

# WISCONSIN PUBLIC EDUCATION NETWORK RK

April 4, 2019

For immediate release

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- Dr. Julie Underwood, Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools, Board Chair (608) 469-2287
- Ellen Lindgren, Community Advocates for Public Education (CAPE), Middleton

## Common Ground on Public Education Expected Highlight of Budget Hearings

**“Testimony Tailgate” Press Event will be held at 4 PM, April 4, 2019 in the parking lot of the hearing site, 2809 North Pontiac Dr. Janesville, WI**

The Joint Finance Committee hearings on the next biennial budget kick off today. Parents and community supporters of public schools from across the state intend to be an active part of those hearings. The Wisconsin Public Education Network and its partners were part of the conversation urging reinstatement of investment in public education during the last budget cycle and during the hearings for the Blue Ribbon Commission on School Finance. During these previous sessions, parents, teachers, administrators, community leaders, and education activists shined a light on the most pressing needs of Wisconsin’s children. We expect to hear similar testimony at the upcoming Joint Finance Committee hearings.

The big difference in this Joint Finance hearing series is that many of the proposals in the Governor’s budget are similar to the proposals put forth in the legislature’s Blue Ribbon Commission’s report. As such, we are hopeful that bi-partisan solutions can be found for many significant issues. Both the proposed budget and the Blue Ribbon Commission recognize that:

- Our children need special education funding, which has been frozen for a decade.
- Our children need English Language Learner resources, which are sorely lacking.
- Our children need mental health supports.
- Our children need full-day early childhood programs.
- Our children need us to attract and retain high quality teachers.
- Our schools need more, predictable, and adequate funding.

Restoring the state’s commitment to public education should be our top priority.

We believe the people of Wisconsin support and recognize the urgent need for restoring our investment in public schools. Both recent public polls, and the fact that most local school referenda have passed, indicate this is true. The state budget should represent the values of the state. Wisconsin values its children and its public schools. Our elected officials’ actions should reflect this shared value. 860,000 children are counting on us.

The 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)(3) non-profit.

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