

Spoooner School Board Resolution in Support of the Wisconsin Voucher Taxpayer Transparency Bill

Whereas, the Spooner School Board and the district it represents strive to provide the best education and opportunities with the best resources available.

Whereas, public schools are accountable to the taxpayer through the election of the school board members they choose to represent them and open meetings they can attend and open records they can request and voucher schools are not.

Whereas, Spooner is a large geographical district, with a low student population in what is deemed a property rich district and was a conservative spending district when the levying caps were set. This has kept our state aid well behind other districts.

Whereas, state aid to voucher schools are a flat rate of \$7,323 for students in grades K-8 and \$7,969 for students 9-12 whether in a property rich district or not.

Whereas, large capital improvements and extra operating monies needed by public schools must be sought through a referendum that the taxpayers must approve. Voucher schools are not subject to referenda that the public has a say in.

Whereas, voucher schools are not subject to the same educational standards as public schools. They are not bound by the same graduation standards as public schools, they have no school report cards, they do not have to accept all students, they do not have to provide the same due process for students, and the teachers do not have to have a background in the subjects they teach.

Whereas, when a student with special needs transfers from a public school to a voucher school, the voucher schools can take up to \$18,000 from the public school.

Whereas, a student with special needs in a public school, individual education plans (IEP) are set by trained staff. The IEP in a voucher school is set with the teacher and parent. After taking up to \$18,000 from the public school the balance of the cost is paid up to 90% from general purpose revenue. This could be up to tens of thousands more with no accountability to the public and no incentive to control cost.

Whereas, the statewide tab for the three voucher programs (Milwaukee, Racine and statewide) reaches \$270 million, an increase of \$25 million over 2016-17 school year. Public schools have their state aid reduced by \$43 million to pay the cost of voucher students who reside in their districts and who first enrolled in and participated in the state wide or Racine voucher programs in 2015-16 or later.

Whereas, a total of 4,540 pupils enrolled at taxpayer expense in 154 private schools under the \$34 million state program. 3,007 pupils enrolled in 23 different private schools under the \$22.4

million Racine voucher program. The biggest program, Milwaukee, with 28,702 students in 126 private schools this year, costs \$213.3 million mostly paid by general purpose revenue at 77.6%

Whereas, northern Wisconsin has a limited number of voucher schools, yet the taxpayers in northern Wisconsin are disproportionately funding private schools in the southern half of the state while watching the state aid to their districts get reduced through budget cuts or through the inefficiencies of the current state aid formula in what are deemed property-rich districts.

Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Spooner District School Board calls on Governor Walker, the Wisconsin State Assembly, and the Wisconsin Senate to support the Wisconsin Voucher Taxpayer Transparency Bill (Assembly [Bill 267](#)/Senate [Bill 183](#)) so that the taxpayers of our district and across the state can see the true cost to educate the students of our state and be given a voice.