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Walker Budget “Defunds” Wisconsin Education
If passed, proposal will force enormous cuts at local level

The state budget proposed today by Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, if implemented, will have a far-reaching and long-term impact on our schools that will lead to significant staff and program cuts, threatening our ability to offer quality public education in our state.

While much attention has been paid to protesters on the Capitol Square, the other shoe to drop is the governor’s 2011-13 biennial budget, which calls for \$834 million in aid cuts to public schools.

Even if the provisions of the budget repair bill went into effect as planned by the governor, the so-called flexibility that Walker has promised to Wisconsin school leaders in the bill would not treat schools across the state evenly or fairly. In many cases, it would not offset the huge cuts of the biennial budget due to major decreases in per-pupil allocations.

“At a time when our governor is proclaiming that Wisconsin is ‘open for business,’ he is cutting the single most important economic engine in Wisconsin, our schools,” said Roxanne Starks, President of the Wisconsin PTA.

According to a recent report by University of Wisconsin-Madison professor Andrew Reschovsky, “Facing lower revenue limits, many school districts will be forced to eliminate programs and increase class sizes.”

Or, as Alan Borsuk, Senior Fellow in Law and Public Policy at Marquette University recently stated: “Even with increases in how much employees pay for benefits, if spending per student drops as much as appears likely, schools throughout the state will be squeezed in ways Wisconsin hasn’t seen since maybe the Depression of the 1930s.”

The simple fact is that Wisconsin’s schools are already in a crisis that has been caused by an ineffectual school funding system that is nearly two decades old. Now, with the enormous and unprecedented cuts to state aids and local spending authority that Walker’s budget proposes, school districts across our state will be forced to make further, more drastic cuts to local schools.

While the specific reductions that will take place in nearly every school in the state will depend on the individual circumstances of each district, parents and community members should expect severe cuts, the likes of which Wisconsin residents have never seen.

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The SFN, a coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to finding a better way to fund Wisconsin public schools, is made up of AFT–Wisconsin, the Fair Aid Coalition, the School Administrators Alliance, the Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance, the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators, the Wisconsin Education Association Council and the Wisconsin PTA.

COALITION PARTNERS

- AFT – Wisconsin
www.aft-wisconsin.org
- Fair Aid Coalition
- School Administrators Alliance
www.wsaa.org
- Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance
www.schoolsalliance.com
- Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools
www.excellentschools.org
- Wisconsin Association of School Boards
www.wasb.org
- Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators
www.wasda.org
- Wisconsin Education Association Council
www.weac.org
- Wisconsin Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
www.wisconsinpta.org

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