

Education is important issue

Dear Editor,

Two weeks ago, a letter asked for legislative candidates to tell citizens how they stand on school funding. As a former agriculture education teacher, school board member, parent of three, and a candidate to represent you in the State Assembly there is no issue more important to me than education. It is a priority to my campaign because of my passion for education and the failure of both sides of the state legislature to adequately support our rural schools.

The most recent state budget is a prime example of the common practice in Madison of saying one thing but doing another. The budget contained a record high amount of money designated for public schools but directed the money away from most of our rural schools and to the wealthier districts in southeast Wisconsin through the School Levy Credit system.

The School Levy Credit is a "shared revenue" program that distributes funds to municipalities based on their share of statewide school levies. This money never reaches the local school boards or educators as it goes directly to reduce property taxes. Since Madison and the southeast portion of the state have a larger concentration of property-wealthy school districts,

they receive a greater portion of the School Levy Credit. This process is counter to what our goal should be - to provide resources to school districts that truly are suffering.

I believe that we need to rework the school funding system to provide resources to all schools so each child has the opportunity to learn, while still valuing the taxpayers' dollars. I will provide legislation that will provide fresh solutions to the problem. I will also make a request to be appointed to the Assembly Education Committee so that I can assist to push forward this issue.

Education, like most issues that impact us on a daily basis, is not a partisan issue. As your representative, I will be able to work with all stakeholders because I have personally served in multiple educational capacities and understand the competing issues. I look forward to talking with you about these solutions at your doorstep and around the district in the next several months. Feel free to look at our website, www.russellforassembly.com, for more information on my education vision and experience.

Sincerely,
Nathan Russell, Sauk City
Candidate for the
51st Assembly District