

10 January 2007

Governor Jim Doyle
State of Wisconsin
P.O. Box 7863
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Governor Doyle:

On behalf of the Columbus School District Board of Education I am writing to you today to respectfully request that the proposed Department of Public Instruction budget be sent on to the legislature essentially unchanged. We believe that the budget submitted by DPI is the minimum required to maintain the excellent programming that is offered by the public schools of Wisconsin. The people of the State of Wisconsin have and continue to support the educational excellence they see in the public schools of Wisconsin.

As you are well aware, school districts all over the State of Wisconsin are suffering under our current funding system. We have reached a point where the formula no longer serves children and/or education. Buildings are in need of repair. Transportation and heating costs are skyrocketing. Technology is falling behind. Teachers are going to other states or to private schools where they will be better compensated. In addition, many districts are experiencing declining enrollment. These things, combined with revenue caps and the QEO, have made this formula untenable.

In Columbus, the Board has had to cut \$600,000 over the past four years. Though we have been able to minimize some of our losses through attrition that will no longer be the case as we look to our next budget. With the loss of the TEACH grant it was necessary to cut a 6th grade computer tech position. Our computer technology is out of date. In the next budget the Board will need to make some tough choices regarding staffing and programming. We also have roofs that need replacement. We have no money for making buildings more secure. Science labs and playground facilities are inadequate. These are only the highlights.

In light of these challenging problems throughout the State we respectfully request that you move forward an initiative to make substantial changes in the way public schools are funded. We pledge to support this effort and look forward to working with you.

Thank you, Governor Doyle, for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Trish O'Neil, President
Columbus School District Board of Education