

News Release

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Evers comments on governor's proposed 2015-17 budget

MADISON —State Superintendent Tony Evers commented on the governor's 2015-17 proposed budget for education in a statement issued today.

“It is hard to see or understand how the governor's budget can be portrayed as school reform or a positive transformation for most of our children. It is a budget that advances a political agenda based on an ideological checklist while leaving our 870,000 public school students behind.

“It does not increase investments in local public schools. This budget sets Wisconsin on the path to delivering a legacy of less for hundreds of thousands of public school kids in local revenue limit authority and state aid. This budget freezes revenue caps and actually cuts state aid to local schools in the first year. This biennial budget means that five years after historic cuts our public schools will still be educating students with less funding and lower revenue caps. And, it continues a long-time freeze on aid for students with special education needs and aid for English language learners. This is wrong. This is not reform.

“It expands taxpayer funded vouchers to private schools and allows independent charter schools across the state. To pay for this, state aid to local schools will be cut with local property taxes likely picking up the new expense.

“This budget once again diminishes local control of public education by imposing another set of school accountability regulations and setting up an unelected state charter school authorizing board.

“This budget proposes lower expectations for becoming a teacher. That's not the way to go. Teaching is more than just knowing stuff. It is an extraordinarily complex skill, and you need to learn about the abilities of students and how to differentiate instruction. Moreover, we already have alternative pathways to teaching that ensure quality and work for our schools and citizens.

“The rural school sparsity and transportation aid proposals, based on my funding requests, are positive. However, rural schools, like all public schools, really need increased revenue authority and school aids that this budget does not deliver.

(more)

“We have another state budget out of Madison that pushes the pain back onto our public schools and universities and once again does not fix our broken school funding system. We need to focus on the ways that we can work together to support our local classrooms and renew the professions of school leaders, support staff, and teachers in our classrooms.”

“With this biennial budget, we now see a legacy built on six years of divisive mandates, and multiple funding cuts. It really is a legacy of less for our kids. We must insist on a robust public dialogue about our constitutional guarantees to our children. We cannot afford to fail.

“I call on our Legislature to invest in public education. I stand ready to provide any support so our public school students don’t face a fifth and sixth year of trying to learn with less.”

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NOTE: This statement is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2015_14.pdf.