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NEWS RELEASE:
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Applauds Howard's Partnership with HSSD to Lessen the Financial Burden of COVID-19 on Local Schools

GREEN BAY— Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) released the following statement after action by the Village of Howard Board of Trustees to donate supplies with unused state reimbursement funds for COVID-19 expenses to the Howard-Suamico School District (HSSD). The unique partnership created an innovative funding solution for pandemic-related back-to-school expenses that were borne by the schools, while making full use of these one-time reimbursements and helping to reduce the impact of COVID-19 in their community:

“As schools throughout the region enter their second or third week of instruction, school districts already have felt the extra financial burden that’s required to set the stage for in-person instruction or conduct virtual learning. In discussions with HSSD, officials from the two local governments, and other area Legislators, we were able to envision a different path for schools to receive municipal reimbursements for some of the supplies they need to keep instruction flowing and keep students safe. Tonight, those discussions I had with the local officials came to life as the Trustees of Howard voted to approve funds they don’t anticipate utilizing from their Routes to Recovery reimbursements to help HSSD schools get through these challenging times.”

Under the state’s [Coronavirus Relief Fund](#), which is a nearly \$2 billion pot of money from the federal CARES Act to aid Wisconsin’s response and recovery efforts, \$190 million was allocated for local governments to reimburse certain allowable expenses. The Department of Administration, which manages the program known as [Routes to Recovery](#), has confirmed that they would allow reimbursement for expenses incurred by local governments that purchase supplies, such as personal protective equipment, disinfecting goods, and remote learning technology, and donate those supplies to the local school district. A letter explaining and encouraging these partnerships was sent to school district leaders throughout the 2nd Senate District earlier this month following productive discussions at HSSD’s Legislative Linkage event.

“I want to applaud HSSD Superintendent Damian LaCroix, Howard Village President Burt McIntyre, and the entire team of board members and staff in HSSD, Howard, and Suamico that made this partnership possible. It’s my hope that, as we continue with the 2020-2021 School Year, other districts in Northeast Wisconsin will consider establishing these mutually-beneficial partnerships that can help to reduce the expenses to school districts, keep students and teachers safe, and reduce COVID-19 spread in the community.”

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