

January 10, 2007

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

Dear Governor Doyle:

The Weyerhaeuser Board of Education respectfully requests that you favorably consider and support the proposed budget submitted by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. We are also asking you to support the four education funding priorities set forth by the Wisconsin Association of School Boards. These funding priorities are:

- **At a minimum, support the annual inflationary increase of the revenue limits.**
Our District has made numerous cuts in the budget but with the rising cost of textbooks, maintenance and benefits such as health insurance we are falling further and further behind and having to use fund balance. By keeping schools under the revenue limits that are tied to enrollment it is causing us to have to make the difficult decisions of delaying maintenance, lay-off staff, or not fill positions, if a staff member retires and cut programs. Our job is to provide all of our students with a quality education, even if they are in a small rural school district and we work hard at doing that. We work with our students to ensure that they can be successful and attend college, technical school, be in the military or able to find a job after they complete high school. Due to the constraints with the revenue limits this is becoming harder and harder to achieve. Please remember that our funding due to the revenue limit is capped but we are still required to meet those unfunded mandates and the high expectations of a Wisconsin School District.
- **Two-Thirds Funding**
Please support the Department of Public Instruction's proposal for the funding for schools but keep in mind that even with an this increase some schools like Weyerhaeuser will not see it due to the funding formula. We have declining enrollment, high poverty level but high property value due to lakefront property and recreational land with little industry. This has caused the problem of receiving reduced aid and then with the revenue limits we are unable to have sufficient funds for our District. Please look at the formula of how schools are funded and what is happening to the rural school in Northern Wisconsin.
- **Support the increase of special education categorical aids**
The Federal and State categorical aids for special education have not increased at the same rate as the costs. More and more students are entering school with great special education needs. The cost for funding these needs for these students is ever increasing. At no time are we asked if we can afford to provide these services but we are required to do so. At the present time we have two students with autism who require an aid to meet their needs during the school day along with having to contract with the parent to take his child home at night. While we meet the needs of the students, who helps to fund these needs, what we receive for special education

aids does not cover the costs. While special education costs rise and the categorical aids stay about the same we are required to shift the excess cost for special education to our general aids and property taxes which are once again under the revenue limits. Thus we are reducing the amount we can spend on regular education. It is hard to look at this situation and have to think of those students with special needs taking away programs and resources that our regular education students need but cannot get funded due to limited funding for special education aid.

- **Support an increase in transportation categorical aids**

Transportation costs have been on a constant increase and with the steady increase in fuel for the buses we are spending more in school transportation than we have in the past. We are a rural district with an average bus traveling 84 miles a day. We have cut bus routes, made even effort to be more efficient and have not purchased a new bus in 3 years. Our bus mechanic works hard at keeping our buses in top condition but the funding for transportation is a small dent in the actual costs. If we are going to provide transportation, we need to ensure our parents and students that we are providing safe transportation with good working equipment. All of this costs money, which is capped at due to revenue limits.

As a school district we will probably have to be going to a referendum to override the revenue limits for the next school year. If it does not pass we will be forced to make some very serious decisions, which will affect not only students but also the community.

Governor Doyle we applaud you for all that you have done for education and we know that you truly support K-12 education in the State of Wisconsin. But we are asking you to consider the problems that our facing our school and most of the public schools in the State and not let the fine school systems we have worked so hard to be top quality fail.

Sincerely,
The Weyerhaeuser Board of Education and Administration

President

Vice President

Clerk

Treasurer

Director

District Administrator

K-12 Principal