

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Governor Walker has turned his back on public schools**

*'Follow the Money' has never been more appropriate*

Stevens Point, WI, 2/19/13 – Governor Walker turned his back on public schools in the last state budget, slashing their funding by an unprecedented \$1.6 billion. Now Governor Walker is proposing a new budget that does not put a single penny of that \$1.6 billion back into our children's classrooms, at a time when class sizes are increasing and dozens of districts are pursuing referenda to help them maintain programs and services.

Wisconsinites prefer funding public schools over tax cuts and road building, says a recently-released UW-Milwaukee poll. "Wisconsinites understand the connection between strong public schools and the health and vitality of our communities and economy," said Sally Overholt, School Funding Reform for Wisconsin member.

Wisconsin's public school students score above national averages on ACT and Advanced Placement exams. Excellent special education programs are provided through Wisconsin's public schools to special needs students. "Anyone who says our public schools are failing and private alternatives must be sought is not telling the whole truth," said School Funding member Tina Peters. "Resources and ideas should be directed at efforts to improve what we have, which is a public system that is accountable to the taxpayers and has a proven record of helping all children succeed, no matter their abilities."

Voucher schools in Wisconsin have failed to prove that they provide better educational outcomes than public schools, according to the Public Policy Forum and the National Education Policy Center. Governor Walker's proposed budget provides more than \$100 million to expand voucher programs.

"There is obviously more at work here with the voucher expansion than a desire to do well by our students," Peters said. "The saying 'Follow the money' has never been more appropriate. Wisconsin is ground zero right now for out-of-state special interests that want to privatize education."

School Funding Reform for Wisconsin ([www.reformwi.org](http://www.reformwi.org)) has joined with other organizations around the state in calling for the Governor and legislature to enact 'Fair Funding for Our Future', State Superintendent Tony Evers' nonpartisan plan to restructure and improve school funding.

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