



ROB SWEARINGEN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 34th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Office: (608) 266-7141
Toll Free: (888) 534-0034
Rep.Swearingen@legis.wi.gov

Room 123 West
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708-8953

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Representative Rob Swearingen

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(608) 266-7141**

Evers Cuts \$750,000 for Northwoods School Serving Children with Special Needs

Madison, WI – Representative Rob Swearingen (R – Rhinelander) released the following statement regarding the enactment of [2023 Act 19](#) and Gov. Evers’ line-item veto of the Lakeland STAR:

“For the third straight budget, Governor Evers has delivered another gut punch to the Lakeland STAR Academy and pulled crucial funding allocated to the school. Senator Felzkowski and I have submitted a budget motion requesting a \$750,000 investment into the Lakeland STAR for the past three budget cycles. To put things into perspective, that is only .0007% of our state budget that would have helped this unique school that serves children with autism and special needs.

“Lakeland STAR plays a vital role in the Northwoods; they just want the capacity to take on more students. Evers says, ‘State funding decisions should not pick winners and losers,’ but I can’t help but notice how many children with special needs are being overlooked in Vilas and Oneida counties.

“I’d like to invite the governor to step outside his Madison bubble and take a tour of the Lakeland STAR. He should meet the students and dedicated staff he has been letting down since 2019.”

Lakeland STAR is open to students with varying ability levels and includes personalized education programs to help them discover their unique potential and maximize their capabilities. Lakeland STAR School serves Grades 7-8, and Lakeland STAR Academy serves Grades 9-12. The ultimate goal of the school is to provide students with the self-confidence and determination to live independently, find gainful employment, or pursue higher education upon graduation from high school.

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Representative Swearingen represents the 34th Assembly District, which includes the Northwoods counties of Oneida and Vilas.