

## SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CUBA CITY

**MEMBERS**

Kendal Bruner  
Dan Bowden  
Lisa White  
Terry Loeffelholz

**Roger Kordus, Superintendent**

101 N. School St.

Cuba City, Wisconsin 53807

Phone No. (608) 744-2847

Fax No. (608) 744-2324

Good afternoon,

On behalf of the Cuba City School Board, our administration, staff, parents, and students, I welcome you, our distinguished guests of the Wisconsin Rural Schools Task Force Rural Schools, to our Cuba City School District. I am Roger Kordus, the Superintendent of the Cuba City School District. I hope you have enjoyed your tour of our District's elementary school and high school. The residents of Cuba City, Dickeyville and surrounding municipalities strongly support the Cuba City School District and are very proud of its accomplishments. I look forward to sharing some of our District's successes as well as some of its challenges.

The Cuba City School District is well known for its successful academic and athletic programs. The District's elementary school, high school and the entire District have earned excellent results through the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE), the State's new report card assessment system and the ACT. Forty-nine percent of the Cuba City High School's graduating class of 2013 planned to attend a four year college, forty-three percent of that class planned to attend a one or two year college, and eight percent planned to join the military or the workforce.

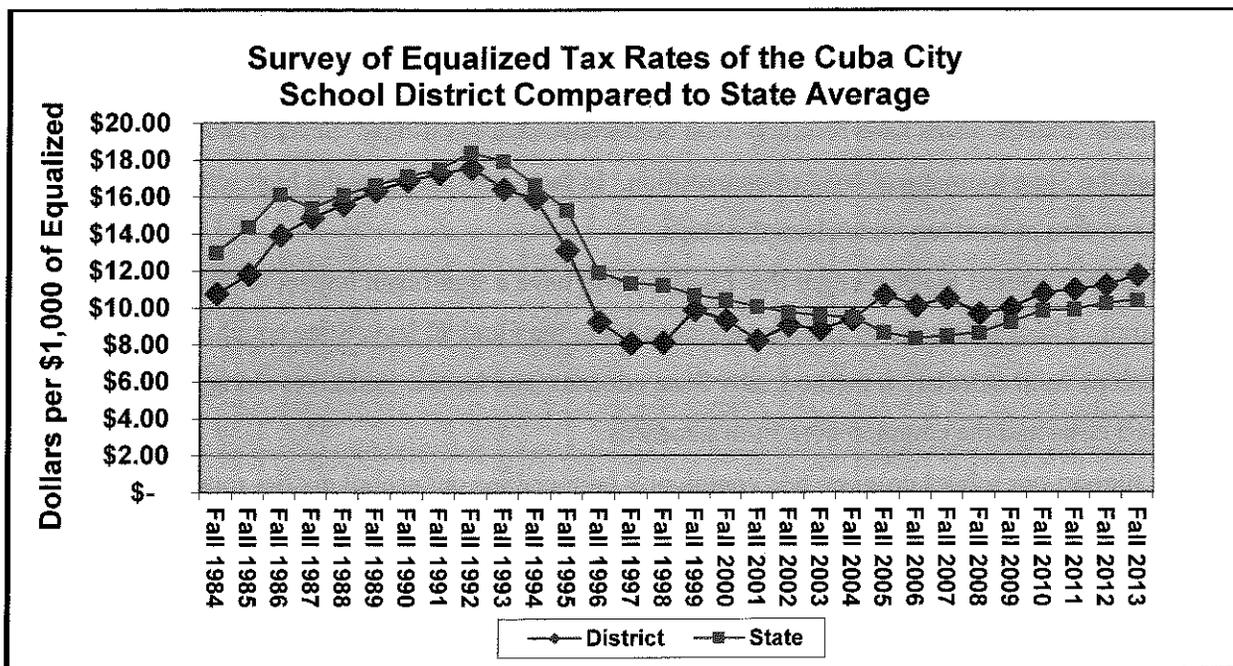
Student programs and offerings continue to be effective with providing students opportunities to participate in After School Help Programs, Project Lead the Way, FFA, FCCLA, the National Honor Society, and the Leo Club. The Cuba City High School's athletic teams have been and continue to thrive. The high school athletic teams have routinely won conference championships. Several sports programs have reached the State tournament level of competition. In fact, over the years the high school sports programs have won at least ten State championships.

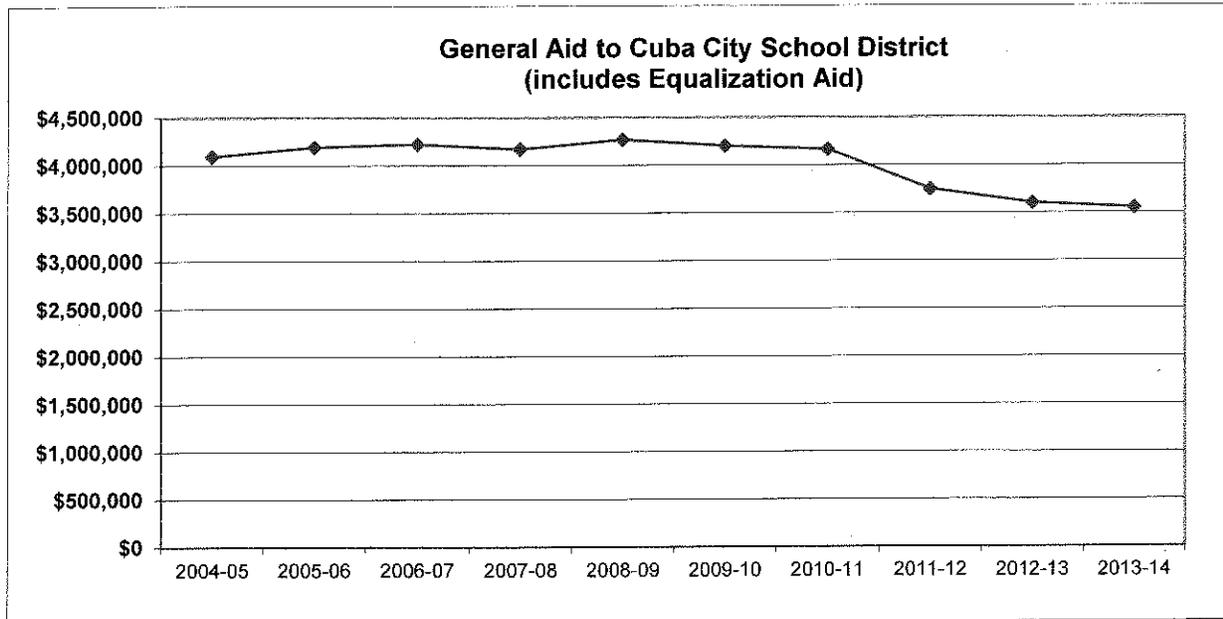
I will now present the challenges that I believe will have a significant impact to the Cuba City School District. These issues center upon recent changes to the Fund 80 levy, State equalized aid formula, revenue limit calculation method, new State educator and learner initiatives along with transportation costs and the common core state standards.

To support our school program and community partnerships our school district routinely seeks out and applies for grants and other resources. For example, during 2010 the District was awarded over \$700,000 through a Federally Funded "PEP" Grant. Those monies were used to purchase physical fitness equipment and to remodel classrooms into a fitness facility in the high school. We are very proud of our school districts fitness center. The District has recently opened the fitness center for the public to use during evenings, weekends, and other times when students are not using the facility. The Community Service Fund, Fund 80, plays an integral part in funding the supervising personnel and related activities

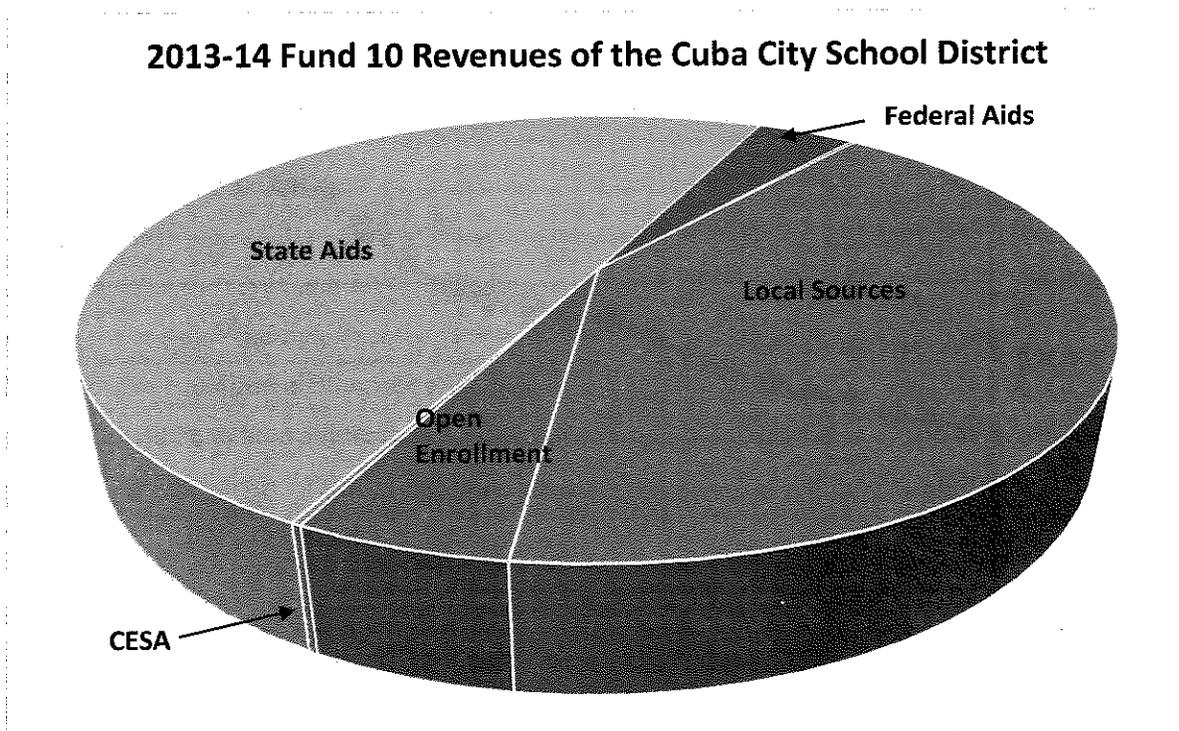
that enable and encourage the residents to be active users of our fitness center. Allowing districts to levy for community activities allows school districts the ability to share resources with its community and to provide the needed revenues to support those community partnerships. I encourage each of you to consider legislation that would once again allow local school districts the ability to levy the amount, through the current public school annual meeting process, of revenue to support all of their community service activities. I believe the fund 80 should not be capped at rates from prior years.

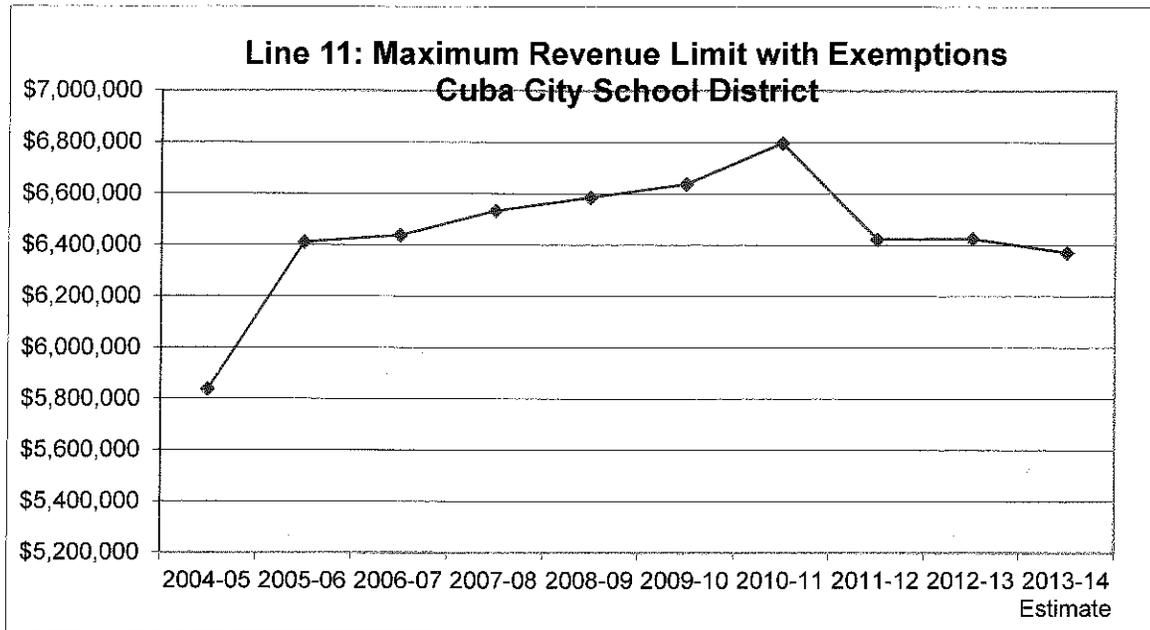
Granted, many rural schools in Wisconsin face difficult financial challenges. However, the Cuba City School District has been highly successful with ensuring that their school district is in a financially strong position. For example, during the past few years the community supported the Cuba City School District with the passage of three referendums. In the fall of 2004, voters approved a \$4.7 million referendum to remodel and upgrade the high school and elementary school. The remodeling project added classrooms to the high school, installed air conditioning to the entire elementary building, as well as the remodeling of several office rooms in both the elementary and high school buildings. During the fall of 2005, the Cuba City School District voters approved a referendum to exceed the revenue cap by \$600,000 for each school year from 2005-06 through 2008-09. In the spring of 2009 the community supported a referendum to exceed state-set revenue limits by \$600,000 per year on a recurring basis (one that would last in perpetuity). The additional funds are used to pay operating costs and general upkeep of the school district. That referendum passed with 497 "yes" votes and 275 "no" votes. Each of these referendums have helped place the Cuba City School District to be in a very healthy financial position. As with most other public school district in Wisconsin, taxpayers of the Cuba City School District have stepped up to support their public school through increasing its annual school levy even as equalized aid continues to drop as the following two graphs illustrate (from the DPI SFS website).



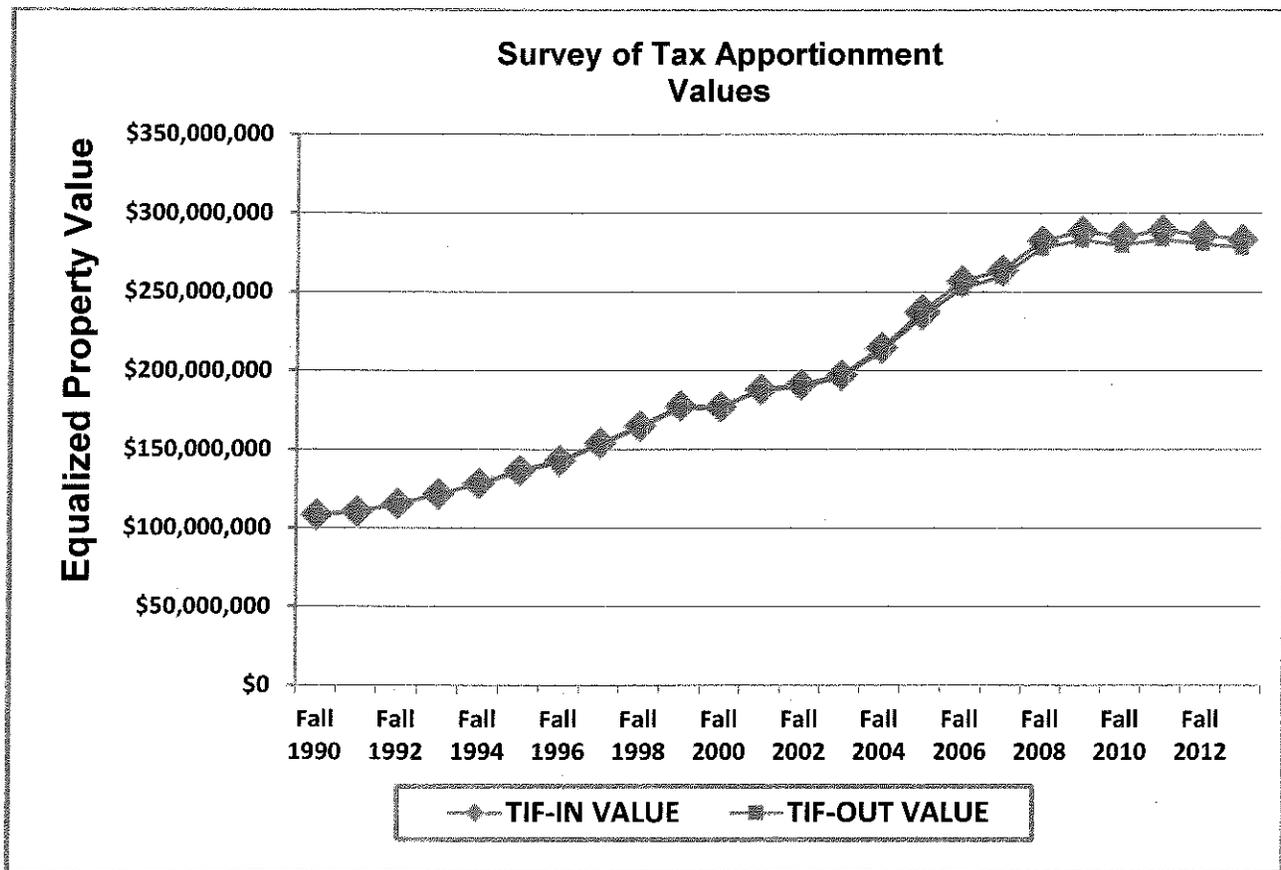


During the 2013-14 fiscal year the Cuba City School District received 53.2% from the State through Equalized Aid. 46.8% from local support within the revenue limit formula. The following graph illustrates how both Equalized State Aid and the Fund 10 general fund levy make up over 80% of the general fund total revenues. The next graph displays a summary of all the expenses of the general fund – fund 10.



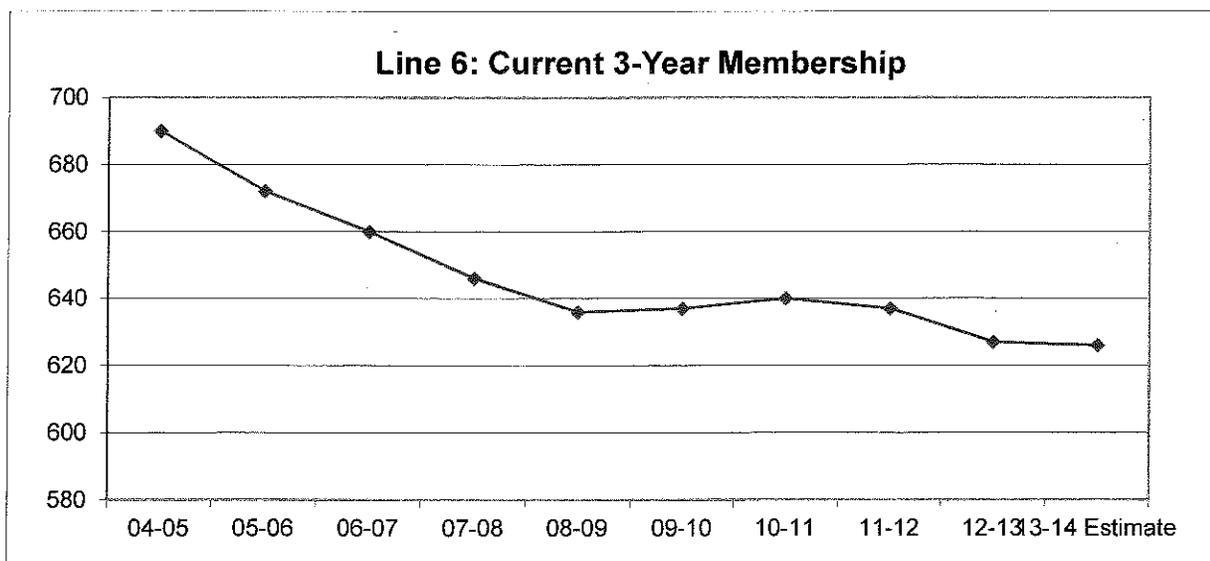
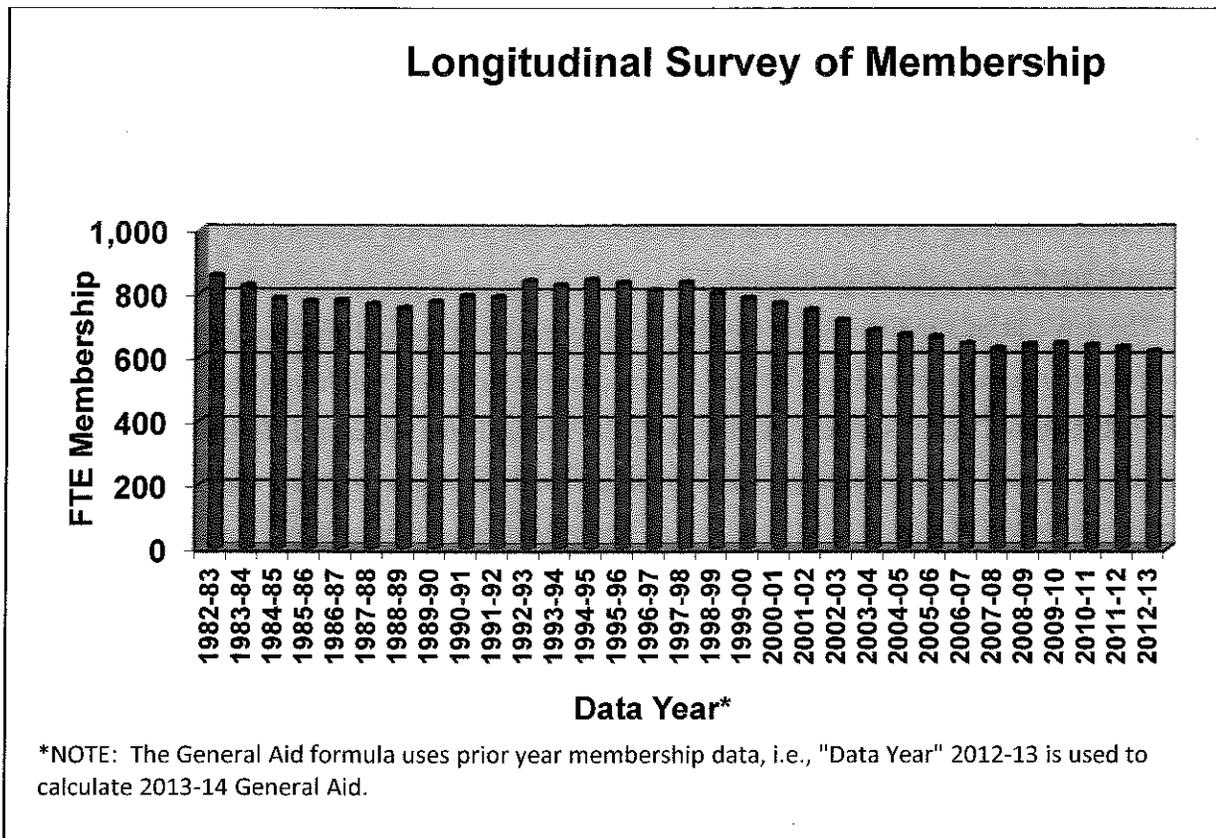


As you are aware, the three main factors that determine a school district's equalized aid and maximum revenue limit are the district's property value, the amount it invests on each of its students, and student enrollment or membership. The District's equalized property value has been rather consistent during the past few years as the following graph for the DPI's School Finance website illustrates.



As for the Cuba City School District's shared cost per member along with the base revenue per member is \$10,790 for the 2013-14 school year. That number, along with the District's value per member of about \$400,000 allows the District to receive negative tertiary aid through the equalized aid formula.

Like all school districts across Wisconsin, the Cuba City School District always pays attention to its student enrollment. The District's membership has been declining, however, enrollment seems to be stabilizing as the District's full-time enrollment has increased during the past two years from 616 in the fall of 2012 to 633 reported this past fall in the third Friday in September report to the DPI. The following two graph illustrates this point.



Yet, even as enrollment declines, a school district must continue to meet the needs of its students. Therefore I urge each of you to continue supporting the declining enrollment exemption in the revenue limit formula to provide resources and time for school district's to prepare for periods of declining enrollment.

I would like to point out the other significant factor that I believe has direct input on the equalized aid and revenue limit formulas, and that is our State legislature. I commend and thank the legislature for providing an additional \$75 per FTE (Full Time Equivalent) for 2013-14 and \$150 per FTE for 2014-15 fiscal year. In addition, I strongly encourage each of you to consider our State Superintendent's Fair Funding Proposal. If the funding formulas for Wisconsin's Public Schools are not improved I believe this will leave rural schools with fewer and fewer resources that are needed to address students' diverse learning needs, the new education initiatives that are being put into place across our State, along with the new associated technology investments that are needed by school districts to meet each of the requirements for the new educator initiatives.

The new educator initiatives that I am referring to are the Educator Effectiveness and Evaluation System and the Smarter Balanced Assessments. Each of these initiatives will have a significant impact to the Cuba City School District's general fund budget. For example, the Educator Effectiveness and Evaluation system will require additional hours of professional development for our staff, additional time of our principals to thoroughly evaluate teachers, as well as additional monies to pay for software licenses and upgrades. Technology will also continue to be a larger expense portion of the District's general fund budget. Just to provide enough technological devices that will be required for each of our third through eighth grade students to prepare for and to complete the Smarter Balanced Assessments, beginning sometime during the 2014-15 school year, may cost the Cuba City School District over \$140,000 dollars. This figure includes the additional hardware and wireless infrastructure needed for this new student assessment system. In addition, I would like to share the following quote from our District's Computer Technician, "Besides the obvious cost of all the physical hardware, the more insidious and expensive cost is the software licensing necessary to keep everything functioning and legal."

Transportation of our students is another significant expense of the District's general fund budget. The school district consists of over 200 square miles. Each fiscal year the Cuba City School District spends over \$300,000 for transporting its students as well as transporting our communities' private school students who attend St. Rose School in Cuba City or Holy Ghost/Immaculate Conception School in Dickeyville. Yet, the Cuba City School District only receives about \$36,500 from the State through the transportation categorical aid. I ask members of this committee and your fellow legislatures to support the increasing of the state categorical aid funding for pupil transportation. That would free additional revenues to be applied directly to student learning.

Common Core is another topic that is currently being reviewed and discussed in the legislative and throughout the State. I am asking you to support the common core state standards. Here at the Cuba City School District we are well underway implementing the common core state standards along with challenging our students through more rigorous expectations. Our District has invested a great deal of time, energy and financial resources to provide professional development and curriculum to align our instruction with the common core state standards. I believe the common core will also serve our District well with comparing our schools to other schools throughout the State, Nation, and the world.

In summary, the issues of concern that I have presented today will play a significant impact on the Cuba City School District. The recent changes to the Fund 80 levy must be reconsidered. The State's equalized aid formula must be reviewed to consider improvements in the way public schools are funded. I believe legislators must continue to increase funding for public schools. School Districts greatly appreciate the new categorical aid provided to Districts for each of its students including \$75 of new public school revenue for the 2014-15 fiscal year and \$150 per student for the 2014-15 fiscal year. I hope these increases in school funding continue. Furthermore, the legislature must continue to assist the State's public school system to provide funding and resources for the new State educator and learner initiatives along with public school transportation programs. Finally, I believe the legislature must continue to support the common core state standards. Thank you again for coming to the Cuba City School District and listening to our presentations.

Roger Kordus

Superintendent, Cuba City School District

*The School District of Cuba City does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability or handicap.*