowable increase at \$209 per pupil).
- Allow borrowing authority *outside the revenue caps* of \$350 per student for essential infrastructure expenses (maintenance, transportation, utility expenses).

Special Needs

- Expand SAGE to fund *all* schools with over 50% enrollment of children eligible for free/reduced meals.
- Oppose efforts to have the state pay for low incidence/high cost special education students, which merely shifts resources and exacerbates the current special education funding crisis.

Local Control Issues

Remove the following policy items from the budget to be considered as separate legislation:

- Requirement that schools start the fall semester after September 1.
- Restrictions on when local units of government can schedule referenda.
- Allow appeal to state superintendent of a charter school proposal if rejected by local school board.

Modifications to Social Promotion/Graduation Test

Change the requirement that graduation/4th/8th grade tests be the sole determiner of a student's ability to graduate from high school or advance to 5th and 9th grades. Provide resources to local districts for remedial, after/summer school programs for students not reaching standard.

IMPACT OF DECLINING ENROLLMENT ON MADISON SCHOOLS

School year	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Enrollment Projection (3 yr. rolling average)	24,816	24,536	24,105	23,572
Projected Revenue Shortfall	(\$3,506,070)	(\$5,923,552)	(\$9,365,558)	(\$13,806,900)
Allowable increase using Budget's formula	<u>966,185</u>	<u>1,800,565</u>	<u>2,839,104</u>	<u>3,594,504</u>
Projected Deficit	(\$2,539,885)	(\$4,122,987)	(\$6,526,454)	(\$10,212,396)

Elkhart Lake —Glenbeulah School District

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April 15, 1999

Honorable Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

My name is David Magar, and for the past thirteen years I have been privileged to be the Superintendent of the Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah School District in western Sheboygan County. My purpose in coming before you today is to seek your assistance in helping us survive as a viable and productive public school district. Specifically, I am here to strongly recommend your consideration of minimally maintaining, and optimally enhancing, the current "hold harmless" provision as it applies to revenue limits calculated for declining enrollment districts. Accordingly, please allow me to paint the following picture.

Only a few short years ago, the Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah School District had an enrollment of just over 800 students. Our current enrollment has dropped to below 700, with an ongoing steady decline predicted in the next few years ahead. Ironically, the majority of the decline is due to factors which most communities would greatly cherish...that being the exceptional quality of life that the Elkhart Lake area provides its populace. It is notable that people tend to reside in our community for many, many years, and long after their children have graduated from our high school. Coupled with the fact that there is somewhat limited family-oriented housing available in the district, as well as the norm of fewer children per family in today's society, the Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah School District is now graduating far more students than it is taking in at the kindergarten level. Hence, the steady decline in enrollment.

The district has not gone blindly about conducting its business in the wake of declining enrollments and corresponding revenue limitations mandated by the state-imposed formula. To the contrary, our district has done what many districts throughout the state have been forced to do:

- closed a small, outlying primary grades school...consolidating grades preK-8 onto one campus
- scaled-back purchases of computers/technology within the regular operational budget
- reduced maintenance to buildings and grounds

- minimized gifted and talented opportunities for deserving students
- reassigned staff and did not fill vacant/retiring positions
- increased workload of existing staff
- greatly reduced allocations for major capital purchases
- use of fund balance to offset diminished revenues, resulting in increased short-term borrowing...resulting in increased interest paid

The Elkhart Lake-Genbeulah School District is doing everything possible to provide necessary and beneficial programs and activities for its students and community, while at the same time working within the constraints of state-imposed revenue limits further reduced as a result of declining enrollment. We can no longer do it on our own; we need your help. Please allow the Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulahs of Wisconsin to survive by minimally maintaining the current "hold harmless" provision, while giving serious attention to changing the exemption to "recurring" from its current designation of "non-recurring."

I humbly ask for your consideration in the name of children, schools, and communities throughout our great state.

Most respectfully,



David M. Magar
Superintendent

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE HEARING

My name is Jean Boothby from the Port Washington/Saukville school district. My counterpart Arlie Davel and I are here on behalf of not just our school district but for all Wisconsin Public School children.

We have already been in contact with some of you by letter, telephone, a public hearing or a personal meeting. Therefore we apologize for any repetition. Our issue of concern is the "NO Social Promotion" and the "Exit Exam" laws.

We Would like to make it clear that we are supportive of high standards for education, regular assessing and the implementation of remedial programs. However, *we are not supportive* of a single high stakes test as the sole determining factor for advancement or retention.

I am not originally from Wisconsin. So when we arrived here and experienced the rigorous process of assessing within our schools, I assumed this was practiced throughout the state of Wisconsin. It wasn't until I became aware of the "Exit Exam" and the "No Social Promotion" laws that I realized that not all Wisconsin Public schools assess their pupils, let alone on a regular basis.

Because of this fact I believe our legislators have put the Cart before the horse, by requiring a state test in determining a students advancement, retention or the denial of a diploma by means of an exit exam. Our state seems to feel that one test is the solution for school accountability.

THIS IS SIMPLY WRONG. Research upon research has indicated that a test is only 1 part to the puzzle. There is a much larger picture of an individual that *must* be considered, when determining an individuals advancement or retention.

Let me share a few examples:

In your packet refer to the sample titled Kevin:

By reviewing this 6th graders grades, received in his 5th grade year, you can see he was a solid A-B student. Likewise for the first quarter of his 6th grade year.

To earn those grades, Kevin had to work 2-3 times harder and longer than the average student. On a normal day he will average 5 hours of homework a night. To keep up with this work load, this student has also given up soccer.

After reviewing Kevin's CTBS test scores , you can see he has scored very low. The low scores are not the result of wrong answers, the scores are low because he was only able to complete 12 sections of the more than 32 sections on the test.

This past fall, out of concern with the length of time for homework, his CTBS test results and Kevin's high anxiety level, we chose to have him tested outside of the school district. Through the testing, it was confirmed that Kevin does have a glitch in his ability to retrieve information. He knows the material, but when it comes to sorting all the information at once, as it would be on a test, this task proves to be a very difficult and lengthy process for him. As a result we were told that time tests would never be an option of measurement for him. Other forms of criteria would be needed to demonstrate his abilities.

Had the CTBS test been the state exam, this A-B student would have been retained. **What would our state have accomplished by retaining this student?**

Refer to your packet for the sample titled Laura and other examples from Lincoln elementary School:

After reviewing Laura's 5th grade district math test results from May 1997, you can see that she failed with a 64%.

This student was a very shy student who had just transferred from a school in North Carolina and was not participating in many extra-curricular activities. Our District has excellent remedial programs in place and she attended their summer school math course. As you can see, she passed the District Math test at the end of summer with a 88%. In addition, attached is a copy of her current report card (she is now a 7th grade student). She is also an academic excellence student.

Laura is now a thriving well rounded student who not only achieves academic excellence, but is on Student Council, Yearbook committee, Peer Mediation Group and Pom Pons. Had the current law been in place, this student would have been retained (she failed ONE subject test). Her parents believe that if Laura had been retained, you could possibly be looking at a very different student. Perhaps one without any self esteem, not at all active in her school activities. This another example of a student who could have been lost in the shuffle of our laws, who could have "fallen through the cracks".

EXAMPLES FROM LINCOLN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 1999

1. 4th Grade boy who is an average student: He started with the WSAS testing, however was so anxious and nervous he froze. The teacher tried talking to him and encouraged him, but to no avail. This student eventually was exempted from the test by his parents. (Our principal indicated that every year about 4 of our 4th graders (class average 75) have test anxiety so severe that they are unable to complete or sometimes even start the test).
2. 4th grade boy who is an average student: This student is clinically diagnosed with Depression, which is not a learning disability. He attempted to take the WSAS test several times, however failed to complete any sections. Eventually the Grandparents exempted the child from the test because the results would have been unreliable in showing his knowledge.
3. 4th grade girl who was extremely ill during testing: On the first day of testing she was in school with a 103 degree temperature. She did complete a small portion of the test and then went home sick. She came back in two days and did another small section of the test, consequently going home again ill. She did finally complete the WSAS testing, however due to her illness during testing she scored extremely low. Her teachers felt that the test score was not an accurate picture of her knowledge.
4. 4th grade girl who was an above average student: She took the WSAS test, however half way through she realized that she was missing 4 pages of the test. The testing procedure had to be halted while the missing pages were added (calls had to be made to the district to verify procedure). The child was interrupted during the stressful testing procedure and was emotionally upset. She did complete the entire test eventually, however her scores were extremely low.

All of these pupils are average or above students. We believe that they could be anybody's child. The "ONE SIZE FITS ALL" concept *does not* work for our children. If you are a parent, as we are, we want to see our children achieve their goals and grow into stable, happy productive adults. Let's make sure that the legislation does that for all our children.

As a result of facts just mentioned we are here to ask for your vote in favor of legislation to repeal our current laws on the "Exit Exam" and "No Social Promotion" .

Currently AB94, SB35 and SB98 have bipartisan support. Our legislators have admitted that they had hastily acted on these laws with out appropriate research.

We ask that before a single student has to face the potential negative ramifications of these laws, that you will repeal them and in their place encourage all Wisconsin Public schools to regularly assess there students, beginning at an early age. By doing so, the student who is at risk, with the support of our state, will receive the additional help they need to *succeed* rather than find themselves as a failure.

If school districts would be allowed to use the current state test, the *millions of dollars* that would have been needed to create a new exam, could then be used to support school districts in their efforts to offer quality remedial and summer programs.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our concerns through this hearing. Now that you have heard the concerns of your constituents it is our hope that *you will work together* to support legislation that will repeal the "No Social Promotion and "Exit Exam" laws. By doing so, perhaps instead of having laws that are filled with flaws, we would then have legislation that would truly benefit all Wisconsin Public School children and not leave the burden of school accountability squarely on the shoulders of Wisconsin's *youngest* constituents.

MRS. JEAN M. BOOTHBY
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April 15, 1999

Hello, my name is Shannon Mork and I am a senior at UW-Madison, majoring in geography. My family is from the Mukwonago area and two of my sisters are also graduates of UW-Madison. I am a member of Student Badger Action Network (Student BAN), which is the student chapter of Badger Action Network (BAN), the Wisconsin Alumni Association's legislative advocacy program. On behalf of the Student BAN, I appreciate the opportunity to express my thoughts with you today and to express Student BAN's support for Governor Thompson's budget recommendations for UW-Madison.

As these last few weeks before graduation wind down, I have been thinking about my experience and time at UW-Madison. I am happy to say that when I look back on these past four years, I realize what a great experience it has been. I just finished the process of selecting a graduate school to attend and throughout the process professors across the country spoke highly of the quality of education at UW-Madison. This was exciting for me to hear because I have always thought UW-Madison was an excellent university but to hear that from professors in North Carolina and Colorado confirms what I have always believed.

I was glad to see that Governor Thompson's budget recommendations include an increase in spending for libraries, which have not received an increase in the past ten years. As a geography major, I realize the necessity of having up-to-date scholarly journals and reference materials at UW-Madison when I research today's important issues. I also was excited to see an increase in spending for advising. Being able to meet with advisors who can effectively assist and guide us to a timely graduation would greatly meet the needs of all students.

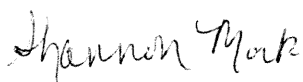
As a student, I believe the tradition of excellence I experienced at UW-Madison may be in jeopardy for future generations if the state does not prioritize higher education in this budget. Not only will the quality of a UW-Madison education be threatened, but there will also be a threatened availability of an affordable public education.

In Wisconsin and many other states over the past 20 years, state tax dollars have made up an increasingly smaller percentage of state university systems. For example, in 1973-74 the state funded 44 percent of UW-Madison's operating budget, compared with just 27% today. However, in recent years other states have begun to re-invest in higher education-but Wisconsin has not. Increasingly, tuition is being used to supplement the state's failure to adequately fund Wisconsin's public universities. This is unacceptable. The harsh reality is that many of Wisconsin's bright and talented students are financially unable to continue their education.

Just as important as making UW-Madison affordable, the quality of the education that students and their families pay for must be maintained. I see examples of quality being threatened in the areas of academic advising, UW libraries, both of which I mentioned earlier, as well as biological laboratories, and faculty salaries and state need-based financial aid. The biological laboratories are out-dated, hindering our faculty and staff's ability to successfully prepare students like myself for future careers in science research and development. The faculty and staff that we depend upon to teach and prepare us for life after graduation are underpaid compared to their peers and we will lose quality faculty to other schools that offer higher salaries. Finally, state need-based aid is failing to meet the needs of students and, as a result, our students are graduating with an average of \$12,000 in debt.

The state must address these factors immediately if UW-Madison's tradition of excellence is to be maintained. On behalf of Student BAN, I urge you to help maintain UW-Madison's tradition of excellence by supporting the "Madison Initiative," which over the next two years combines a shared investment of \$30 million by the state and students with \$20 million in private matching.

Thank you.



Shannon Mork

Member of Student Badger Action Network