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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **February 18, 2013**

**Governor's Budget Proposals Continue Defunding of Public Education**  
*Walker to freeze public schools, expand private school vouchers*

MADISON, Wis. — Two years after passing historic budget cuts that took away more than \$800 million from public education, Governor Scott Walker is proposing to inflict further harm on public schools and students across Wisconsin.

His latest proposal freezes the amount that school districts can spend on public school children under revenue caps. Meanwhile, the governor wants to increase funding for private school vouchers by \$600 per K-8 student and \$1,200 per high school student, and allow the expansion of private voucher schools that have little to no accountability and that do not result in higher levels of achievement for students.

“Considering that public schools make up more than 40 percent of the state budget and Governor Walker has \$1.7 billion in available revenues for new spending, I am shocked that he is proposing a revenue cap freeze for public schools,” said John Forester, director of government relations for the Wisconsin School Administrators Alliance (SAA).

In his 2011-13 budget, adopted in June 2011, Governor Walker cut the public school revenue limit by an average of \$550 per student, while private voucher school per-pupil allocations were held harmless. And at the same time the state was cutting more than \$800 million from Wisconsin public schools, it was increasing the amount given to voucher schools by about \$23 million.

“The disastrous defunding of public education continues unabated,” Forester said. “Given that this is coming on the heels of the last budget’s massive cuts, it’s safe to say that this proposal represents the worst state budget for public school students in Wisconsin history.”

Despite overwhelming evidence that private school vouchers do not improve student achievement and lack adequate financial accountability to the public, Governor Walker continues to pursue private school voucher expansion. His current proposal would open private school vouchers to nine new school districts and special needs students.

“Make no mistake about it,” said Forester. “The ultimate objective of voucher advocates is a statewide system of private school vouchers for all Wisconsin school children. This

takes critical resources away from students in public schools, leaving most school districts in Wisconsin with no choice but to increase local property taxes and make greater reductions in quality educational opportunities for all students.”

“Clearly, Governor Walker is attempting to privatize public education for the exclusive few at the expense of the many,” said Forester.

Rather than continuing to defund public education, the SAA is calling for the governor and legislature to reaffirm the state’s investment in Wisconsin’s students. At a minimum, the state must provide a \$200 per pupil increase on the revenue cap, fully funded with general school aid. And private school voucher expansion is such a fundamental change in educational policy in Wisconsin that it should stand as a separate piece of legislation—away from the budget—to allow the public’s voice to be heard.

“In the days and weeks to come, we will work with legislators of both parties to encourage them to do the right thing and provide more resources to Wisconsin’s public schools and students,” said Forester. “Budgets are about choices, and we need to send the message that our priorities lie in our children, not in tax cuts, road builders and private school vouchers.”

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