



March 10, 2023

Dear Representative Duchow:

Thank you for your service to the people of the State of Wisconsin. Legislating is never easy, but in our next state budget, **AEF hopes to see the end of 30 years of revenue limit gaps.**

AEF is a membership organization of 60 public school districts educating almost 100,000 students across the state. Chartered in 1993 when revenue limits were first introduced, we have made it clear that **every state budget since then has made our districts losers** in the funding race. We believe it's unconstitutional. It can and should be changed in the 2023-2025 budget.

Attached to this letter is a map of base revenues for each district in the state. There are 125 districts in red at \$10,000 per student, giving almost 300 districts more funding per pupil. That's right, **almost one in three school districts is stuck at the bottom of the funding ladder.** The highest funded districts get \$18,000 and more...for every student! **The top 14 districts share almost \$71,000,000 to educate just 4300 students. This hurts kids.** Low revenue districts:

- Send a smaller share of their students to college.
- Spend 25% less per student on elementary teachers and have 8% more children per class.
- Make up just 17% of districts that spend more than \$3000 per MS/HS student, while high revenue districts are 50% of the total.
- Spend 30% less, but have 12% **more students for every school counselor.**
- Spend **22% less on nursing care** compared to high revenue districts.
- Make up just one-third of the districts spending the most on Library Media Specialists.

Furthermore, districts at the bottom level of revenues in 1993 are almost all still there today. Taxpayers in low revenue districts that pass spending referendums are covering for state funds that have been going to high revenue districts for years.

Here are **examples from your legislative district**. The second column is the 21-22 revenue limit per pupil, no exemptions. The third column compares the 20-21 revenue limit with the state average with exemptions (\$10,859), showing how much higher their revenues would have been in that year. The third column shows the cumulative effect of revenue limits since 1993.

| District | Revenue Limit/Pupil | Loss in 21-22 | Loss 1993-2021 |
|------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Merton | \$10,000 | \$1,004,000 | \$13,000,000 |
| Oconomowoc | \$10,616 | \$1,729,000 | \$6,000,000 |
| Waukesha | \$10,204 | \$7,255,000 | \$27,000,000 |

Other area school districts with low per pupil revenues include Arrowhead at \$10,496, North Lake at \$10,350, and Swallow at \$10,623. Hartland was at \$10,159. If their revenue limit was at the state average, their 2021 budget would have been \$1,331,000 higher.

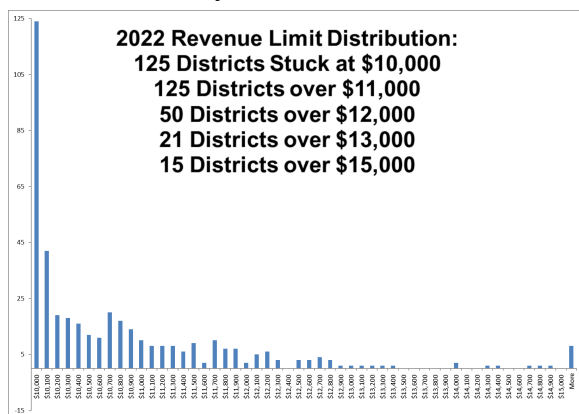
Compare those to Hamilton \$11,069; Kettle Moraine \$11,155; Lake Country \$11,293; Richmond \$11,009; and Stone Bank \$11,189. Why should these districts get over 10% more funds per student than your other constituents? It's not fair.

The revenue limit system hurts kids in low revenue school districts.

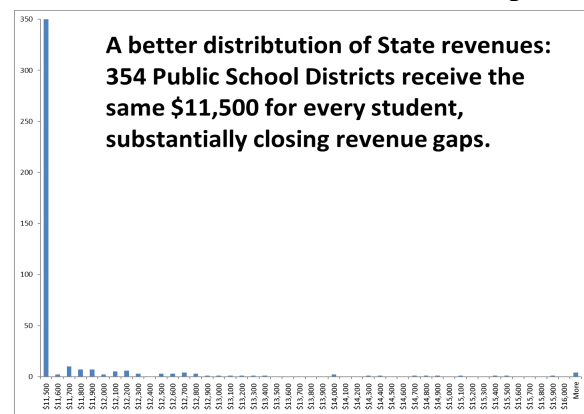
AEF does not propose to take away funding from a few lucky districts at the top. Instead, we hope that the Joint Finance Committee will do the same thing they did 4 years ago—raise the low revenue ceiling and provide additional funding through per pupil categorical aid. DPI wants to raise all revenue limits by \$1000—there would be no gap closure under their plan. Governor Evers proposed to raise all revenue limits by \$1000 with \$200 extra for districts at the bottom. This would have a small impact on equity. **AEF proposes to raise the low revenue ceiling by \$1500**, with other aids provided for all students equally. Here is how the proposals compare.

| | Current | DPI | Governor | AEF |
|--|---------|-------|----------|--------------|
| Districts at the Minimum | 125 | 125 | 187 | 354 |
| Districts Funded Within 10% of the Minimum | 74.4% | 74.4% | 78.2% | 93.5% |

End this unfair system:



AEF's 2023-2025 Revenue Limit Proposal



AEF also supports significant increases in special education funding. Insufficient special education funding has a major impact on nondisabled students. Below is the amount taken from every child without a disability in Fiscal 2020 to cover unfunded costs in those same districts:

- Arrowhead \$866
- Hartland \$1661
- Merton \$1098
- North Lake \$1325
- Oconomowoc \$1297
- Waukesha \$1758

Contact AEF Executive Director John Humphries at (608) 438-6109, or see www.waef.net for historical lawsuit information, background, downloadable maps, and more.