

Dear Rob Summerfield,

As a resident of the Prentice School District, I am writing to express my concerns regarding the current state of public school funding in Wisconsin. The state's funding status quo is hurting our community. Our district is dedicated to providing quality education, but significant challenges persist that require immediate attention and action at the state level. I respectfully urge you to consider the following proposals to support public schools across the state:

1. Increase 4K Funding to .8 or 1.0 FTE

Currently, 4K programs are underfunded at .5 or .6 FTE. Raising this to .8 or 1.0 FTE will enable districts like ours to offer high-quality early childhood education, a critical foundation for students' long-term success.

2. Reallocate \$500 Million Back to Public Schools

The diversion of public funds to private school vouchers has left public schools severely underfunded. Redirecting \$500 million to public schools would help ensure that the majority of Wisconsin's students, who are educated in public schools, have access to the resources they need.

3. Increase Special Education Reimbursement from less than 32% to 66% or Higher

The current reimbursement rate of below 32% for special education costs is inadequate. Raising it to at least 66% would help school districts meet the growing needs of students with disabilities, ensuring they receive the support and services they deserve. Mandating schools to provide for diverse needs requires staffing. So logic dictates that funding should accompany these requirements.

4. Use Surplus Funds to Support Schools and Communities Now

Wisconsin's \$4.6 billion budget surplus presents a unique opportunity to address the urgent needs of our schools and communities. We propose that half of this—\$2.3 billion—be allocated to schools and communities where it is most needed, particularly rural schools under 800 full time student enrollment, allowing for immediate improvements in education and local services.

5. Create an Equitable Funding Formula with a Rural School Multiplier

The current school funding formula disproportionately impacts rural schools, like ours. We advocate for the creation of a new, equitable formula that includes a rural school multiplier to ensure that districts with gradually declining enrollment still receive the necessary financial support to operate effectively. Our school district just lost 13% of the state funding placing an increased tax burden on our local community. Our community is land rich but financially poor. We are tree and cattle farmers who make a living but not an excessive surplus.

These proposals are crucial to ensuring that all Wisconsin students, regardless of where they live, have access to the high-quality education they deserve. The Prentice School District is committed to doing its part, but we need the state's partnership and support to make these improvements a reality.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of these urgent matters. I look forward to your response and am hopeful for meaningful progress in support of Wisconsin's public schools.

Sincerely,