



Peshtigo School District

Home of the Bulldogs

April 9, 2021

Dear Joint Finance Committee:

Thank you for your service to the children, families, and residents of Wisconsin. I appreciate your time and the work that you have ahead of you with this budget. Creating a budget that reflects our state's priorities is challenging.

The Peshtigo School District (PSD) is located in northeast Wisconsin, in the heart of the manufacturing industry of Marinette County. The district serves just over 1,150 students, with a population of 13% of the students with disabilities and 39% of students who are economically disadvantaged. The district operates with a \$13 million Fund 10 budget annually.

The pandemic has brought many challenges... a lack of broadband access, learning gaps have widened, achievement has been stunted, and there remains questions about students' mental health. Our response has or will include hiring additional teachers in special and regular education, math and reading interventionists; along with improving our teaching and curriculum to identify how we will teach in a classroom with students with an increased disparity range of abilities. This comes with a cost

Here is how you can help---

Rural Broadband Access

The pandemic has truly brought the need to expand broadband access to rural Wisconsin to the forefront. PSD has provided and assisted 50 families (100+ students) with Internet access by providing mobile hotspots and data packages as their children have to participate in virtual learning. **The PSD encourages you to increase Governor Evers' \$204 million broadband expansion.**

Special Education Categorical Aid

PSD transfers about \$1,000,000 annually from Fund 10 to Fund 27 for additional expenses above state and federal aid revenue. This transfer equates to 8% of our total budget. Each additional 10% of aid would provide \$100,000 in additional funding for all students. **PSD supports the increase as reimbursable categorical aid as proposed by Governor Evers.**

General Revenue Increase

PSD is faced with expenses related to transportation, food service, and utilities that continue to rise. This past winter PSD went to bid for a new student transportation contract, unfortunately the best rate we could secure resulted in a **20% increase in transportation costs**. We are also experiencing a labor shortage in support and professional staff that calls for an increase in wages to compete in the job market. **PSD supports at least a \$200 per pupil increase in general revenue each year of the biennium.**

Low Revenue Ceiling (LRC)

PSD revenue limit remains at the ceiling of \$10,000, well below the state average of \$11,450 revenue limit. Why? As a result of state legislation in the 1990's that calculated and created revenue limits (based on spending at the time) for each public school district as part of the promise from the state to provide 2/3's of funding for public schools. **A lot, a lot has changed since then and setting a course to keep the lowest spending districts within 90% of the average is reasonable. It is time for a stable and consistent form of school funding.**

Thank you for your time and all are invited to visit the Peshtigo Schools to learn how the state's investment in public education benefits our children.

Respectfully,



Patrick Rau

Superintendent

raup@peshtigo.k12.wi.us

715-582-3677