WISCONSIN PUBLIC EDUCATION NETW♥RK

January 20, 2017   **For immediate release**

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Wisconsin Communities Call on Lawmakers to Use Increased Revenue to Restore Public School Funding
Advocates around the state urge investment in thriving communities

SUN PRAIRIE — Parents and community members around the state are calling on lawmakers to restore funding to Wisconsin public schools after learning the state has nearly $715 million more than expected to work with, according to a new Legislative Fiscal Bureau memo, due to higher revenue projections and lower-than-anticipated Medicaid spending.

"The news of the increased revenue projections gives Wisconsin the opportunity to restore funding to K-12 public schools," says **Carol Lenz** of **Fox Cities Advocates for Public Education**. "Now Wisconsin can join the many other states that are reinvesting in public education."

In 2016, a record 155 school referenda went before taxpayers. 80% of these passed, demonstrating that public schools are a priority investment for the people of Wisconsin. But for the 20% that didn't pass, communities face hard decisions that could include shutting down schools, limiting programs, reducing staff, or consolidating districts. Already, there are nearly 40 more referenda on the ballot for the April 2017 election, with more districts reporting every week. Restoring adequate state funding reduces the risk of "have" and "have not" districts with unequal opportunities for students.

Sandy Whisler, President of **CAPE (Citizen Advocates for Public Education), Lake Mills**, urges lawmakers to use these funds to ensure Wisconsin remains a national leader in education excellence while better meeting local demands for increased services to address disparities for students of color and students in poverty. "In Lake Mills," she says, "this revenue would provide resources to address our achievement gaps and meet the diverse needs of our students."

Kenosha parent **Todd Price** says "A greater investment in public education would for the Kenosha Unified School District (KUSD) mean restoring our advanced placement courses, growing our special education and paraprofessional support staff, and strengthening our language curriculum so that our students receive a 21st century education."

In Wauwatosa, parents called on the governor to use these funds to make good on the promise of a future where all can thrive. "Our kids can have big dreams about their future when they're confident about the present," notes **Stacy Racine Lynch**, **President of Support Our Schools SOS-Wauwatosa**. "We encourage Governor Walker to seize this unique moment and raise the revenue cap and increase state funding by at least $300 a year per pupil. We want all children in Wauwatosa and Wisconsin to be able to imagine and prepare for success."

Mary Jarvis, a retired educator in **Wausau**, calls on legislators to restore funding so that all Wisconsin communities can thrive: "Take this opportunity to invest in public education that provides access for all children to learn the skills and knowledge for a vibrant economy."

"The Governor has promised a 'significant increase' in school funding. We're not asking for more money – we just want to see previous funding levels restored. Our public schools have never let us down here in in the Saint Croix Valley," says **Bob Wright** of **Saint Croix Valley Friends of Education**. "Let's not let them down, either."

Wisconsin Public Education Network is a coalition of individuals, organizations, school districts, and grassroots advocacy teams working to ensure that every child in Wisconsin has equal opportunity and equal access to an excellent public education. Those who wish to connect with the Network and be part of the growing movement to support local schools are invited to visit http://WisconsinNetwork.org. Wisconsin Public Education Network is a project of the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools, a 501(c)(4) non-profit.

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