



Unified School District of Antigo

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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Jake Leiterman
Supvr. of Buildings & Grounds

April 21, 2021

Thank you for being here today. I am Tim Prunty, Unified School District of Antigo Business Manager, and with me is Andy Merry, President of the Antigo School Board. We have five points we would like to make.

1. The Governor has proposed that the Low Revenue Ceiling be increased to \$10,250 in FY22 and to \$10,500 in FY23. The State average revenue per member this year as reported by DPI is \$11,450, yet districts like Antigo with the lowest revenue limit ceiling, received only \$10,000. Antigo will be facing a two million dollar deficit in FY23, and this proposal would eliminate half of that. While some may feel that districts that want more money should pass operational referendums, we have tried to do so numerous times without success. We are a district that is property poor and for us to pass a one million dollar per year referendum, our property taxes would increase by \$0.85 /1000, which we know is much more than they would increase in a property rich district. It is absolutely vital that you support the increase in the low revenue limit ceiling. Why should a student's educational opportunities be determined by where they live?

2. The Governor has proposed that Special Education Categorical Aid reimbursement be increased to 45% in FY22 and 50% in FY23. Our numbers for Special education students have been averaging between 16 and 17% for the last several years. On average we spend an additional \$10,000 per special education student. This categorical aid needs to continue to increase.

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3. The Governor has proposed eliminating the enrollment limit that says only districts with enrollments of fewer than 750 students are eligible for Sparsity Aid. The Antigo District covers 540 square miles and has an enrollment of about 2200 students. We have substantial transportation costs; I hope you can support a proposal that makes the transportation cost more equitable for all districts.

4. As was mentioned earlier, Antigo is a property poor district, but in addition to that, we also have a population that is economically disadvantaged. 54% of our total student population is economically disadvantaged and at two of our three elementary schools, 70 % of the students are economically disadvantaged. The Blue Ribbon commission report recommended that low-income students have a weighted count of 1.2 per student. A large number of economically disadvantaged students come to school already behind their peers. They often have a limited vocabulary, and sometimes have not even developed simple skills like holding a crayon. Early interventions with these students can help them to become proficient readers, and additional monies would open up new opportunities for them in later grades. We implore you to increase the funding for economically disadvantaged students.

5. The pandemic has catapulted mental health to the top of the list of barriers to student learning and success. Until we can effectively meet the growing mental health needs of our youth, far too many of our students will continue to struggle. Currently, our students have to wait up to four months to see a mental health provider. We ask that you consider funding the training of additional mental health providers or incentivize those who can work specifically in rural areas.

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