



Monona Grove School District

"Promoting Excellence for Global Opportunities"

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Monona Grove School Board Resolution for Public School Funding in Response to the COVID-19 Related Economic Downturn

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic downturn across the United States have caused widespread unemployment, decreased consumer spending, and strained housing security nationwide, leading to sharp declines in 2020 income tax, sales tax, and property tax projections, and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers noted in an April letter to President Trump that Wisconsin could lose more than \$2 billion in tax revenues without federal invention, resulting in likely cuts for public schools, and

WHEREAS, while the Monona Grove School Board appreciates the federal allocation of \$13.5 billion to K-12 funding, with an additional \$3 billion in gubernatorial discretionary education funds, as part of the CARES Act of early April, 2020, we note most of that stabilization funding was related directly to immediate pandemic-related costs, such as temporary job protection and equipment needed for remote learning, with no expansion of E-Rate or aid to state governments, and

WHEREAS, the projected COVID-19 related economic downturn is more severe than the 2008 recession, and yet the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided more aid (\$51.6 billion) for K-12 public schools and was followed by an additional \$10 billion in the American Jobs Act of 2009, to help save and create educators' jobs (still resulting in a loss of about 120,000 teachers), and

WHEREAS, on April 6, 2020, nonpartisan national organizations of school administrators, teachers, counselors, and parents penned a letter to the majority and minority leaders in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House urging them to allocate at least an additional \$200 billion in K-12 emergency relief funding, including the following:

- At least \$175 billion: Provision of emergency funding directly to state governments to support local school districts;
- At least \$25 billion: \$13 billion to support IDEA and \$12 billion to support Title 1;
- At least \$2 billion: Funding technology to further enable home-based learning and close inequities in broadband internet access, and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Senate has yet to approve the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Solutions Act (HR6800 - HEROES Act) passed by the House of Representatives in May, 2020, which includes:

- \$1 trillion to state, local, territorial, and tribal governments;
- \$90 billion for a State Fiscal Stabilization Fund for grants to State to support statewide and local funding K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions (about \$58 billion for K-12 education);
- \$1.5 billion in funding for the E-Rate program for schools and libraries to provide much needed internet service to students and teachers, prioritizing those without internet access at home;
- \$3 billion for school meal providers and USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program; and
- double the deduction for certain unreimbursed out-of-pocket expenses for K-12 school teachers from \$250 to \$500, and amount to be adjusted for inflation in future years.

WHEREAS, K-12 public schools rely mostly on a combination of state aid and property taxes to fund their operations and deliver on their mission to educate students, and

WHEREAS, educators and staff of school districts nationwide, including the Monona Grove School District, acted quickly to lead at a time of uncertainty in the face of school closure, by promptly implementing a meal delivery program to provide continuity of nutrition for our students, and by working long hours to implement remote learning – involving rapid gaining of new technological skills, ensuring availability of devices for all students as well as internet connectivity, and checking in with students and parents – to provide continuity of learning, and

WHEREAS, at-home learning has added layers of stress for parents as well as for students and educators, and uncertainty for fall requires the creation of planning for multiple scenarios for the opening of schools in the fall, and

WHEREAS, in spite of the fact that the state of Wisconsin recently had a budget surplus, the Joint Finance Committee still did not fund any of the Blue Ribbon Commission’s recommendations that would have addressed public school underfunding and special education costs, and

WHEREAS, many public schools in Wisconsin remain underfunded through the pandemic, illustrated by 57 school referenda questions from 45 districts on the April 7, 2020 election ballots; and

WHEREAS, increases in special education funding in the current biennial budget is minimal, and

WHEREAS, public schools are an indispensable part of the nation’s and each state’s economy, and will play an important role in economic recovery, and

WHEREAS, cuts in education will have a long-lasting negative impact on the lives of American children, and

AND WHEREAS, while we understand that public schools will be asked to play a part in resolving the projected state budget shortfall, we note that public school students and families of Wisconsin deserve to have state budget/financial decisions made within a context of the facts and points provided in this resolution,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the undersigned Monona Grove School Board members call upon members of the Wisconsin State Legislature to be mindful of these points and to work together with Governor Evers in prioritizing the educational needs of the 860,000 children in public schools to minimize cuts as they consider any possible budget repair bill.

This Resolution was passed by a unanimous vote of the Monona Grove School District Board of Education on June 3, 2020

On behalf of the Monona Grove School Board



Andrew McKinney - School Board President

Susan Fox, Vice President

Loreen Gage, Treasurer

Susan Manning, Clerk

Elizabeth Cook, Board Member

Eric Hartz, Board Member

Peter Sobol, Board Member