



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

Capitol Update
By Senator Howard Marklein
August 14, 2015

Sparsity Aid for Rural Schools

Rural communities have a different set of challenges than other communities. As one of the largest senate districts in the State of Wisconsin, the 17th Senate District is almost entirely rural and has its own unique challenges.

Representing a rural district means that I often have different priorities than those of my colleagues. However, the one priority that my colleagues and I share is a strong public school system. The public schools in these rural communities have an especially difficult challenge to provide a quality education and services to a small number of students spread over a large geographic area. I continually work to try to find ways to improve our rural educational system.

The 2015-17 state budget has been signed into law. There were a lot of important items in the budget that increased funding for public schools. The Joint Finance Committee (JFC) added \$300 million to K-12 education funding, restored the \$150 per pupil aid that was originally slated to be cut, and added an additional \$100 per pupil in categorical aid for the second year of the biennium.

For rural schools, we provided an additional \$2.5 million per year in high cost transportation aids and increased sparsity aid to our local school districts.

Sparsity aid is additional state funding that is distributed to schools with enrollment of 725 pupils or less and a density of less than 10 pupils per square mile. Sparsity aid adds \$300 in additional categorical aid per student. Student enrollment in schools that qualify for sparsity aid represents around 6.8% of total public school enrollment.

For this upcoming school year, 137 school districts across the state of Wisconsin will see an increase in sparsity aid of \$4.2 million per year to local schools, totaling \$17.674 million statewide for the 2015-17 school year. Of the \$4.2 million annual increase, almost \$790,000 will go to schools in the 17th Senate District. The program will be fully funded for the next two years.

The Department of Public Instruction recently released its distribution of sparsity aid payments for the 2015-16 school year. I have provided a table below that shows the school districts in the 17th Senate District that will receive sparsity aid for the 2015-16 school year. I am proud of our commitment to provide additional funding to rural schools, especially those in our community.

School District	Enrollment	2015-16 Aid	2014-15 Aid	Difference
Argyle	347	\$104,100	\$79,582	\$24,518
Belmont	358	\$107,400	\$85,958	\$21,442
Benton	245	\$73,500	\$57,148	\$16,352
Black Hawk	389	\$116,700	\$92,806	\$23,894
Cassville	217	\$65,100	\$50,772	\$14,328

Cuba City	664	\$199,200	\$149,245	\$49,955
Highland	284	\$85,200	\$71,080	\$14,120
Hillsboro	503	\$150,900	\$118,546	\$32,354
Ithaca	318	\$95,400	\$79,582	\$15,818
Mineral Point	721	\$216,300	\$0	\$216,300
Necedah	709	\$212,700	\$166,484	\$46,216
New Lisbon	618	\$185,400	\$150,898	\$34,502
Pecatonica	452	\$135,600	\$102,252	\$33,348
Potosi	338	\$101,400	\$78,165	\$23,235
River Ridge	530	\$159,000	\$118,546	\$40,454
Riverdale	725	\$217,500	\$169,317	\$48,183
Royall	622	\$186,600	\$156,566	\$30,034
Shullsburg	392	\$117,600	\$90,444	\$27,156
Southwestern	572	\$171,600	\$138,618	\$32,982
Weston	312	\$93,600	\$73,914	\$19,686
Wonewoc-Union Center	373	\$111,900	\$87,374	\$24,526
Totals		\$2,906,700	\$2,117,297	\$789,403

**Source: Department of Public Instruction, August 2015*

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov. Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have input, ideas or need assistance with any state-related matters.

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