



WAUSAU SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education

415 Seymour Street • P.O. Box 359 • Wausau, Wisconsin 54402-0359 • 715-261-0500 • www.wausauschools.org

Resolution to Support Increasing Reimbursement of Special Education Funding

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the 422 Wisconsin public school districts to support and provide for the educational needs of ALL students, including those who are differently abled; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has a stated commitment to fund 40% of the costs to educate and support students with special needs, which are accounted for in Fund 27, yet funds only 15%, and

WHEREAS, the state of Wisconsin has statutory language to fund 60% of costs related to educating and supporting students with special needs, which are accounted for in Fund 27, yet funds 24.5% that fluctuates annually, and

WHEREAS, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau recently concluded that due to historic underfunding by the federal and state governments, public schools now fund over \$1 billion to cover the educational costs associated with implementing Individualized Educational Programs or IEPs through a transfer from Fund 10, the public school districts' general budget which is supported by taxpayers, with Wausau School District funding \$9.7 million, and

WHEREAS, public school districts across Wisconsin must eliminate, reduce, or restructure educational programs and offerings to comply with the underfunded special education mandate that forces school districts to transfer funds from Fund 10 (General Fund) to Fund 27 (Special Education Fund) on an annual basis, and

WHEREAS, the state of Wisconsin has not increased funding in public school special education categorical aid for more than a decade, and

WHEREAS, for the Wausau School District, the Fund 10 budget (General Fund) is forced to cover structural shortfalls in Fund 27 (Special Education Fund) due to underfunding the special education mandate, which has impeded the free, appropriate, and equitable educational programs and offerings of our 8,308 students, and

WHEREAS, for the Wausau School District, our identification rate is 14.8% for students with special needs, which is slightly higher than Wisconsin's identification average rate, and knowing there is no fiscal incentive to over identify students for special education services.

FURTHER, Wisconsin public school students receiving special education services are worthy of significant investments represented by increased reimbursement rates.

THEREFORE, the Wausau Board of Education calls on the Governor and State Legislature to increase the special education reimbursement funding to 30% in Year One and 60% in Year Two of the 2019-21 State Budget.

Adopted this 8th day of April 2019.

Approved:

Jeff Leigh, President
Wausau Board of Education

Attest:

Beth Martin, Vice President
Wausau Board of Education