

October 10, 2006



GREEN BAY AREA
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
All learning. All growing.

Dear Members of the Legislative Council Study on the Review of the State's School Aid Formula,

On behalf of the Green Bay Area Public School District Board of Education, we want you to know how grateful we are that Wisconsin's school funding formula is being studied. The following is apparent from our perspective:

1. The current funding formula is not providing funds sufficient to meet current expenditures even with expenditure reductions at a level not previously seen in our district.
2. All districts are feeling constraints under the current funding formula albeit for different reasons.

As an urban district, the Vincent v. Voight case speaks to many of the funding problems we are experiencing. The Vincent decision indicates "so long as the legislature is providing sufficient resources so that school districts offer students the equal opportunity for a sound basic education as required by the constitution, the state school finance system will pass constitutional muster...an equal opportunity for a sound basic education...takes into account districts with disproportionate numbers of disabled students, economically disadvantaged students and students with limited English language skills." (2000).

It is our belief that the findings in this case specifically relate to major funding issues in urban districts, including ours. Urban districts are tending to serve higher percentages of special needs students. The following data is supportive of this belief:

	<u>% Green Bay Area District</u>	<u>% State</u>
Students with Disabilities	18	13
Economically Disadvantaged Students	43	31
English Language Learners	15	5

Our District is committed to the proposition that all of our students become proficient learners and caring and contributing members of society. Current state and federal funding to specifically address the needs of these three special populations of students is insufficient and far below a level previously committed. Because of the need to serve these children, other programs and services within our District have been negatively impacted and compromised.

Since the Vincent ruling, legislative remedies to address the funding for these three populations of children have been lacking. We specifically request your committee address the intent of the Vincent case by creating legislative initiatives aimed at enhanced funding for these students. This is based on a belief that some children require a commitment of additional resources to reach proficiency.

We understand there are significant challenges involved with a review of the current school aid formula especially related to meeting the unique needs each District is facing under the current funding model. We would ask that time be taken, as part of the study, to develop an understanding of the various funding issues facing different types of districts and that attempts be made to identify comprehensive solutions for these issues.

Sincerely,

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Superintendent of Schools and Learning

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