

Shorewood School Board Resolution

Support of Increasing Special Education Funding in Wisconsin Public Schools

August 21, 2018

WHEREAS, Governor Walker's goal of having the best schools in the nation cannot be met at current funding levels, and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the 422 local Wisconsin public school districts to support the educational needs of ALL students, INCLUDING those who are differently abled, and

WHEREAS, the federal government has a stated commitment to fund 40% of the costs of supporting students with special needs, but funds merely 15%, and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin had statutory language to fund over 60% of costs related to these students, but now funds merely 26%, and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has not increased funding in public school special education categorical aid for a decade but has increased it for private schools to a minimum of 90% using the taxpayer-financed special education scholarship, and

WHEREAS, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau recently concluded that because of the historic underfunding by the state and federal governments, public school districts must now fund over \$1billion to cover the educational costs associated with implementing Individual Educational Programs (IEPs), and

WHEREAS, as a result of this underfunding, districts across Wisconsin must cut critical programs supporting the education of the rest of their students to support the legislatively mandated special education needs, and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin now has taxpayer-financed special needs scholarships (vouchers) which benefit students in private schools, and

WHEREAS, these vouchers serve children, 75% of whom already were in private schools, and allow private schools to leave children with the greatest special education needs in the public schools, and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin public schools are required by law to continue serving all special education students in private schools, whether or not they receive a voucher, putting public schools out more money to pay for these public school special education educators (i.e. teachers, physical/occupational therapists, speech/language pathologists), and

WHEREAS, private voucher schools, despite getting increased funding for special needs students, are not required to have certified/licensed special education staff, and

WHEREAS, these special needs vouchers for private schools are paid 100% reimbursement up to \$18,500 and then at a 90% reimbursement rate, while students with the greatest special needs in Wisconsin public schools are only funded at a 26% reimbursement rate, and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin public schools are held accountable to taxpayers while private schools are not, and

WHEREAS, the Shorewood School District would increase special education funding by a minimum of \$2,145,178 when using the same formula for reimbursement presently used for private schools.

FURTHER, it is believed that Wisconsin public school children are worth reimbursement equal to that of private school children.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Shorewood School District calls on Governor Walker, the Wisconsin State Assembly and the Wisconsin State Senate to match the reimbursement rate given to private schools under the legislated Special Needs Scholarship Program by increasing reimbursement for public schools at 100% reimbursement up to \$18,500 and then at a 90% reimbursement rate,

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being all of the members of the School Board, the Shorewood Education Association's Executive Board and the Superintendent, have executed this resolution the 21st day of August, 2018.

Board President, Paru Shah

Superintendent, Bryan Davis

SEA President, Amy Miller

Board Vice President, Hilary DeBlois

Board Treasurer, Joanne Lipo Zovic

Board Clerk, Pablo Muirhead

Board Member, Lance Weinhardt

SEA Vice President, Susan Leslie

SEA Treasurer, Marita Gruber

SEA Secretary, Elizabeth Dean

SEA Chief Negotiator, Sachin Pandya