

# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILLIPS

P.O. Box 70

Phillips, Wisconsin 54555

Phone 715-339-2141 FAX 715-339-2144

Dr. Jerry Trochinski, Superintendent

Karren L. Balzar, Financial Manager

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January 8, 2007

Governor James Doyle  
Office of the Governor  
115 East State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Doyle:

We realize the upcoming budget represents many challenging decisions and we are pleased you have been an outspoken supporter of quality education for all students. Not only have you spoken to the importance of quality education, you have built your budgets with a focus on maintaining the tradition of excellence in education for Wisconsin's youth.

Financial Manager Karren Balzar and I had the opportunity in October to address the Legislative Committee on the School Aid Formula. I have enclosed a copy of the School District of Phillips' case study and recommendations we made to the committee.

I restate our recommendations:

- A. **Sparsity** recognized as part of any school aid funding formula
- B. **Five-year rolling average** option for school districts to ease the transition for declining enrollment districts.
- C. **Adjustments to formula** for districts that were **low-spending in 1993** and continue to be low-spending districts.
- D. **All PILT/25% Federal Funds** that Wisconsin is eligible for should remain in Wisconsin and not returned to the Federal Government. WIN/WIN - \$1.6 million of additional revenue for 27 school districts. PILT – Payment in Lieu of Tax and 25% stumpage free – national forest revenue.
- E. Adding reimbursement categories to transportation aid for distances beyond the current limits.
- F. Allow for preschool special need students who attend school all day to be counted as one child, not ½ child.
- G. Reduce testing requirements.
- H. Provide funding for gifted and talented education.

(Long-term – Equity and adequacy must become the foundation of a funding plan for **all of Wisconsin's children**. Our citizens and our economy require a well educated populous.

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Phillips was a low-spending and low-taxing district in 1993 when revenue limits were put in place. Phillips continues to be a low-spending, low-taxing, and high-performing district. However, declining enrollment and the draconian effect of 14 years of revenue limit is taking its toll on educational opportunities. The budget cuts of nearly 25 percent of a \$10 million dollar budget in a five-year period have had a dramatic impact including significant frustration with layoff and part-time contracts. Over 6.5 percent of our budget is just for bussing and an increasing free and reduced lunch count we face significant challenges.

As a district of 600 square miles, the 5<sup>th</sup> largest in the state, we have approximately 1.5 students per square mile. We may be small in population; however, we are large in geographic area, not unlike the Florence School District.

Please consider the proposal we made to the legislative study committee when you develop the budget.  
Our students need your support!!

Yours truly,

Jerry Trochinski  
Superintendent

JT/hes

Cc: Phillips Board of Education  
Tom Beebe, WAES  
Rick Stadelman, WI Towns Association  
Senator Olson, Chair Legislative Study Committee  
Representative Decker  
Representative Williams  
Representative Petrowski  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel  
File

Enc: Presentation Packet