



STOUGHTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Erica Pickett, Director of Business Services, SFO
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May 26, 2021

Senator Melissa Agard
Room 126 South
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Senator Agard,

Please support and encourage others in your caucus to support the inclusion of the following items in the 2021-23 biennial budget.

- Increasing the level of special education aid to 50% of aidable costs. According to DPI, Stoughton Area School District would receive an additional \$1.2 million dollars under this proposal to help support the budgeted \$4.6 million transfer from our general fund to support special education costs.
- Provide a per pupil general revenue increase in each year of at least \$200 to help our district meet the required costs (staffing, utilities, maintenance, technology, etc) of providing a high quality education.
- Comprehensive pupil count mitigation strategies including:
 - allowing districts to use the greater of the 2019-20 or 2020-21 pupil count for revenue limit calculation
 - Increasing special adjustment aid from 85% to 90% of prior year general aid in each year of the biennium
 - Treating the non-recurring declining enrollment exemption and base revenue hold harmless as recurring adjustments for one year only.

Stoughton has supported students in all aspects of their lives this year from academic work to social/emotional and physical health. We worked diligently to bring students back to in person learning while following the guidance and requirements of our local health department. We appreciate the one-time ESSER funds that have helped us address the significant investments we have made in technology, cleaning, equipment, and improvements to HVAC systems due to COVID 19. By assuming that those funds can be used in lieu an annual, ongoing increase in funding from the state doesn't take into account the fact that many districts have already spent some of their ESSER funds (or have set them aside for a specific purpose) or the fact that those

funds have strings attached in terms of what is an allowable use. We can't just use them to fill budget holes created by a lack of state funding. Even if we could, using one time funds to support annual, ongoing budget costs creates a fiscal cliff as soon as the funding source runs out. It is not a fiscally responsible way to budget.

Building the state budget is one of the most important responsibilities required of our legislators. We appreciate your time and effort as you work to prioritize the many interests of your constituents. We strongly believe prioritizing education is the best way to serve our community and state.

Respectfully,

Tim & Erica

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'T' and 'O' followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tim Onsager
Ed.D.
District Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, written in a cursive style that reads 'Erica J. Pickett'.

Erica J. Pickett
SFO
Director of Business Services