

**DASD Board**  
**Budget / Advocacy Talking Points**  
**March 2023**

**BASIC FACTS ABOUT DEFOREST**

**DeForest Area**

- Nine Municipalities
- Dane and Columbia County
- Square Miles - 89.29 square miles
- Tax Base \$ \$3.6B

**Student Demographics**

Student Enrollment	4147
Students with Disabilities	12.3%
ELL students	3%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	17.5%
Students by Race	
Amer Indian	0.12%
Asian	2.99%
Black	2.87%
Hispanic	6.94%
Pacific Isle	0.02%
White	81%
Two or More	6.05%

**Financial Snapshot**

2022-23 Operating Budget

- General Fund \$52.4m
- Special Education Budget \$8.9m
- Capital Projects \$8.7m
- Food Service \$1.9m
- Post Employment Benefits \$665k
- Community Service \$198k

**Staffing**

- DASD employs 557.99 FTE
- Certified Staff 323.3
- Support Staff 200.69
- Administrative 22
- Coordinators/specialists, Deans

## DEFOREST AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT ADVOCACY TALKING POINTS

### STAFFING CHALLENGES

#### ● Indicators and Impacts of Staffing Challenges

- **Inability to fill vacancies** resulted in programing adjustments (2 instances in 22-23)
- **Permanent positions filled with substitutes**
- **Increased applications for licenses with stipulations** (formerly known as emergency licenses)
- **Single-digit applicant pools** becoming the norm
- We have had **unfilled vacancies throughout the entire school year**

#### ● Increasing number of certified and support staff leaving the field of education.

- We had 10 mid-year resignations of certified staff in 21-22
- None of these former employees reported leaving for jobs in other public school systems

#### ● Despite the licensure requirements to be a substitute decreasing, we are unable to secure enough substitutes to meet our operational needs.

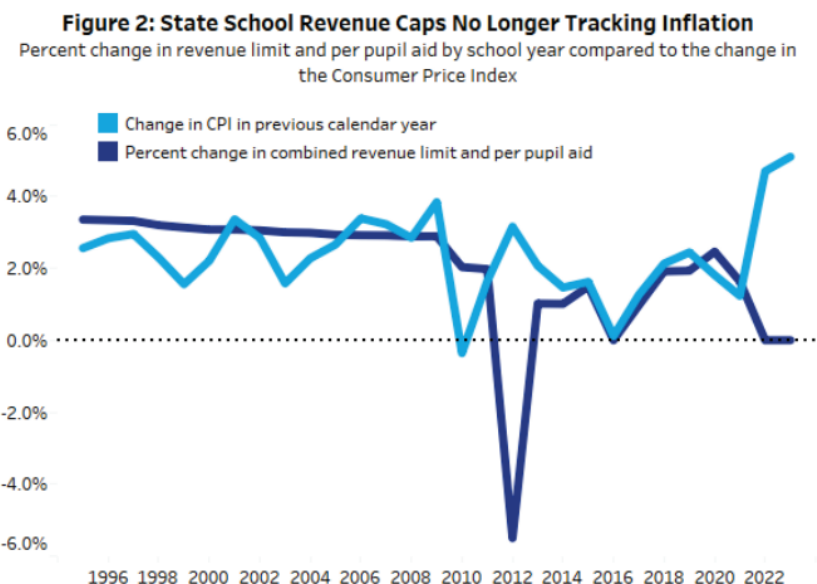
- Requirements for holding a substitute teaching license went from needing a 4 year degree to an associates degree.
- DASD went from roughly a 1:3 substitute to teacher ratio (82 subs for 243 teacher) to a 1:4 ratio (78 subs for 328 teacher)
- Results in overall decrease in fill rates

### FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

#### ● Revenue caps have not kept up with inflation.

For DASD 86.4% amount of our total budget comes from the revenue limit which is dictated by state statute. We do not have the ability without the state legislature or voter approved referendum to raise our revenue limit to offset inflation.

Since 2009 the revenue limit has not kept up with CPI.



Sources: WI Department of Public Instruction, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Bloomberg; the combined amount in revenue limit and per pupil aid is divided by the average revenue limit per member and the change in the Consumer Price Index is calculated with calendar year averages and a 2022 forecast.

● **Despite DeForest's strong financial rating and financial position we are not immune to the impacts of a \$0/\$0 biennial budget and costs of inflation.**

● **Cost to employ staff have gone up**

Attracting and retaining staff has become very competitive. Salary increases have been a necessity to operate but a challenge to fund long term with \$0 increase in the revenue limit for the 2021-23 biennium.

Budgeted increase of 4.7% for salary and wage adjustments for existing staff in 2022-23.

Sub costs increased by 31% since last school year, and 50% when compared to pre-pandemic sub costs.

● **Inflation costs for normal operational needs have skyrocketed**

Food costs for our food service program increased by 15%

Large inflationary increases also occurred for general supplies used for cleaning, instruction, and operations in general. For example, copy paper increased by 65%

● **Use of one-time funds to make ends meet creates the potential for a fiscal cliff for DASD**

Federal stimulus funds were intended to help get kids back to school safely and improve academic recovery. With the \$0/\$0 state legislature decision, this forced Wisconsin districts to use one-time funds for recurring expenditures versus the intended use of these funds.

DASD is currently using \$1.1 million of federal dollars to fund recurring costs 2022-23

DASD is estimating using \$200K of fund balance

● **Eroding of district fund balance reserves weakens the stability of school districts**

School district fund balance is extremely important for having sufficient cash flow for payroll and other expenses. State Aid and property tax revenue payments to districts do not align with district payroll and other expense payment timelines.

Fund balance reserves are also important for covering expensive capital project expenditures, and other unforeseen emergencies.

Having sufficient reserves is imperative to a school district's credit rating and can save taxpayers significant money on interest expenses related to bonds.

● **Revenue Limits are not comparable among districts**

Within Dane county per pupil revenue is not equal between school districts. All districts have similar operating expenses and compete for staffing, but have vast differences in revenue.

2022-23		
District	With Exemptions (less Voucher & EEE)	With all Exemptions
Verona Area	\$15,105	\$15,187
Madison Metropolitan	\$14,113	\$14,254
Marshall	\$13,535	\$14,987
Oregon	\$13,379	\$13,397
Sun Prairie Area	\$13,359	\$13,417
Wisconsin Heights	\$13,071	\$13,093
Monona Grove	\$12,599	\$13,043
Stoughton Area	\$12,284	\$12,328
Middleton-Cross Plains	\$11,917	\$12,022
Waunakee Community	\$11,824	\$11,836
Belleville	\$11,784	\$12,033
Cambridge	\$11,748	\$11,812
McFarland	\$11,726	\$11,793
DeForest Area	\$11,530	\$11,610
Deerfield Community	\$11,499	\$11,592
Mount Horeb Area	\$10,427	\$10,532

● **The negative Impact Voucher Schools have on property taxes is growing for DeForest.**

Voucher schools increased the DeForest property tax levy by \$313,379 for 2022-23.

## STUDENT NEEDS

● **DASD has had to increase resources to support kids**

In order to meet the needs of our students, DeForest has had to add additional positions in the areas of nursing, school psychology, and social work.

● **DASD students are experiencing an increase in mental health concerns**

Center for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2021:

- 42% of high school students felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks in a row that they stopped doing their usual activities.

- 29% of high school students experienced poor mental health
- during a 30-day period.
- 22% of high school students seriously considered attempting suicide.

#### DHS 2021

- 53% of students reported significant problems with anxiety (70F/37M)
- 33% of students reported depression (45F/22M)
- 18% of students reported serious consideration of suicide (24F/12M)
- 88% of students reported having at least one adult besides parents they could turn to (90F/86M)

#### DMS 2021

- 49% of students reported significant problems with anxiety (61F/38M)
- 30% of students reported depression (40F/21M)
- 20% of students reported serious consideration of suicide (27F/13M)
- 84% of students reported having at least one adult besides parents they could turn to (84F/83M)

#### ● **The number of DASD students with disabilities has increased**

- In 22-23: 506 students with disabilities
- In 21-22: 438 students with disabilities (Primary: Speech/Language (SL), Autism (A), Learning Disability (LD))
- In 20-21: 420 students with disabilities (Primary: SL, A, LD)
- In 19-20: 417 students with disabilities (Primary: SL, A/LD, OHI)
- In 18-19: 378 students with disabilities (Primary: SL, A, LD)

#### ● **Academic Recovery has been challenging**

Interventions have been necessary and implemented. In the 2021-22 school year we were able to hire six teachers to help with interventions. After realizing ESSER dollars were needed in order to sustain class sizes, four of those support teachers were placed in regular classroom positions in order to save the ESSER dollars for regular budget needs (increased FTE for enrollment), therefore reducing the number of support teachers to help with intervention in the 2022-23 school year. The behavior needs and mental health supports students have needed upon returning to the classroom full time have also put stress on the current budget.

#### ● **DASD students would benefit greatly from the Healthy Meals/Healthy Kids proposed program which would provide free school meals for all students.**

When the temporary pandemic relief program that provided free lunch and breakfast for ALL students ended, there was a drastic drop in students receiving healthy school breakfast and lunches at DASD. There are 300 less DASD students on average participating in school lunch and on average 700 less participating in school breakfast.

Approve Governor Ever's proposed budget for public school funding. This budget will help prevent many Wisconsin districts from having to go to referendum to meet their operational needs. It contains important funding items that are good for Wisconsin kids, support mental health, help with teacher recruitment, support early learning, and provide additional needed support for special education and our English language learners..

### **Key items for DASD**

- Increase the revenue limit by \$350 for 23-24 and \$650 for 24-25
- Increase the special education aid reimbursement rate to 60%
- Increase the per pupil aid adjustment by \$24 for 23-24 and \$45 24-25
- Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Program

## **OTHER ADVOCACY**

### **General Talking Points for WI Public School Funding**

- An Increase in the state reimbursement of districts special education costs.
- Equitable, adequate, transparent, predictable, and fair state funding
- Investments where the needs are the greatest: English Language learning (ELL), mental health support, services for students in poverty, rural schools and low-revenue limit districts, pre-K needs, and support for attracting and retaining educators.
- Accountability for public dollars and a moratorium on private voucher and independent (non-district) charter spending.

### **JFC Budget Hearings**

#### **Please consider testifying on the behalf of WI public schools**

- Wed. April 5, 10am-5pm, Waukesha  
Waukesha County Expo. Center, Main Arena  
1000 Northview Rd.  
Waukesha, WI 53188
- Tues. April 11, 10am-5pm, Eau Claire  
UW-Eau Claire, Davies Student Center  
Ojibwe Grand Ballroom (Third Floor)  
77 Roosevelt Ave.  
Eau Claire, WI 54701

- Wed. April 12, 10am-5pm, Wisconsin Dells  
Glacier Canyon Conference Center at the Wilderness Resort  
Sandstone Meeting Room  
45 Hillman Road  
Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965
- Wed. April 26, 10am-5pm, Minocqua  
Lakeland Union High School Theatre  
9573 State Highway 70  
Minocqua, WI 54548