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April 22, 2020

Dear Chairman Marklein, Chairman Born and Members of the Joint Committee on Finance,

My testimony today focuses on recommendations regarding the following three issues:

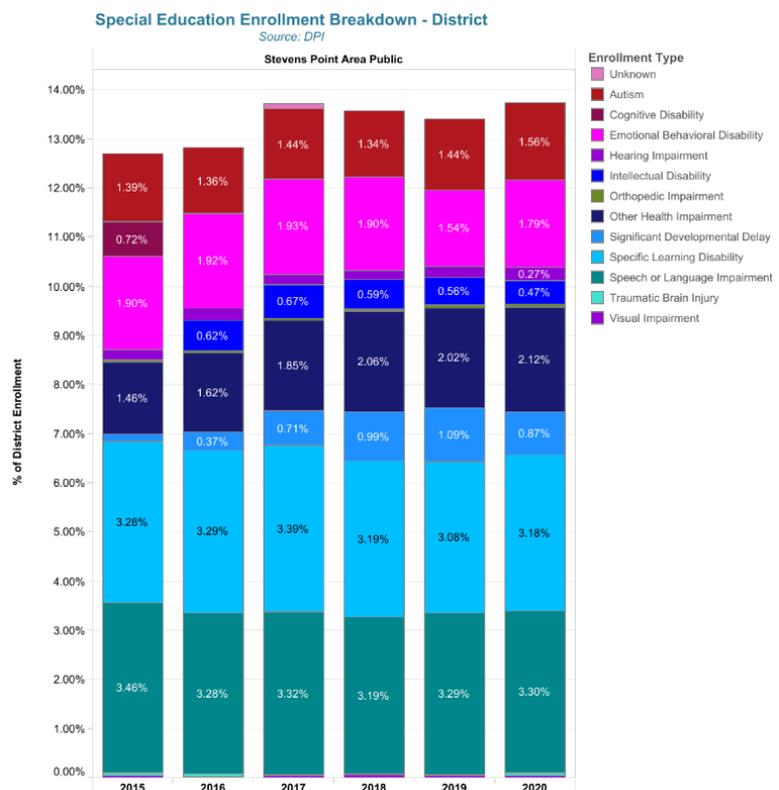
1. Special Education Categorical Aid – Set at 50% of aidable cost on a sum-sufficient basis beginning the first year of the new biennial budget and thereafter.
2. Revenue Limit Allowed Per-Member Change – Set at \$250 in each year of the biennial budget.
3. Pupil Count – COVID Offset – Allow our District to use the reported 2019-20 September and Summer FTE Membership in lieu of the 2020-21 September and Summer FTE Membership shown on our Revenue limit worksheet.
 - a. Treat the non-recurring declining enrollment exemption and base revenue hold harmless as recurring adjustments for only for the next biennial budget, then have them revert to non-recurring thereafter.

1. Special Education Categorical Aid – The 7,000+ student enrollment of the Stevens Point Area Public School District consists of about 13.5%, or 945, special education students. With categorical special education aid at the sum-certain percent of 28.21, the district’s general fund provides local support for special education at over \$11 million.

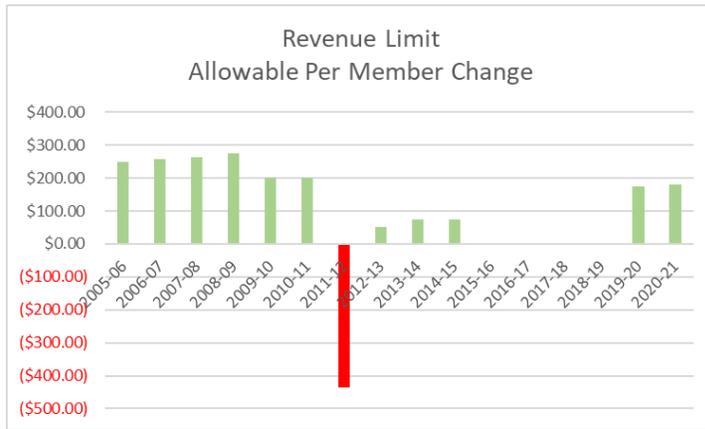
The District’s special education fund currently is about \$35 million.

Increasing special education aid to 50% of aidable cost would clearly improve ability to meet mandated and essential needs.

Funding special education aid on a sum-sufficient basis is more challenging to the legislature, but alternatively provides all Wisconsin school districts with a more stable financial platform.



2. Revenue Limit Allowed Per-Member Change – For several years in the past, the revenue limit allowed per-member amount was above \$250. For nearly a decade, Wisconsin school districts endured low to no support.



The last two years provided some relief. In this biennial budget, establishing an amount of \$250 for the revenue limit allowed per-member amount in both years would provide much needed relief.

3. Pupil Count – COVID Offset – In the summer of 2020, the COVID pandemic decimated our summer school program causing enrollment to drop by 35%. By September’s Third Friday count, COVID restrictions and concerns caused a drop in enrollment of 214 students.

	2018	2019	2020
Summer FTE:	219	217	74
% (40,40,40)	88	87	30
Sept FTE:	7,235	7,186	7,029
New ICS - Independent	0	0	0
Charter Schools FTE			
Total FTE	7,323	7,273	7,059

school program causing enrollment to drop by 35%. By September’s Third Friday count, COVID restrictions and concerns caused a drop in enrollment of 214 students.

The result of that 214 loss in enrollment

Line 10B: Declining Enrollment Exemption =		1,108,417
Average FTE Loss (Line 2 - Line 6, if > 0)		108

caused a revenue limit three-year rolling average enrollment decline of 108 students and a \$1.1 million loss in future revenue limit authority, which is a crippling amount.

Please allow our District to use the reported 2019-20 Summer and September FTE Membership in lieu of the 2020-21 Summer and September FTE Membership shown on our Revenue limit worksheet.

Also, treat the non-recurring declining enrollment exemption and base revenue hold harmless as recurring adjustments for only for the next biennial budget, then have them revert to non-recurring thereafter.

Respectfully,

Thomas R. Owens, Ph.D., SFO
Director of Business Services