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## **Assembly Republican Leaders Promote Education Budget Package in Merrill**

**Madison**...Assembly Republican leaders illustrated the positive impact of their education budget proposal during a press conference at the Merrill School District Office. Rep. Rob Swearingen (R-Rhineland) and Dr. John Sample, Merrill School District Superintendent, attended the event and expressed support for the plan which will address funding inequities in local districts. Every school district in Wisconsin will get more state aid under the Assembly Republican plan, which also provides additional assistance to frugal, low-spending districts, many of which are in northwest Wisconsin.

“The way we fund schools largely hasn’t changed since 1993 when frugal districts were locked into low levy limits. Since then, these limits have created an uneven playing field with low-spending school districts struggling to compete with high-spenders to hire quality teachers,” said Rep. John Nygren (R-Marinette), Assembly chair of the Joint Committee on Finance and co-author of the proposal. “The Assembly Republican plan makes education funding more sustainable, equitable and effective, all while decreasing property taxes.”

The Assembly Republican education budget proposal helps Wisconsin rural schools by fully funding sparsity aid and high-cost transportation aid. It also makes reforms to free up resources to be redirected to the classroom.

“Every child counts in Wisconsin and that means every child must have an equal opportunity to succeed,” said Rep. Mary Felzkowski (R-Irma), co-author of the education plan and Joint Finance Committee member. “Under our plan, low-spending districts like Merrill, Antigo and Tomahawk will be on a more level playing field with high-spenders.”

The Assembly GOP plan puts over \$100 million more in the school funding formula and provides a significant increase in per pupil funding with \$150 per pupil in the first budget year and \$200 per pupil in the second year. It also addresses funding inequities among frugal, low-spending districts.

“Our kids are our future and we need to offer them opportunities to grow and succeed,” said Rep. Swearingen. “This plan will work to limit school funding inequities, which will encourage more of our students to remain in Wisconsin long after they graduate.”

Also speaking at the press conference in support of the budget proposal was the superintendent of the Merrill School District, Dr. John Sample.

“I’m glad we’re finally starting to address the imbalance of Wisconsin’s school funding formula,” added Sample.

Assembly Republican leaders look forward to working with the governor and their senate counterparts on a sustainable education plan that provides equitable funding for K-12 students in Wisconsin.