

## Green County Superintendents Speak Out Against Governors Budget

On February 23 the Green County Superintendents held a Legislative Breakfast with their State Representatives. Legislators in attendance were Senator Jon Erpenback, Senator Janis Ringhand, and Representative Mark Spreitzer. Some of the issues discussed were School Accountability, Voucher Expansion, and Fair School Funding. The largest and most controversial topic was Governor Walker's proposed budget cuts to education. As with many of the Public School Districts around the state, Green County Districts would see a large decrease in revenue from the State if the Governors budget stays intact.

The Governors budget sets districts back to 2009 levels by reducing school district budgets by \$150 in per pupil aid for 2016. While this hits every district differently, it is pretty easy to figure that the amount districts would lose is the number of students times \$150. With the current budget proposal, districts in Green County would lose approximately \$750,000. While \$165 per-pupil aid is added in 2017, it is a net loss of \$135 per pupil over the biennium. Districts were lead to believe that school finance would remain intact for the 2015-17 biennium, but when the budget actually came out, this was not the case.

Another area of concern in the budget is the potential expansion of the voucher system. This is money that is taken out of the public school funds and used for students to attend private schools. Again, at the expense of public school students, the Governor has continued his assault on the public school system. While state spending on K12 education has slipped from 8<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation in 2000 to 26<sup>th</sup> in 2012, ([wistax.org](http://wistax.org)), our public education system has remained one of the strongest in the nation. The drop in the state's financial support and lack of support from the Governor will eventually start to erode away the hard work that is being done in our public schools.

There has been strong reaction from the Public School system in regards to the State budget proposal. Superintendent Lenny Lueck stated that for Brodhead, a District already struggling to make ends meet, this will have a direct impact on students. With less state aid, we have had to balance our budgets at the expense of our students, staff and facilities. We were not prepared to go backwards in state financing even more.

Superintendent Al Brokopp, Monticello, stated that community members need to contact their legislative representatives and express their concern regarding Governor Walker's budget effect on our children and their futures. All of the Green County Superintendents would like to see their communities send a strong message in support of public schools.

The Legislators in attendance all agreed that they had significant concerns over this budget. They felt that this budget would have a very detrimental effect on Wisconsin as a whole. They reiterated the fact that people need to contact government officials and express their concerns. These communications are tracked and representatives can use this data to send a strong message from the people.

More information about the Governors Budget can be found at [wistax.com](http://wistax.com)

Your local representatives can be found at <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/>