

ACTIVE CITIZENS FOR EDUCATION

WHITE PAPERS ON EDUCATION

Purpose: to present independent information and analyses about key educational issues concerning curriculum, instruction, administration and operation of concern to the Madison Metropolitan School District and to the community-at-large.

The reader is requested to keep in mind that as additional information becomes available these papers will be updated.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION COSTS & ADMINISTRATION STAFFING LEVELS

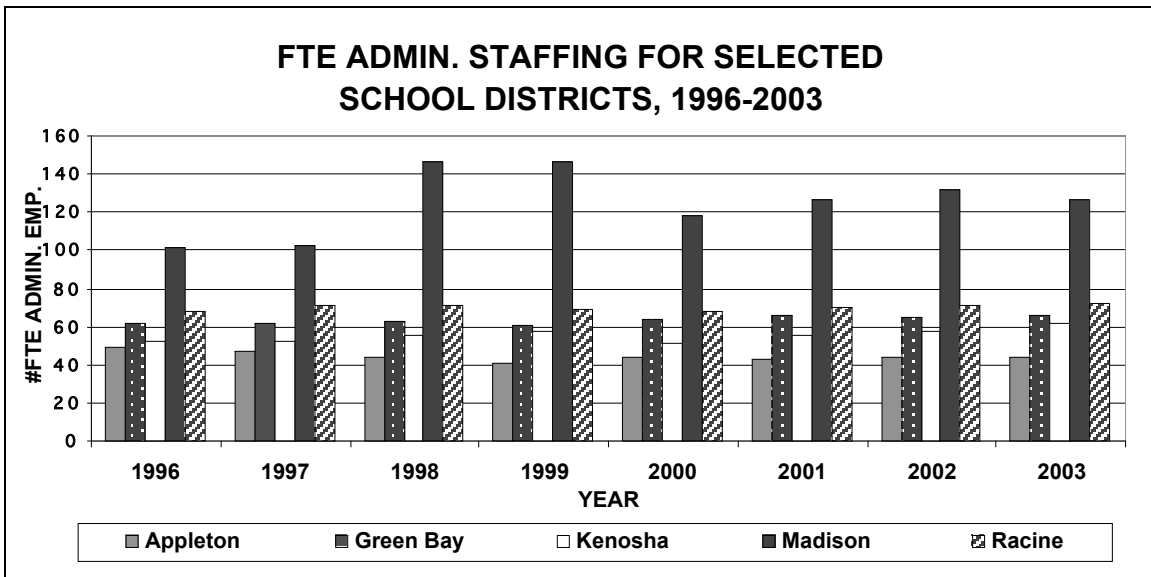
BACKGROUND: MMSD has one of the highest per pupil costs of any school district in the state. MMSD administration proposed a FY 2004-05 budget with a \$10 million shortfall in revenues to deliver the same services as that which was delivered in the 2003-04 budget year. This white paper compares MMSD administration costs, staffing levels and per pupil costs with peer school districts at Appleton, Green Bay, Kenosha and Racine.

ANALYSIS: This analysis uses data from *School Facts*, an annual publication from the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance. Relevant data regarding administration expenditures and staffing data was gathered from Appleton, Green Bay, Kenosha, Madison and Racine school districts. Comparisons are made to assess current levels and trends.

For purposes of this analysis, administrative staff is defined in terms of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees. District administration is defined as activities associated with “establishing and administering overall school district policy; directing, managing or supervising the business and fiscal operations of the district; or providing central services on a district wide basis, such as research, planning and statistical analysis, data processing, personnel or public information services.”¹ Data regarding administrator-staffing levels is provided from surveys conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

I. ADMINISTRATION STAFFING

The following charts provide data for FTE Administration staffing trends for MMSD and selected peer school districts. The table reflects the district’s relatively high number of administrators. Although MMSD is slightly larger than other peer districts, administration staffing in the district was consistently and significantly higher than peer districts. From 1996 to 2003, MMSD administration staff increased 25 percent from 101 FTE to 127 FTE, while district enrollment increased only 2.7 percent. School districts in Racine, Kenosha and Green Bay experienced more modest administration staff gains of five, six and seven percent respectively. The Appleton Area School District recorded an 11 percent decline in administration staffing over the same period.



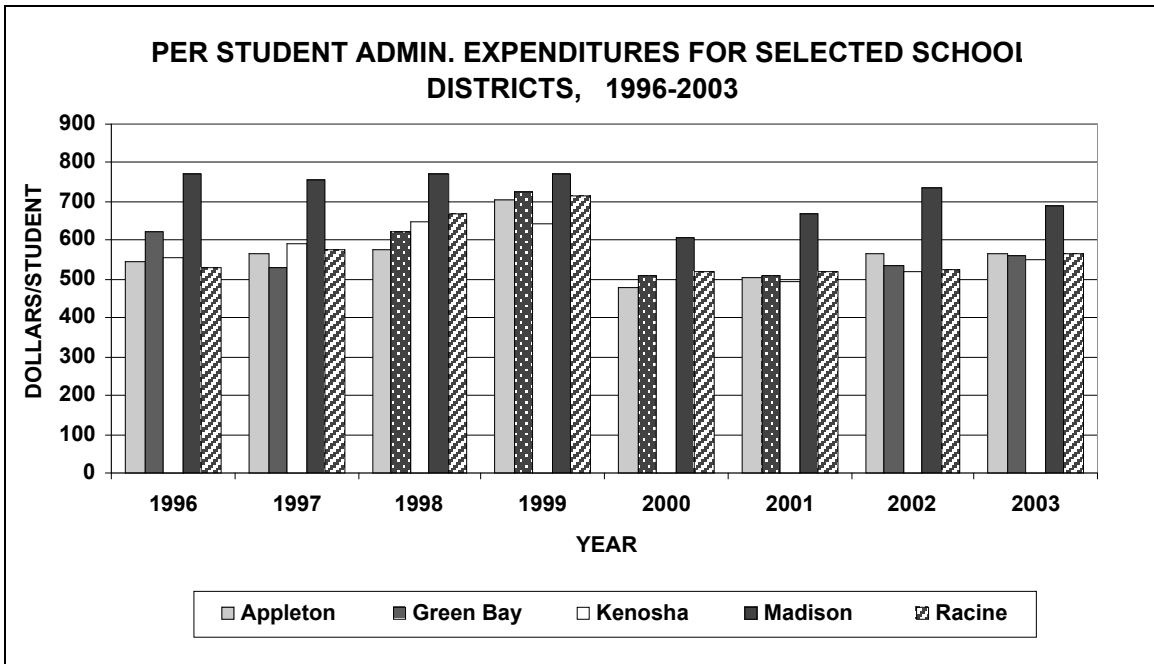
FTE ADMINISTRATION STAFF FOR SELECTED SCHOOL DISTRICTS, 1996-2003								
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Appleton	49	47	44	41	44	43	44	44
Green Bay	62	62	63	61	64	66	65	66
Kenosha	59	52	55	57	51	55	57	62
Madison	101	103	146	146	118	127	132	127
Racine	68	71	71	69	68	70	71	72

Source: *School Facts*, for selected years, Published by Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance. Fractions rounded.

II. PER STUDENT ADMINISTRATION EXPENDITURES

“Per-student” administration expenditures balances the differences in the school district size; therefore, comparative data can provide valuable insights regarding administration spending. The following charts show per-student administration expenditures for selected districts for the years 1996 to 2003. The data reveals that even though MMSD per-student administration expenditures showed declines in some years, MMSD per-student administration expenditures remained consistently higher than peer districts. In addition, MMSD shows a steady increase in per-student administration expenditures for the 3-year period 2000-2002.

Patterns at other “peer” districts varied. Racine and Appleton both saw per-student administration expenditures increase by seven and four percent respectively. Kenosha experienced virtually no change over the period, while Green Bay witnessed a 12 percent decline in per-student administration costs.

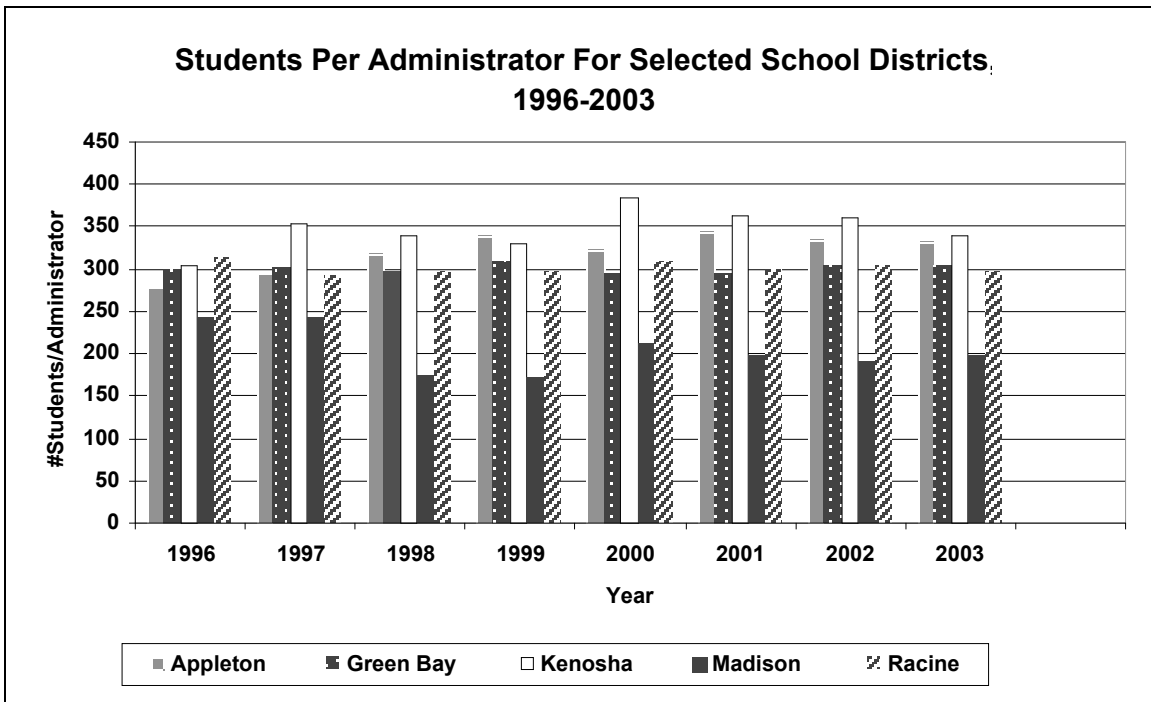


ADMINISTRATION EXPENDITURES PER STUDENT, 1996-2003								
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Appleton	545	567	576	705	479	502	566	567
Green Bay	624	531	623	725	508	509	536	559
Kenosha	554	591	648	641	501	494	522	552
Madison	771	755	769	771	607	669	738	688
Racine	530	575	669	713	519	519	527	567

Source: *School Facts*, for selected years, published by Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance. Fractions rounded.

III. STUDENTS PER ADMINISTRATOR RATIO

MMSD has more administrators per student than any peer district. Students per Administrator Ratios provide another means of comparing administrator-staffing levels without regard for differences district size. The following charts show students per administrator ratios for MMSD and selected districts. Once again, peer district trend lines varied. While Appleton and Kenosha experienced moderate increases in the number of students per administrator, Green Bay School District experienced virtually no change. On the other side, MMSD and Racine school districts recorded overall declines in their students per administrator ratios. The data also reveal MMSD consistently had the lowest student/administrator ratio among peer districts. In 2003, MMSD had approximately 200 students for every administrator. This figure stands in sharp contrast to peer districts. Students per administrator ratios in peer districts were at least thirty percent higher than MMSD, ranging from 296 students per administrator in Racine to 339 students per administrator in Kenosha. Also noteworthy is the disparity in eight-year averages. While MMSD eight-year average is 204 students per administrator, peer district eight-year averages are significantly higher at 317 students per administrator.



STUDENTS/ADMINISTRATOR FOR SELECTED DISTRICTS									
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Average
Appleton	278	294	317	339	323	343	334	333	320
Green Bay	299	302	298	308	295	295	304	303	301
Kenosha	304	353	340	331	383	363	360	339	346
Madison	243	243	174	171	213	199	191	199	204
Racine	313	291	297	298	308	299	304	296	301

Source: Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Enrollment Surveys, *School Facts* (for selected years published by Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance)

¹ From: *School Facts01*, published by Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance. Appendix, page A-4

SUMMARY: Growing budgetary pressures are forcing closer scrutiny of MMSD staffing and expenditure patterns. One area for potential review and savings is administration. This analysis demonstrates MMSD has consistently more administration staff, higher per student administration expenditures and lower students/administrator ratios than peer districts. These findings validate these concerns and suggest further research to identify contributory factors and corrective actions to improve management and efficiencies.

Questions to Consider upon Reviewing the Data:

1. Are MMSD administration costs too high?
2. What factors explain variability over time and between districts?
3. What changes and/or reductions were made to the administration budget to relieve the \$10 million budget shortfall?
4. What has the Board of Education done to engage an independent functional and cost analysis of the business and educational administration departments?
5. What is the impact of student fee charges on the size and cost of administration?
6. What is the impact of administrative ratios and costs on other functional areas such as instruction, pupil services, etc.?

Notes:

1. Statistical data was obtained from the 1996-2003 SchoolFacts annual publications of the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WTA), Madison. The WTA compiles the reliable data from several sources to provide a comprehensive source of information on Wisconsin's 426 school districts. The peer school district comparisons and charts were developed by the Wisconsin Education Reform Council, Robert Luebke, President.
2. Active Citizens for Education (ACE) is a Madison based non-profit, non-partisan organization committed to identifying, analyzing and presenting reliable information about issues concerning curriculum, instruction, administration and operation of the Madison Metropolitan School District. It is expected this information will assist in stimulating wide-spread public debate and increasing enlightened decision-making by the public and policy-makers to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and performance of the Board of Education, administration, staff and pupils of the District. Contact: ACE, Don Severson, President at P.O. Box 2153, Madison, WI 53701; 608/238-8300; donleader@aol.com
3. For further information please refer to these additional documents by Active Citizens for Education:
 - a. "Comparative Performance Results" chart of academic test results.
 - b. "Community Service Fund (80)" describes community service programs and financial issues.
 - c. "Retention Rates: Comparatives to MMSD"
 - d. "Per Pupil Costs" comparing MMSD with four peer districts.

Revised: 09/01/04