



Speaker Vos, Majority Leader LeMahieu, Members of the Joint Committee on Finance:

Thank you again for your leadership and work on behalf of the People of Wisconsin.

As partners in the City of Milwaukee, and with a united interest in helping students here and throughout the state to achieve their full potential, we write to you today to ask for your support and leadership to improve funding for Students with Disabilities. Specifically, we ask that the state improve the reimbursement rate for special education services from the current level of 28% to the sum-sufficient, 50% level proposed in the Executive Budget.

Over the past several years it has become clear that there is broad and strong appreciation of the need to increase funding for students in this area. The report of the

Speaker's Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding included a recommended reimbursement level of 60%, and the two candidates for State Superintendent recently stated their support for a reimbursement level of 90% to match the level of support for Students with Disabilities in the Special Needs Scholarship Program.

The need for stable and sustained funding in this area is critical. As the Wisconsin Policy Forum has noted, "In the 2015-16 academic year, to pay for special education costs, school districts used more than \$1.0 billion in resources that otherwise would have served all students. For two-thirds of Wisconsin school districts (283), this equates to 10% or more of resources available under their state-imposed per pupil revenue limits." Although the state slightly improved the reimbursement rate in the last biennium, nationally Wisconsin remains near or at the bottom in funding support in this area.

As partners in Milwaukee, we join with our colleagues across the state in asking the Wisconsin State Legislature and Governors Evers, to take advantage of the common agreement that has been found in this crucial area to ensure a reimbursement rate of 50% for the services that enhance and improve the educational potential of Students with Disabilities.

We look forward to assisting in this effort, and thank you again for your leadership in moving the state forward.

cc.

Governor Evers, Superintendent Stanford-Taylor, Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature

John Kersey, Executive Vice President, Zilber LTD.

Peter Feigin, President, Milwaukee Bucks

Cecilia Gore, Executive Director, Brewers Community Foundation

Patricia R. Contreras, Vice President of Public Affairs, Rockwell Automation

Nancy Sennet and Mark Sabljak, Co-chairs of the GMC Education Committee

Larry Miller, Board President, Milwaukee Public Schools

Dr. Keith Posley, Superintendent, Milwaukee Public Schools

Cory L. Nettles, Founder and Managing Director, Generation Growth Capital, Inc.

Tim Sheehy, President, Metropolitan Milwaukee Chamber of Commerce

Paul Sweeney, Principal of P.S. Capital Partners & Chair of the MMAC Education Committee

Dr. Patricia Hoben, President and Executive Director, City Forward Collective

Robb Rauh, Chief Executive Officer, Milwaukee College Prep

Laura Gutierrez, Executive Director, United Community Center

Gary Witt, President and CEO, The Pabst Theater Group

Peggy Williams-Smith, President and CEO, Visit Milwaukee

Louis Fortis, Editor/Publisher, Shepherd Express

Emilio De Torre, Executive Director, Milwaukee Turners

Caitlin Cullen, Owner, The Tandem

Maurice Thomas, President/CEO/Founder, Milwaukee Excellence Charter School

Mark Clements, Artistic Director, Milwaukee Repertory Theater

Chuck Roedel, Group Senior Vice President, Town Bank

Jeff Bentoff, Owner, Bentoff Communications

Eric Wagner, CEO, Lowlands Grand Cafes

Leslie West, Owner/Operator, The Rave/Eagles Club

Wendell Willis, Executive Director, MPS Foundation Inc.

Jennifer Bartolotta, President, Bartolotta & Associates

Paul Miller, Ward Fowler, Lincoln Fowler, Colectivo Coffee

Dan Jacobs, Chef/Co-owner, DanDan

Danae Davis, Executive Director, Milwaukee Succeeds

Kevin Newell, President and CEO, Royal Capital

Abby Andrietsch, Chief Executive Office, St. Augustine Prep