

News Release

Education Information Services ■ 125 South Webster Street ■ P.O. Box 7841 ■ Madison, WI 53707-7841 ■ (608) 266-3559

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DPI-NR 2011-59

Thursday, May 26, 2011

Contact: Patrick Gasper, DPI Communications Officer, (608) 266-3559

Statement on upcoming Joint Finance Committee vote

MADISON — State Superintendent Tony Evers issued the following statement about today’s meeting of the Legislature’s Joint Committee on Finance.

“Budgets are about choices and priorities. Today I call on members of the Joint Committee on Finance to show citizens across Wisconsin that they have their priorities straight by reversing the proposed cuts to Wisconsin’s public schools.

“The budget proposal they take up makes cuts of historic proportions to the amount public schools have available for educating our children. New information from local school officials shows that even with the collective bargaining changes of Act 10, schools will be forced to make unprecedented cuts to children’s opportunities to learn and succeed. Our children did not cause the economic downturn, but this proposed budget would ask them disproportionately to pay for it.

“Legislators have the resources and the opportunity to make better choices. For one, our fiscal environment has improved — the state has an additional \$636 million now available over the biennium. Also, these cuts are proposed in the context of a budget that increases overall spending by nearly 2 percent, while other proposals spend an additional \$40 million on choice and charter schools, and require additional taxpayer money to expand private school vouchers.

“Legislators can do better for our children. They can restore the cuts to general school aids and reverse the \$1.7 billion cut to school revenue limits. They can even fix our broken school finance system — for example by adopting my ‘Fair Funding for Our Future’ plan, as one legislative proposal announced this week would. We can protect students and enact school finance reform while holding the line on property taxes even in difficult economic times.

“I urge the Joint Finance Committee to create a biennial budget that is fair and equitable and does better for the children in our public schools.”

###

NOTE: This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2011_59.pdf.