



Date: February 20, 2019

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- New State Superintendent is Carolyn Stanford Taylor
- Legislative Panel - At February's CESA 11 Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting, several legislators joined the superintendent group to discuss a number of education related topics, including the Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations, state budget, legislative timelines, school start date, and other topics.
- Governor Evers will release his budget proposal on February 28th; however, local legislators indicated they don't see an approved budget until late summer or early fall.
- School Administrator Alliance (SAA) has set its legislative agenda for the 2019-21 budget, where it will advocate for such broad topics as special education funding, predictable and sustainable school funding; early learning opportunities; children's mental health educator preparation, training and retention; private school voucher; revenue limit equity; and declining enrollment relief.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

According to the Wisconsin Policy Forum report, Wisconsin school districts spend approximately \$1 billion on special education costs not reimbursed by the state, forcing districts to use general fund dollars to cover the costs. Low reimbursement rates place a "considerable burden on local districts," according to the report.

- Wisconsin schools enrolled 118,546 students with disabilities in 2018-18, down almost 5600 students from a decade earlier. That amounts to 13.8% of its student population, slightly above the 13% national average.
- Special education costs in Wisconsin rose 18.3% to about \$1.4 billion from 2007-08 to 2017-18. At the same time, the state's primary funding source has remained flat at about \$369 million. That has pushed the reimbursement rate from 28.9% to about 24.5% in 2018-19.
- Wisconsin schools received \$186.3 million in federal funds for special education in 2017-18, not counting Medicaid dollars, which cover about 12% of special ed costs. Federal funding for special education has remained relatively flat for the past decade.
- In 2017-18, Frederic needed to use approximately \$388,000 to cover the special education costs.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Frederic's social media reach continues to grow as a viable communication tool for the 1194 people currently following the District on Facebook. We have been posting an average of 1.1 posts per day this school year, but our new goal is 2-3 posts per day. I have asked all staff members to help in our communication efforts. This increase in content for our followers will mean on a weekly basis, we can regularly reach more than 10,000 people.

## STATE EDUCATION CONVENTION PRESENTATIONS

The School Board and administration participated in two presentations at the state conventions. We participated in a panel about the Future Search process and attendees were impressed at the turnout we had for our community conversation. We also presented to a packed room about our Roots and Branches Community Childcare Center. A number of districts have reached out to do site visits, learn about our process, and have us send materials. More and more, districts are looking at child care programs in their buildings.

## DISTRICT WEBSITE

To best meet the needs of stakeholders, the District is reviewing its website design and exploring various vendors. A functional, inviting website increases communication opportunities amongst students, staff, families, and community.