



Vicki Bayer
Superintendent of Schools and Learning
200 South Broadway | Green Bay, WI 54303
Phone: (920) 448-2100 | www.gbaps.org

June 11, 2025

Dear Joint Finance Committee:

Today, I am reaching out on behalf of the Green Bay Area Public School District to express my concerns regarding what is being shared in the Legislative Fiscal Bureau's papers on school funding.

Primary Special Education Aid is at risk of being overlooked.

First, while high-cost aid may sound generous, it is insufficient to meet the overall special education needs in the District. For our district, high-cost special education reimbursement was only \$263,000 for the 2024-25 school year. Changing this to 60%, for high-cost special education expenses *only*, does nothing to address the increasing costs of meeting the needs of the majority of students that receive special education services.

School Levy Tax Credit is not true school funding.

To say public school funding would increase through the School Levy Tax Credit is not accurate. No additional revenue is received by public schools through the School Levy Tax Credit.

There is no increased predictability in public school funding.

Legislative Fiscal Bureau Paper #610 indicates that the per-pupil adjustment remains \$325 through 2024-25 and beyond. This amount does not keep up with inflation, causing school districts to continue to cut staff, close schools and end programming, which ultimately negatively impacts students. The only other option is to continue to seek voter support through an operational referendum, pushing the burden of funding schools on property owners. This seems especially harsh and unnecessary when the state has a substantial surplus. It also harms low funding school districts disproportionately.

Instead, I ask you to consider the following:

- Fund primary special education aid at 60%. Every school district, student, and teacher benefits from primary special education aid. Increased reimbursement protects general education programs. The Green Bay Area Public School District transfers approximately \$35 million into special education every year, shifting money from our general fund that supports all students. I also ask that you make the funding sum sufficient. This year our district only received 30% reimbursement, instead of the 33% that was promised. This resulted in a reduction of nearly \$900,000 for our district.
- Reject using the School Levy Tax Credit as a substitute for school support. While the School Levy Tax Credit may reduce tax bills, it doesn't cover textbook costs, pay teachers, or fund interventions.

- Protect our public school district and our communities by ensuring state funding mechanisms result in real dollars for public school districts. Meaningful, structural investment in schools today will eliminate the need for local tax increases and sustain excellence for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration. Our students and staff are accomplishing amazing things everyday. They deserve your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vicki Bayer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Vicki" and last name "Bayer" clearly distinguishable.

Vicki Bayer
Superintendent of Schools and Learning

cc: Senator Andre Jacque
Senator Jamie Wall
Representative Joel Kitchens
Representative Benjamin Franklin
Representative Amaad Rivera-Wagner
Representative Ryan Spaude
Board of Education