



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

October 24, 2006

Milwaukee Board of School Directors
5225 West Vliet Street
Milwaukee, WI 53208

Dear Directors:

I am writing to express my concern about the potential for a 7.7% property tax levy increase for Milwaukee Public Schools in 2006-07. I believe an increase of this magnitude will be counter-productive because it will reduce the public's support for and confidence in the school system.

I understand that an increased state aid deduction pertaining to the Milwaukee parental Choice program (MPCP) has caused approximately \$7.6 million of the levy increase. I also understand the impact of higher property values on the District's state aid payments. I don't expect the Board to absorb all of these state aid impacts through reallocation of existing resources. However, I believe a 7.7% levy increase is difficult to justify given declines in enrollment and school closures.

I have fought for a correction to the MPCP funding flaw and will continue to do so. In February of this year, as the details of the most recent MPCP enrollment package were being negotiated, I asked the School Board to join me in addressing the funding flaw issues. Unfortunately, the Board took no formal position.

I also believe that support from the general public is essential to winning legislative support for this change. A levy increase that is approximately twice the inflation rate will reverse the gains you have earned in the public's support for MPS. This will make it more difficult to achieve our mutual goals in Madison.

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I look forward to working with you on school funding issues. I hope that you will identify ways to make the 2006-07 MPS property tax levy manageable for our taxpayers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Tom Barrett
Mayor

Cc: William Andrekopoulos, MPS Superintendent
Michelle Nate, MPS Finance Director
Honorable Members, Milwaukee Common Council