Uniting our Communities for Strong Public Schools

Heather DuBois Bourenane and Sandy Whisler
October 29, 2018
Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance Conference
We are a non-partisan coalition connecting ALL public education supporters to information, actions, and each other.

THIS IS A PUBLIC FIGHT. ANYONE CAN JOIN. #VotePublic
Every child deserves an equally excellent public education. No exceptions.
The people who know and care the most about our students and schools should be HEARD the LOUDEST and RESPECTED the MOST.
Why we do it: EQUITY MATTERS

- Student success
- Funding fairness
- Respect for teachers
- Democracy depends on strong public schools
- Thriving communities

Photo: Joe Brusky
Taking disparities seriously matters.
Why don’t we have equity

*Change* in Per-Pupil Revenue Over Time

Wisconsin has cut $3.5 billion in state aid to public schools since 2011.

Tax Cuts Increase, Even as State Aid to Wisconsin Public School Districts Remain Below Historical Levels

Dollar amounts are shown in millions, and in 2018 dollars.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in state aid to school districts, compared to 2011</th>
<th>Fiscal year</th>
<th>New or expanded tax cuts since 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-$600</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-$610</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-$570</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-$412</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$1,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-$494</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$1,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-$386</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$1,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-$306</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$1,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-$153</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$2,011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cumulative cuts in state aid to school districts:

$3.5 billion

Cumulative total for new tax cuts:

$8.7 billion

State aid to public school districts excludes property tax credits, aid to non-district charter schools, and aid to private voucher schools.

Source: Analysis of Legislative Fiscal Bureau documents

WISCONSINBUDGETPROJECT.ORG
How does school funding work in Wisconsin?
FUNDING INEQUITY in Wisconsin:
Per Pupil State Aid

PUBLIC  $5,001  (K-12 average)
         $8,619  (privately-run charter)
PRIVATE $7,754  (K-8 Private Tuition Subsidy)*
         $8,400  (9-12 Private Tuition Subsidy)*
         $12,431 (Special Needs Tuition Subsidy)*

* Private figures are for 2018-2019 WPCP. Source: DPI
35,420 students at 240 school statewide received vouchers in 2017-2018. Total voucher spending for 2017-2018 statewide was $274,000,033,172.65.
Only 28% of ALL voucher recipients in the statewide program ever attended a public school (2013-present)
What we do that works

LOCAL LEVEL ACTION, STATEWIDE IMPACT
1. GET ORGANIZED
Gov. Scott Walker signs $76B Wisconsin budget with money for schools, fees for hybrids

Patrick Marley, Jason Stein and Jen Zettel, Milwaukee

Published 9:58 a.m. CT Sept. 21, 2017 | Updated 5:27 p.m. CT Sept. 21, 2017

Gov. Scott Walker’s budget remains up for debate, the issue is traveling the state to listen to constituents.

On Wednesday, the legislators were in Ellsworth, where the public weighed in on a number of issues, including the DNR and retirement benefits, but one topic stole the show.

“We’ve made difficult budget reductions at UW-Eau Claire, while doing our up most to try and protect the student experience,” said UW-Eau Claire Chancellor James Schmidt.
THE QUESTION IS NOT "WILL THEY LISTEN?"
THE QUESTION IS "DID I SPEAK UP?"

Be a voice for children and our public schools. Our future depends on it.
**2018 WPEN Local Action Timeline**

**PEAK TACTICS**
- focused on a specific, measurable outcome (strategic goal) that will improve lives
- build capacity
- leverage resources and strengths of team
- motivational
- contagious, others can and want to emulate

**LOCAL ACTION PEAKS**
Host a regional "I love my public school event!" - celebrate local schools week of Feb. 12-16

**STATEWIDE PEAKS**
Feb. 12-16 I Love My Public School events (regional or local) amplified by WPEN

**LOCAL ACTION PEAKS**
Local forums on school board elections, tax payer accountability and transparency in voucher spending (perhaps some sort of local action day around this/paired with getting out and voting)

**STATEWIDE PEAKS**
April 3: Spring Election

**THEME:**
#VOTEPUBLIC

**LOCAL ACTION PEAKS**
Promote Summer Summit locally [bring local leaders!] and ongoing #VOTEPUBLIC efforts

**STATEWIDE PEAKS**
Aug. 1: Summer Summit
Aug. 14: Primary Election

**LOCAL ACTION PEAKS**
Us on a Bus (local bus stops with media to highlight ed issues) + #VOTEPUBLIC

**STATEWIDE PEAKS**
Us on a Bus events (final stop: circle the Capitol)
Nov. 6: General Election

**FOUNDRATIONAL/ BUILDING BLOCK TACTICS**
- ongoing or preparatory
- "behind the scenes" work
- makes use of resources
- strengthens team

**BUILDING BLOCK TACTICS**
- I Love My Public Schools: Profile frames, social media, etc.

**BLUE RIBBON AMBASSADORS**
(ongoing campaign — peaks at hearings — dates/locations TBA)
Local: Attend and promote regional hearings of Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding
Statewide: help local teams prepare for hearings, amplify testimony, create talking points and media kits for fair funding proposals

**BE THE MEDIA!**
(ongoing campaign)
Letter to editor, op-eds, press releases and other local education and communication efforts WPEN to serve as vehicle for sharing & amplifying stories (WE DID IT!), positive messages and events, more sharing of resources between groups.

WPEN calls etc.
Focus on priorities

PUBLIC HEARINGS
BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON SCHOOL FUNDING

Feb. 2  Milwaukee
March 19 La Crosse
March 26 De Pere
April 9  Fennimore
April 23 Oshkosh
May 7   Tomahawk
May 21 Turtle Lake
June 4  Madison

I pledge to ensure that every student in every Wisconsin public school has equal opportunity to succeed and equal access to equally excellent resources.

I pledge to support budget and policy measures that:

- Fix the school funding formula to prioritize student needs over property values
- Work for funding fairness by resolving revenue limit disparities
- Restore funding to public schools, including by increasing the state’s obligation to meet mandated costs of special education
- Respect educators with hiring incentives and high standards for licensure
- Demand full accountability for all private and privately-operated schools receiving tax dollars, and pledge not to further expand the existing voucher program

Let Wisconsin know that you #VotePublic!
Take your photo with your pledge card and share on social media. Tag us @WisconsinNetwork (facebook) & @WiscEdNetwork (twitter)