

RESOLUTION in Support of Increasing Special Education Funding
in Wisconsin Public Schools to 90% of the Cost Incurred
December 13, 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 less than 30%, 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 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, 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 River Valley School District would increase special education funding by approximately \$1,700,000 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 River Valley 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 for the River Valley School District, have executed this resolution the 13th day of December, 2018.

Kathy Jennings, President
John Bettinger, Vice President
Deb Nelson, Clerk
Fred Iausly, Treasurer
Jeff Maier
Sara Young
Dan McGuire
Mark Strozinsky
Kiley Cates

Motion by: Sara Young

Seconded by: Kiley Cates

*Carried 8-1, with
Bettinger opposed.*

President: Kathy Jennings

ATTEST:

Clerk: Deborah A Nelson