

March 11, 2015

CESA #12 Board of Control Members and Administrators:

We are now approaching the next stage of the 2015-17 Biennial Budget process. Many of you have already contacted your legislators, communicated with members of the Joint Finance, passed school board resolutions, provided letters to the local news outlets or to the community. Your efforts are to be commended. However, the final outcome of this budget process is very much in limbo because of strong and competing interests for additional support and budget modifications from a variety of sectors. My personal interactions with countless legislators on both sides of the isle indicate that there is sincere support to provide additional support for K-12 public education, but at the end of the day politics will play a significant role in determining the level of that support.

Therefore, I strongly urge you to continue your local advocacy efforts and make repeated contacts with the legislature throughout the remainder of the process. Here are the ways we need your help.

1. Testify at one of the four public Joint Finance hearings, providing written copies of your testimony to all committee members and to your local legislators. Public hearings will be held at the following times and locations.
 - * 10 am – 5 pm: Wednesday, March 18 at Brillion High School
 - * 10 am – 5 pm: Friday, March 20 at Alverno College in Milwaukee
 - * 10 am – 5 pm: Monday, March 23 at UW Barron County in Rice Lake
 - * 9:30 am – 4 pm: Thursday, March 26 at the CAL Auditorium in Reedsburg
2. If you are unable to testify in person, you can still send your testimony to all members of the Joint Finance Committee.
3. Consider passing a Board of Education Resolution urging modifications to the biennial budget. John Forester, SAA and Dan Rossmiller, WASB have posted on their websites various resolutions that have been passed by school districts.
4. Send an editorial to your local paper and/or to your community. Again, great examples of editorials and communications are on the WASB and SAA websites.
5. Hold a joint news conference or create a joint news release with area school districts. This is extremely effective because it reaches a broader audience. This has already happened in a number of regions of the state. I have attached an excellent example below of a joint release that could be utilized.

6. In all cases, tell your district's story and copy your communications to your local legislators and to members of Joint Finance.
7. It is also beneficial if I receive a copy of your communications so I can reinforce your efforts. In my discussions with legislators it helps if I name a particular school district and give concrete examples.

In addition to personal meetings, calls and emails with members of Joint Finance and other legislators, The primary areas that I have been addressing in my meetings with legislators include: maintaining the additional sparsity and high cost transportation aids, restoration of the \$150 per pupil aid, providing an inflationary increase to the revenue limit, eliminating the expansion of statewide independent charters which will take additional resources directly from rural taxpayers in every district, keeping the local government property fund intact, and creating flexibility on how the TEACH funds contained in the budget can be applied in rural districts. Of course, I have also been involved in the discussions on the status of CESAs, the impact of statewide voucher expansion and the various versions of school accountability provisions being advanced in the budget or through legislation.

Again, your voices are being heard but this is not the time to cease talking! Thanks for your continued efforts.

Sincerely,

Ken