

PEWAUKEE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mike Cady, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools

Pewaukee School District | 404 Lake Street | Pewaukee, WI 53072

Phone: 262-695-5046 | Fax: 262-691-1052

www.pewaukeeschools.org | cadymic@pewaukeeschools.org

September 17, 2018

Representative Adam Neylon
1357 Lake Park Ct.
Pewaukee, WI 53072

Dear Representative Neylon,

I am writing today on behalf of the students, parents, and community members of the Pewaukee School District to respectfully request your attention to address a fundamental issue of fairness in support of the thousands of public school students, not only in our community, but throughout the State of Wisconsin. This issue relates to adequate funding of K-12 Special Education on a level at least equal to what is being provided to private school students through the Special Needs Scholarship program for private schools. I think we can agree that public school students have no less inherent value than a student attending private school and therefore our laws, policies, and budgets should reflect that.

As you may be aware, both the state and federal government have been underfunding special education for years. This is an issue that not only negatively impacts our students with disabilities, but all students. Public school districts are obligated, both morally and legally, to provide an adequate education for every student who comes through our doors, whether adequate funding is provided or not. This means reallocating funds that may otherwise be used to support additional programming, resources and staffing that could improve the opportunities for all students when inadequate resources are provided by the state and federal government.

As you can imagine, it is very difficult for the tax-paying citizens of our community and state to understand why current legislation values private school students with disabilities at more than triple the rate (90%) of reimbursement to that (26%) of public school students. Again, this is a basic issue of fairness that warrants an equitable solution. In the Pewaukee School District of more than 3,000 students, we calculate the difference between how the district is currently reimbursed to the level approved for private school voucher students to be \$1,963,039. Attached you will find a resolution passed unanimously by the Pewaukee School District Board of Education on September 10, 2018, calling on our state government to increase the reimbursement rate to 90% for public school students, matching the reimbursement provided through the Special Needs Scholarship program to private schools in the next biennium budget.

I want to close by thanking you for your public service. Your job is not an easy one in that you face many competing interests. I will leave you simply stating that although complex, some challenges are obvious issues of right and wrong, and it could not be clearer the inequity that exists with the current approach to funding K-12 special education in our state. I ask for your leadership in support of our public school students to correct this issue.

Sincerely,



Dr. Mike Cady; Superintendent
Pewaukee School District

Enclosure (1)

Mike Cady, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools

Pewaukee School District | 404 Lake Street | Pewaukee, WI 53072

Phone: 262-695-5046 | Fax: 262-691-1052

www.pewaukeeschools.org | cadymic@pewaukeeschools.org

September 17, 2018

Office of Governor Scott Walker
115 East Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Walker,

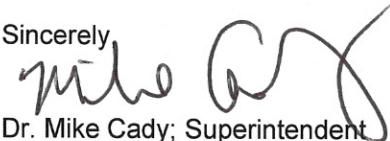
I am writing today on behalf of the students, parents, and community members of the Pewaukee School District to respectfully request your attention to address a fundamental issue of fairness in support of the thousands of public school students, not only in our community, but throughout the State of Wisconsin. This issue relates to adequate funding of K-12 Special Education on a level at least equal to what is being provided to private school students through the Special Needs Scholarship program for private schools. I think we can agree that public school students have no less inherent value than a student attending private school and therefore our laws, policies, and budgets should reflect that.

As you may be aware, both the state and federal government have been underfunding special education for years. This is an issue that not only negatively impacts our students with disabilities, but all students. Public school districts are obligated, both morally and legally, to provide an adequate education for every student who comes through our doors, whether adequate funding is provided or not. This means reallocating funds that may otherwise be used to support additional programming, resources and staffing that could improve the opportunities for all students when inadequate resources are provided by the state and federal government.

As you can imagine, it is very difficult for the tax-paying citizens of our community and state to understand why current legislation values private school students with disabilities at more than triple the rate (90%) of reimbursement to that (26%) of public school students. Again, this is a basic issue of fairness that warrants an equitable solution. In the Pewaukee School District of more than 3,000 students, we calculate the difference between how the district is currently reimbursed to the level approved for private school voucher students to be \$1,963,039. Attached you will find a resolution passed unanimously by the Pewaukee School District Board of Education on September 10, 2018, calling on our state government to increase the reimbursement rate to 90% for public school students, matching the reimbursement provided through the Special Needs Scholarship program to private schools in the next biennium budget.

I want to close by thanking you for your public service. Your job is not an easy one in that you face many competing interests. I will leave you simply stating that although complex, some challenges are obvious issues of right and wrong, and it could not be clearer the inequity that exists with the current approach to funding K-12 special education in our state. I ask for your leadership in support of our public school students to correct this issue.

Sincerely,



Dr. Mike Cady, Superintendent
Pewaukee School District

Enclosure (1)

Mike Cady, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools

Pewaukee School District | 404 Lake Street | Pewaukee, WI 53072

Phone: 262-695-5046 | Fax: 262-691-1052

www.pewaukeeschools.org | cadymic@pewaukeeschools.org

September 17, 2018

Senator Chris Kapenga
N9W31035 Concord Ct.
Delafield, WI 53018

Dear Senator Kapenga,

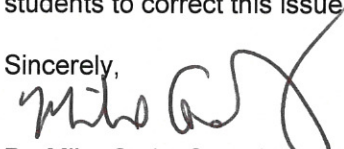
I am writing today on behalf of the students, parents, and community members of the Pewaukee School District to respectfully request your attention to address a fundamental issue of fairness in support of the thousands of public school students, not only in our community, but throughout the State of Wisconsin. This issue relates to adequate funding of K-12 Special Education on a level at least equal to what is being provided to private school students through the Special Needs Scholarship program for private schools. I think we can agree that public school students have no less inherent value than a student attending private school and therefore our laws, policies, and budgets should reflect that.

As you may be aware, both the state and federal government have been underfunding special education for years. This is an issue that not only negatively impacts our students with disabilities, but all students. Public school districts are obligated, both morally and legally, to provide an adequate education for every student who comes through our doors, whether adequate funding is provided or not. This means reallocating funds that may otherwise be used to support additional programming, resources and staffing that could improve the opportunities for all students when inadequate resources are provided by the state and federal government.

As you can imagine, it is very difficult for the tax-paying citizens of our community and state to understand why current legislation values private school students with disabilities at more than triple the rate (90%) of reimbursement to that (26%) of public school students. Again, this is a basic issue of fairness that warrants an equitable solution. In the Pewaukee School District of more than 3,000 students, we calculate the difference between how the district is currently reimbursed to the level approved for private school voucher students to be \$1,963,039. Attached you will find a resolution passed unanimously by the Pewaukee School District Board of Education on September 10, 2018, calling on our state government to increase the reimbursement rate to 90% for public school students, matching the reimbursement provided through the Special Needs Scholarship program to private schools in the next biennium budget.

I want to close by thanking you for your public service. Your job is not an easy one in that you face many competing interests. I will leave you simply stating that although complex, some challenges are obvious issues of right and wrong, and it could not be clearer the inequity that exists with the current approach to funding K-12 special education in our state. I ask for your leadership in support of our public school students to correct this issue.

Sincerely,



Dr. Mike Cady; Superintendent
Pewaukee School District

Enclosure (1)

**RESOLUTION in Support of Increasing Special Education Funding in Wisconsin Public Schools to 90% of the Cost Incurred
July 2018**

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the 422 local Wisconsin public school districts to support the educational needs of ALL students, INCLUDING those who are differently abled; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has a stated commitment to fund 40% of the costs of supporting students with special needs, but funds merely 15%, and

WHEREAS, the state of Wisconsin had statutory language to fund over 60% of costs related to these students, but now funds merely 26%, and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has not increased funding in public school special education categorical aid for a decade but has increased it for private schools using the special education scholarship, and

WHEREAS, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau recently concluded that because of the historic **underfunding** by the state and federal governments, public school districts must now fund over \$1billion to cover the educational costs associated with implementing Individual Educational Programs (IEPs), and

WHEREAS, as a result of this **underfunding**, districts across Wisconsin must cut critical programs supporting the education of the rest of their students to support the legislatively mandated special education needs, and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin now has special needs scholarships (vouchers) which benefit students in private schools, and

WHEREAS, these vouchers serve children, 75% of whom already were in private schools, and allow private schools to leave children with the greatest special education needs in the public schools, and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin public schools are required by law to continue serving all special education students in private schools, whether or not they receive a voucher, putting public schools out more money to pay for these public school special education educators i.e. teachers, physical/occupational therapists, speech/language pathologists, and

WHEREAS, private voucher schools, despite getting increased funding for special needs students, are not required to have certified/licensed special education staff, and

WHEREAS, these special needs vouchers for private schools are paid at a 90% reimbursement rate, while students with the greatest special needs in Wisconsin public schools are only funded by a 26% reimbursement rate.

WHEREAS, the Pewaukee School District would increase special education funding by \$1,963,039 when using the same percentage of reimbursement (90%) presently used for private schools.

FURTHER, it is believed that Wisconsin public school children are worth reimbursement equal to that of private school children.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Pewaukee School District calls on Governor Walker, the Wisconsin State Assembly and the Wisconsin State Senate to increase reimbursement for public schools to a rate of 90% for special needs students, matching the reimbursement rate given to private schools under the legislated Special Needs Scholarship Program.

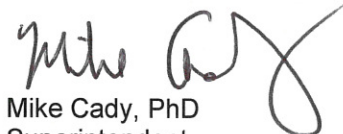
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being all of the members of the School Board and Superintendent for the Pewaukee School District, have executed this resolution the 10th day of September, 2018.



Brian K. Kammers
President
Pewaukee Board of Education



Jeanne Witthun
Vice President
Pewaukee Board of Education



Mike Cady, PhD
Superintendent
Pewaukee School District