



# NORTHLAND PINES SCHOOL DISTRICT

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April 21, 2021

Dear Joint Finance Committee:

Welcome to the Northwoods. It is an honor and privilege to be speaking to the committee so close to home. I have the honor of being the District Administrator of the Northland Pines School District. Our main campus is located in Eagle River, just 30 minutes North of where we are sitting. Northland Pines makes up over 476 square miles and we share a border with the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. I am here to advocate for funds to support learning for the 1,349 students at Northland Pines and students across the state.

In the world of school finance, Northland Pines is considered "property rich" and we are reaching the point of zero state aid. When some hear the words "property rich", they think we have nothing to worry about for school finances, but that is not the case.

I would like to advocate for a few of the many ways in the upcoming budget in which you can help kids:

### **Increase 4K to a Full FTE**

Our students need to be in 4K full-time and we have moved to 4 full days a week. We would be happy to make this 5 days a week; this commitment is an expense that should be valued at a full FTE. At Northland Pines this would mean an additional 27 FTE.

### **Special Education Categorical Aid**

Last year, Northland Pines transferred over 2.1 Million dollars from Fund 10 into Fund 27 (Special Education). This is approximately 7.5 % of our budget. These obligations should be shared with the State at a rate closer to the 50-60% that is in the proposed budget to allow for us to use the dollars on **ALL** students!

### **Transportation Aid**

Please consider an increase in both transportation aid and high cost transportation aid. We spend approximately 1.2 Million dollars for transportation costs and that number is only going to rise due the shortage of drivers and rising costs of equipment. This aid helps students and the taxpayers.

The Northland Pines community guarantees rigor, relevance, and relationships to prepare all learners for life.

*ALL staff BELIEVE in ALL students*

**Sparsity aid**

Please support the proposed second tier for sparsity aid. We are the poster district for sparsity; our density is 2.67 and the average for the districts that did receive sparsity aid was 4.2 last year and well below the threshold of 10. The \$125,000+ we would receive would continue to help support learning and help our taxpayers.

**Mental Health Categorical Aid**

Schools are the main, and sometimes only, support for students and families. We need financial support to have staff to support the daily mental health needs of our students.

We need your help in this budget. You will hear a lot of numbers and figures today and they are important, but what is more important are the names, faces and stories behind those numbers. All the dollars you put towards education are not expenses, they are investments in our students and state's future!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Scott Foster

District Administrator

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