

Board of Education of the Superior School District

RESOLUTION 18-07 in Support of Increasing Special Education Funding in Wisconsin Public Schools to 90% of the Cost Incurred

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 \$1 Billion to cover the educational costs associated with implementing Individualized Education 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.

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 Superior 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 School Board of the Superior School District, has executed this resolution the 8th day of October, 2018.



Len Albrecht
Len Albrecht, President



Laura Gapske
Laura Gapske, Clerk

by Kelly Rugh
Deputy Clerk

Board of Education of the Superior School District

**RESOLUTION 18-08 in Support of the Wisconsin Voucher Taxpayer Transparency Bill
(Assembly Bill 267 and Senate Bill 183)**

WHEREAS, the Superior School District administrators, educators, staff, parents and community members of Superior are united in our effort to provide all children with the highest quality educational opportunities possible; and

WHEREAS, the Superior School District supports local control and the ability of the elected School Board to make decisions to support the learning of our students; and

WHEREAS, private school voucher advocates have consistently pushed for expanding the use of taxpayer-funded vouchers to pay tuition for students in private schools in Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the Governor and members of the Wisconsin Legislature have proposed expanding voucher programs into many more communities and have proposed increasing state payments to voucher schools; and

WHEREAS, a recent memo from the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau demonstrated that payments to voucher schools under the Governor's proposed budget would range from \$7,757 to \$8,403 per student by 2018. Including all of Governor Walker's proposed increases, in some cases public schools might receive as much as \$1,700 less per student at \$6,703; and

WHEREAS, the same memo also shows that tax dollars for voucher operators are increasing 12 times faster than total public school aids and that voucher payments would more than double over eight years. At the same time, net general aids that support public schools and reduce property taxes would fall by 1.3%; and

WHEREAS, the voucher amount is \$7,323 for pupils in grades K-8 and \$7,969 for pupils in grades 9-12; and

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill 267 and Senate Bill 183, the "Wisconsin Voucher Taxpayer Transparency Bill," authored by state Rep. Dana Wachs (D-Eau Claire) would require property tax bills to include information from the school district where the property is located regarding the amount of any net reduction in state aid, if any, to the district as a result of pupils enrolled in the statewide voucher program, the Racine voucher program, or the Milwaukee voucher program; and

WHEREAS, the increase in statewide property taxes due to school boards levying to offset lost aid due to the voucher system was over \$25 million in 2016-17. The statewide property tax impact is estimated to grow to \$37 million in 2017-18 and to \$47 million in 2018-19; and

WHEREAS, local taxpayers are not provided with information about their tax dollars being spent on private and voucher schools. When private school voucher programs expand in our community, the Superior School District loses state aid (to the voucher schools) and our School Board must either raise additional property taxes to replace the aid lost to the voucher schools or lose that funding permanently under the state-imposed revenue limits; and

WHEREAS, just as property tax bills show how much money goes to public schools and technical colleges, taxpayers deserve to know the cost of expanding the voucher program; and

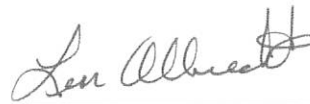
WHEREAS, it bears repeating that voucher schools are not bound by most state instructional requirements or graduation standards, are not subject to either the state's accountability system (i.e., no school report cards are issued for voucher schools), are not held to the public accountability requirements contained in major federal laws, including special education, are not governed by locally elected school board members who must stand for election or reelection, do not have to accept all students, nor do they have to provide students with the same due process protections in public schools, do not have to employ teachers who have a background in the subjects they teach, and do not have to adhere to open meetings and public records laws; and

WHEREAS, the voters of Wisconsin have never had an opportunity to vote on whether or not Wisconsin should have a taxpayer-supported voucher program; and

FURTHER, multiple studies throughout the nation have shown that school voucher programs do not perform better in reading and math than students in public schools, and the nonpartisan Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau released a five-year longitudinal study in 2011 which concluded that students in Milwaukee using vouchers to attend private schools perform no better on standardized tests than their counterparts in public schools.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Superior School District calls on Governor Walker, the Wisconsin State Assembly, and the Wisconsin Senate to support the Wisconsin Voucher Taxpayer Transparency Bill in an effort to be open, honest, and transparent with the taxpayers of Superior and Wisconsin.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the School Board of the Superior School District, has executed this resolution the 8th Day of October, 2018.



Len Albrecht, President



Laura Gapske, Clerk

by Kelly Rugh
Deputy Clerk