



The Madison Metropolitan School District seeks approval of the district taxpayers to permanently exceed the revenue cap for operations money by \$13 million a year. In the meantime, to establish that new tax base over the next three years, a total of \$27 million in more revenue will have been raised for programs and services. The district has also projected there will continue to be a 'gap' or shortfall of revenue to meet expenses of approximately \$4 million per year after the next three years, thereby expecting to seek approval for additional spending authority.

**Whereas**, the Board of Education has staked the future of the district on increased spending to maintain current programs and services for a "high quality education;"

**Whereas**, student performance on the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exams has languished at the 7, 8, and 9 deciles (in comparison with the rest of the state's schools where 1 is the highest level and 10 is the lowest) in 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade reading, math, science, social studies and language arts exams for the past five years. The total percentage of MMSD students performing at either "proficient" or "advanced" levels (the two highest standards) has consistently ranged in mid 60%<sup>s</sup> to mid 70%<sup>s</sup>;

**Whereas**, the district Drop Out Rate of 2.7% (2006-07) was the highest since 1998-99. With the exception of two years with slight declines, the rate has risen steadily since 1999.

**Whereas**, the Attendance Rate for all students has remained basically steady since 1998-99 in a range from 95.2% (2005-06) to a high of 96.5% (2001-02);

**Whereas**, the district Truancy Rate of students habitually truant has risen again in the past three years to 6.0% in 2006-07. The truancy rate has ranged from 6.3% (1999-2000) to 4.4% in 2002-03;

**Whereas**, the district total PreK-12 enrollment has declined from 25,087 (2000-01) to its second lowest total of 24,540 (2008-09) since that time;

**Whereas**, the district annual budget has increased from approximately \$183 million in 1994-1995 (the first year of revenue caps) to approximately \$368 million (2008-09);

**Whereas**, the board explains the 'budget gap' between revenue and expenses as created by the difference between the state mandated Qualified Economic Offer of 3.8% minimum for salary and health benefits for professional teaching staff and the 2.2% average annual increases per student in the property tax levy. The district, however, has agreed with the teachers' union for an average 4.24% in annual increases since 2001;

**Whereas**, the district annual cost per pupil is the second highest in the state at \$13,280 for the school year 2007-08;

**Whereas**, there has been a significant growth in the numbers of MMSD graduates who are required to take remedial math, English and writing courses at post secondary institutions of higher learning in order to enter regular, beginning level courses;

**Whereas**, the 2008 MMSD Math Task Force Report states that MMSD students are required to take less math than other urban schools in Wisconsin; and, there are notable differences in the achievement gap;

**Whereas**, there is district acknowledgement of a serious achievement gap between low-income and minority student groups compared with others. There are no plans evident for changing how new or existing money will be spent differently in order to have an impact on improving student learning/achievement and instructional effectiveness;

**Whereas**, there are no specific plans and strategies for changes in the response and reporting systems for safety, use of appropriate technology and for curriculum and services for helping students, staff, parents and the community develop shared responsibilities for safety and conflict resolution;

**Whereas**, there are no cost-sharing and collaborative initiatives taking place with city and county governments to reduce costs, minimize duplication of services and create better-defined roles and responsibilities;

**Whereas**, the district is not demonstrating full disclosure, accountability and transparency by providing data and information to show and verify criteria, assumptions, base lines, calculations and analyses for stated efficiencies, savings, past and current projects, cuts and reductions;

**Whereas**, the board will make budget cuts affecting programs and services, whether or not this referendum passes. The cuts will be made with no specific assessment/evaluation process or strategy for objective analyses of educational or business programs and services to determine the most effective and efficient use of money they already have, as well as for the additional spending authority they are asking with this referendum;

**Whereas**, there is a lack of a data-driven basis for the re-allocation of existing funds, as well as for the allocation of new funds to programs and services for the greater benefit of all students; therefore, all students are in harms way and are impeded in their academic achievement and personal development;

**THEREFORE**, THE question is: “Why authorize more spending for the same programs, services and personnel which are NOT attaining desirable results with cost efficient and benefit effective performance?”

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