

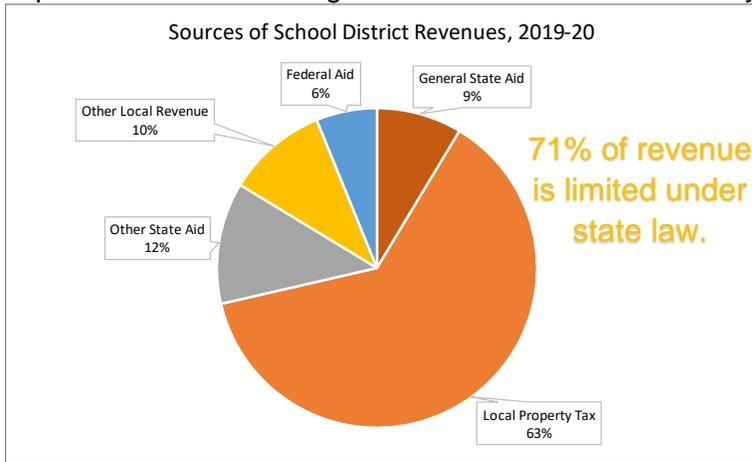


Turtle Lake School District: A Failure of State Funding

One Side of the Coin: Fair Funding for Schools

Wisconsin school districts have limited control over the amount of money they have to educate their students. Since 1993-94, the state government has imposed limits on the revenue school districts can receive from their two main funding sources: local property taxes and state aid.

The pie chart shows funding sources in Turtle Lake. Seventy-One cents out of every dollar are



constrained by the state's revenue limits. Although the school district has some discretion over its *other local revenue*, the amount it receives in federal and other state aid is out of its control.

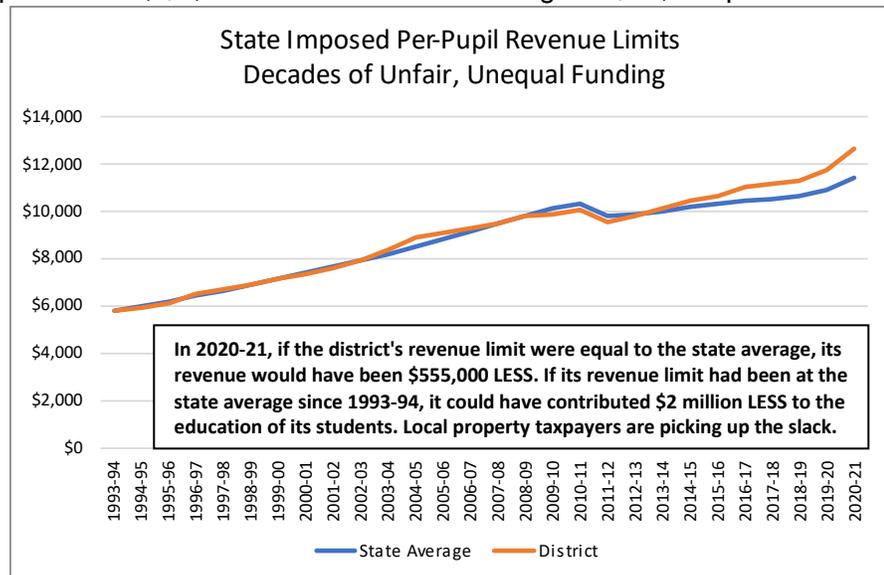
In 1993-94, the revenue limit in Turtle Lake was set at \$5,779 per student, just below the state average of \$5,817. In the same year, 24 school districts were allowed to have revenues of over

\$7,500 per student! Funding gaps have only grown worse.

Revenue limits in Turtle Lake remained at or below the state average most years from 1993 through 2012 when local taxpayers agreed to fill the gap in state funding. In 2020-2021, its revenue limit is \$12,618 per student, \$1,173 above the state average of \$11,445 per student.

New federal funding in 2021 will help with pandemic-related costs, including learning losses. But these funds only last for a few years. We need long-term improvements in fair funding.

These unfair funding gaps will continue unless the legislature takes steps now to reform the state's school funding system.

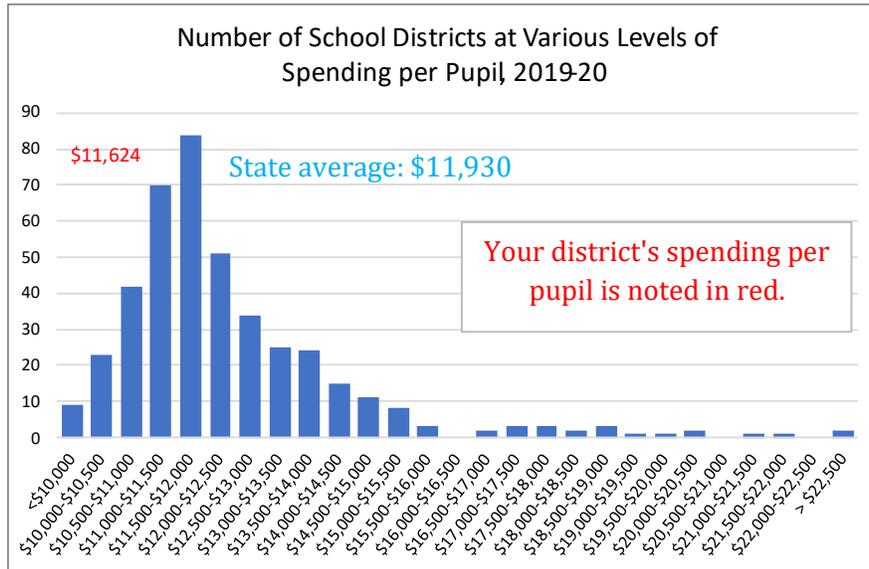


Flip the page to see how revenues impact education.

Special thanks to RW Baird School Business Solutions for expert assistance with data analysis.

The Other Side of the Coin: Adequate Spending to Meet Student Needs

The amount of money Turtle Lake spends to educate its students is constrained by its available funds. Given its low per pupil revenue limit, Turtle Lake has had to rely on local revenue to attain spending of \$11,624 per student, close to the state average of \$11,930. This level of spending was made possible through local spending referenda. **In other words, local property taxpayers have had to step up because the state is not fairly funding your schools.**



Turtle Lake not only faces the challenge of limited revenues. Its student body includes a large concentration of *high-need* students.

- 54% of students are from low-income families.
- 14% of students have disabilities requiring extra services.

Providing high-need students with a quality education requires additional resources.

The state's funding system mostly disregards extra costs of educating high-need students.

- Wisconsin is one of only a few states that does not provide extra aid for students from low-income families.
- State aid covers only 28% of the extra costs to provide special education services.

To provide an adequate education to all its students, one that meets the state's academic performance standards, AEF estimates that Turtle Lake will need to increase spending by at least \$3,152 per student. At the current level of enrollment, this increase implies a **spending gap of \$1.6 million**. We base this on a conservative estimate of 40% higher costs for these students.

AEF calls on the state legislature to close unfair funding gaps and recognize the additional costs incurred by districts serving high-needs students. Specifically, AEF proposes:

- Raising low revenue limits by \$300 per year, and closing gaps for low-revenue districts.
- Raising special education reimbursement to 45%, then 55% of actual costs.
- Providing \$150 of additional state aid per low-income student.
- Providing "Bilingual/Bicultural Aid with a floor of \$10,000 and \$500/student.

Please join AEF's call for fairness. Contact your legislators today to tell them you want a fair funding system for ALL students.

Data in this Dashboard are from WI DPI Revenue Limit Longitudinal Data, School Report Card Data Downloads, 2019-20 student "membership" counts, and Comparative Revenue and Comparative Cost files. Dr. Andrew Reschovsky (LaFollette School of Public Affairs, UW-Madison) assisted in the analysis of the data. All averages are pupil weighted. Spending is defined as "Total Current Education Costs."