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February 11, 2020

Senator Robert L. Cowles
State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Cowles:

We are writing to encourage you to support Governor Evers proposal to invest the state surplus funds into Wisconsin's public schools. In the Green Bay Area Public School District, this additional funding will make a significant difference as we work to continue to meet the needs of all students.

While we are very appreciative of the increase to the special education reimbursement in the state biennial budget, the fact remains that the reimbursement amount continues to be insufficient to address the increasing needs in this area. For the 2019-20 school year, the District transferred more than \$35 million from Fund 10 - General Education to Fund 27 - Special Education. Removing \$35 million from Fund 10 limits the District's ability to address the needs of all students, including those living in poverty and/or are English Language Learners. **The Green Bay Area Public School District is supportive of Governor Evers' request to provide sum sufficient resources to reimburse school districts' reimbursement costs at 34%.**

In addition, we are very appreciative of the additional dollars provided for mental health services. However, the current resources provided are insufficient to address the significant mental health and social/emotional needs of students, especially those impacted by trauma. The reality is that we have children and families that are in crisis and the District does not have the human and financial resources to adequately meet their needs. **The Green Bay Area Public School District is supportive of Governor Evers' request for \$19 million in additional school-based mental health services, and the additional \$3.75 million for the School-Based Mental Health Collaborations grant program.**

Finally, last school year, the Green Bay Area Public School District made significant changes to its summer school program to ensure greater access, equity and accountability in programming across the District. Each year the summer school program services between 6,000-8,000 students. Summer school not only prevents summer slide, it also affords enrichment and remediation opportunities that close both the opportunity and achievement gaps. **The Green Bay Area Public School District is supportive of Governor Evers' proposal to increase summer school programming by \$3.6 million.**

In closing, we recognize that the state biennial budget did much to move education funding forward and bring much needed resources to our classrooms. But as noted, there is much more work yet to do. We very much appreciate Governor Evers' request to put an additional \$130 million into equalization aid. Simply, equalization aid is taxpayer relief. The future of the state is predicated on the success of the students in our public schools today. Your decision to invest the surplus dollars in public schools across

the state will make a significant difference in the lives of thousands of children as we prepare them to successfully transition to a 2- or 4-year college, the military, or directly to the workforce.

Sincerely,



Michelle S. Langenfeld, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools and Learning



Peter J. Ross
Chief Operations Officer



Laura McCoy
Board of Education Trustee, Legislative Liaison

cc: Governor Evers