

NOV 26 2001

4612 Erie St.
Racine, WI 53402
Nov. 20, 2001

Senator Grobschmidt
Capitol Building
Madison, WI

Dear Senator Grobschmidt;

Rep. Bonnie Ladwig said there is to be a hearing Nov. 28 on the bill co-authored by her and Kim Plache, regarding funding for Exceptional Education, and that if we wanted testimony entered into the hearing it should be sent to you. We are unable to attend as we both teach school that day.

We teach in Racine where revenue caps have forced \$23 million in cuts to our regular education students while the costs of Ex.Ed. have continued to skyrocket.

Jim teaches Technology Education at Gilmore Middle School. Middle school students in Racine lost one elective per day, giving them less time in classes which often lead to careers. Meanwhile, Exceptional Education has grown so fast, they have taken over 5 classrooms formerly used for home ec. art and tech. Ed. These rooms which were each used by more than 200 students per day are now used by a handful of Ex.Ed. students.

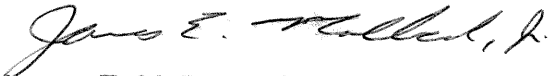
Connie teaches at Horlick High School, a building which is so dilapidated that outside experts said it should be torn down, it is beyond repair. So many library assistants have been cut that the library is almost unusable. Class sizes are huge, everywhere except Ex.Ed. The dropout rate has more than doubled since revenue caps were begun.

Meanwhile, in both of our buildings, Ex. Ed. is about 15% of the students, but has the largest department of teachers, and the only department with teaching assistants. There are fewer teachers of English, who teach all of the other 85% of the students, as well as some mainstreamed Ex.Ed. students. In both schools numerous other programs have been cut, including help with reading for students in danger of not passing the competency tests, and after school homework help.

Our top and average students should not have to compete for dollars and programs with students whose programs are so mandated but unfunded by the state. They should not be crammed 35 to a room because Ex.Ed. mandates small class sizes and our regular Ed. doesn't. They should not continue to have program cuts in order to pay for the increasing costs of Ex.Ed. and remain under the revenue caps. Our future leaders come primarily from the ranks of regular Ed. students, and yet all the cuts have been from their programs.

Please support this legislation. Our first preference would be for the state to pick up the cost of its mandates. But lacking that, we should at least be able to take this cost off the revenue caps.

Sincerely,
Jim and Connie Molbeck


James E. Molbeck, Jr.


Connie Hohlfield Molbeck