

May 4, 2015



Dear Joint Finance Committee Members:

As the Joint Finance Committee prepares to address K-12 education issues in the 2015-17 proposed state budget, we wish to share the following for your consideration.

The Board of Education and District administration recognize the important and vital role we play in the lives of students, families and our community. In order to meet the promise of "every child, every day," we have been moving quickly and purposefully to improve outcomes for ALL students. We have done this by creating educational opportunities and pathways to achieve our mission: educating all students to be college, career and community ready, inspired to succeed in our diverse world.

Working collaboratively with our community partners, we are transforming public education with innovative solutions to address workforce needs and focus efforts to improve overall results from cradle to career. Below are just a few examples.

- In April 2015, the District announced the development of City Stadium Automotive at East High School.
- In October 2014, Bay Link Manufacturing, a high-precision manufacturing learning lab opened for business at West High School.
- In September 2014, the District opened the Leonardo da Vinci School for Gifted Learners, one of the first of its kind in Wisconsin.
- In 2013, the District partnered with the Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary and the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay to offer a nature based 4-year-old kindergarten program.
- In 2011, the District launched the East High School Fine Arts Institute, which enables students to study the arts under master teachers.
- The District has one of fewer than 300 worldwide authorized K-12 International Baccalaureate Programmes, including the prestigious Diploma Programme.
- Through our higher education partnerships, the District is able to offer over 80 opportunities for students to access college-level coursework with the potential to earn college credit.

To continue this momentum, it is important that policymakers support the work of the District, the Green Bay community and its business partners (including the Greater Green Bay Chamber of Commerce). To assist you in that effort, below is a list of the District's state budget priorities.

Accountability

- Remove the school accountability provisions from the budget and consider in separate legislation. Further discussion is warranted in light of the fact that the Senate and the Assembly cannot come to agreement on their proposed school accountability bills. NOTE: We continue to support SB1 which focuses on improvement and includes: the current Wisconsin report card accountability ratings (not A-F grades), a single assessment and no sanctions. In addition, non-fiscal items deserve a robust discussion given their policy implications. This should not be done in the budget process.

Funding

- Restore \$150 per pupil aid for the 2015-16 school year.
- Adjust revenue limits to match inflation and adjust low revenue ceiling accordingly.
- Provide a modest increase in state aid for Special Education services.
- Provide increased funding to support existing English Language Learner (ELL) programs to aid the District in serving its growing population of ELL students and families (18.2% of the District).

Vouchers and Independent Charter Schools

The District opposes public tax dollars being redirected to fund private and religious schools. As such, the District's priorities are as follows:

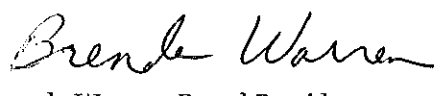
- Remove the expansion to the statewide voucher program. However, if the program is expanded, the District asks that the Legislature retain the current system in which voucher payments are funded through its own separate appropriation. In addition, we request a cap be placed on the voucher program to enable the District to meet its fiscal obligations and plan accordingly.
- Remove the statewide chartering board which could authorize charters. This budget provision removes local control from publicly elected school boards, and eliminates community oversight of public tax dollars.

A strong Wisconsin economy and democracy are dependent on having a strong public education system. The Wisconsin constitution states that our public education system must provide a free and equitable education for ALL Wisconsin students.

At a time when our state faces financial difficulties, it is even more vital that as a state we invest in all of Wisconsin's children. They deserve to be our priority – Every Child. Every Day.

Sincerely,

Members of the Green Bay Area Public School Board of Education

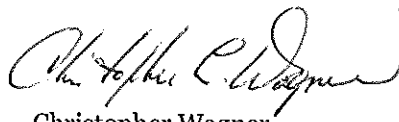

Brenda Warren, Board President


Katie Maloney

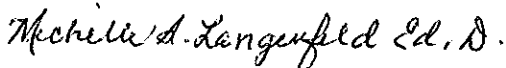

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