

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 2013-26

Monday, February 18, 2013

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

Statement on preview of state budget for education

MADISON — State Superintendent Tony Evers issued the following statement regarding the state education budget as previewed to news media over the weekend.

“State budgets are about priorities and choices. I am deeply disappointed and saddened that this budget, as rolled out to date, does not prioritize funding for our 870,000 public school students. By freezing the revenue limit, which governs school spending, this budget ensures that the small proposed increase in school aids will only be used to reduce property taxes, not increase spending on our students. No new textbooks or computers. No additional reading or career and technical education teachers. No additional interventions or services.

“Forty percent of the state’s budget is currently allocated to public schools. Unfortunately, this budget invests less than 20 percent of state’s new revenue into K-12 education. The revenue limit cuts and freezes over the last two state budgets will leave public schools with the same resources to educate our kids they had five years ago. This will mean fewer educational opportunities and offerings for our students at a time when the state is implementing great changes that ask more than ever of our public schools.

“Private voucher schools will receive \$73 million in additional funding and spending authority, coupled with a dramatic statewide expansion. This means an up to \$1,400 per-pupil funding increase for the 25,000 students in voucher schools, while freezing spending (\$0 revenue limit growth) for our 870,000 students in public schools.

“Additionally, the inclusion of statewide special education vouchers in the budget fast-tracks this controversial proposal. Special education students in private schools are not guaranteed services and surrender their legal rights and recourses under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

“I continue to support including private voucher schools in the state data systems and reports cards with meaningful and equal accountability requirements. And I remain opposed to a new state board that will expand independent charter schools and further erode local control.

“I have called repeatedly for reinvestment in our public schools. I laid out a plan that will do this and hold the line on property taxes. And, I did it for less new revenue than it seems we are willing to spend on building roads over the next two years. Leaving public school kids behind is not a path to shared prosperity. Our legislators now have the chance to prioritize our children and public schools.”

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