School District *of Cambridge*
District Office

403 BLUE JAY WAY • CAMBRIDGE, WISCONSIN 53523-9547

Telephone
(608) 423-4345

Fax
(608) 423-9869

Website
www.cambridge.k12.wi.us

January 9, 2019

Dear Representatives of the School District of Cambridge,

At their December board meeting, the Cambridge School Board Members unanimously passed a resolution urging our elected representatives to strongly advocate for increased state funding for educating our special education students. The Board is in full support of Governor Evers proposal to increase the state reimbursement for special education costs to 60%. The Resolution is enclosed with this correspondence.

Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any assistance to you on this topic or other topics of mutual concern.

Sincerely,

Bernard Nikolay

Bernard Nikolay, Superintendent
School District of Cambridge

enclosure

School District *of Cambridge*
District Office

403 BLUE JAY WAY • CAMBRIDGE, WISCONSIN 53523-9547

Telephone
(608) 423-4345

Fax
(608) 423-9869

Website
www.cambridge.k12.wi.us

RESOLUTION in Support of Increasing Special Education Funding in Wisconsin Public Schools to 60% of the Cost Incurred
December 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

WHERAS, 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 School District of Cambridge would increase special education funding by $1,089,635.00 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 School District of Cambridge calls on Governor Walker, the Wisconsin State Assembly and the Wisconsin State Senate to increase reimbursement for public schools to a rate of 60% 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 for the School District of Cambridge, have executed this resolution the 17th day of December, 2018.

Tracy Smithback-Travis, Board President

Bernie J. Nikolay, Superintendent

Jim Womble, Board Vice-President

Mark Worthing, Director of Business Services

Mike Huffman, Board Treasurer

Krista Jones, Director of Pupil Services/NMS Principal

Sean Marren, Board Clerk

Keith Schneider, CHS Principal/C & I Director

Thomas Wright, Board Member

Chris Holt, CES Principal/Summer School Director

Heidi Thuli, Board Member

Courtney Reed Jenkins, Board Member

SDC/mkr/12/14/18