

January 16, 2007

Governor Jim Doyle  
115 East State Capitol  
Madison WI 53702

Dear Governor Doyle:

We, the members of the Glidden School District Board of Education, have reviewed the proposed budget submitted by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. We feel it is essentially proposing a bare minimum of what is necessary to continue providing the high quality of excellent education for our children for which the State of Wisconsin has always taken pride.

Our school is just one of many in the state that is suffering financial hardships. Although the state resumed its promise to fund education overall at two-thirds, because of the current funding formula our school is only aided at 44%—down from the 78% level of just ten years ago. We have made difficult choices in the past few years, cutting back wherever possible:

- Grade 8 teacher position eliminated
- Grade 5 teacher position reduced to part time
- Multi-age classroom for grades 4 & 5
- Negotiated changes in health insurance coverage
- Music teacher and grade 6-12 music program shared with neighboring district
- Shared school psychologist with neighboring district
- Shared speech therapy services
- Reduced contract for special education director
- District administrator is combined position of principal, superintendent and technology technician
- Applied Economics course eliminated
- One bus route eliminated
- Cooperative co-curricular programs with neighboring district at high school level
- Elimination of co-curricular programs—Academic Decathlon, High Quiz Bowl, wrestling, etc.

However, even with those cuts we are facing a deficit with next year's budget. Unfortunately, the next round of cuts we make will have a detrimental effect on our students' educational quality.

Our educational and health care costs are increasing. The Glidden School District's geographical boundaries cover 290 square miles, and our transportation costs are rising because of the high cost of fuel. We are experiencing a sharp decline in enrollment and skyrocketing property values. Sixty-five percent of the land in our district is comprised of either national forest or county forest. Neither provides revenue to operate our school. A significant amount of privately owned forested lands have already been enrolled in the forest crop program resulting in minimal property tax payments to our school. This means

Governor Jim Doyle  
Page 2  
January 16, 2007

that the owners of approximately 30 percent of the land in our district are paying all of the property taxes to support our school. We are anticipating calling for a referendum within the coming year; but with over 60% of our district's families qualifying for free or reduced lunch, most of the families in our district are just plain tapped out.

For many years Wisconsin's educational system has been recognized as one of our nation's finest. Many other states long to have what we have here in Wisconsin. We, therefore, beseech you, Governor Doyle, to favorably consider the proposed budget submitted by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and send it on to the legislature essentially unchanged.

As a partner in the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools, the Glidden School District is committed to fighting for increased categorical aid to address the critical short-term needs in all school districts. At the same time, we urge you to work with us, other education stakeholders, and the Legislature to begin comprehensive reform of the school-funding system in 2007. If we cannot adequately invest in our children, what kind of future can we expect for our state?

We would like to thank you, Governor Doyle, for your commitment to the children of our state. We will continue to pledge our support for your hard work and efforts on behalf of Wisconsin's schools.

Sincerely,

The Glidden School District Board of Education

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Member