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More Money for Schools and Lower Property Taxes: Governor Walker Signs 2017-19 State Budget into Law

NEENAH – In front of an outstanding crowd of students and staff at Tullar Elementary School in Neenah, Governor Scott Walker today signed the 2017 – 19 state budget into law (Photo Attached). The budget lifts K-12 education aid to the highest appropriated levels in state history and keeps Governor Walker's promise to lower property taxes for the typical home so they will be lower in 2018 than in 2010.

"This budget proves you can provide more money for our schools and lower property taxes at the same time," Governor Walker said. "Our successful economic and fiscal reforms led to a growing economy and better budget outlook. We call this the Reform Dividend, and we are investing this dividend in our priorities."

Governor Walker's priorities for this budget came as a result of listening sessions he held with citizens in all 72 counties. Our priorities fall into three categories: Student Success, Accountable Government, and Rewarding Work. This budget, which is projected to end with a roughly \$200 million surplus, includes major new investments in each of these areas and provides continued tax relief.

"After listening to families and hardworking taxpayers across our state, we built this budget based on the people's priorities," Governor Walker continued. "I thank the Legislature for keeping the core of our budget in place which includes historic K-12 education funding, property tax relief, and more funding for broadband and worker training. I have never been more optimistic about the future of our state. We are working and winning for Wisconsin!"

In addition, Governor Walker today signed [Executive Order #255](#) which creates an Office of Inspector General at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to reinforce the department's efforts to find savings and eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse.

Highlights from the 2017 – 19 State Budget include:

STUDENT SUCCESS

- Wisconsin's total state investment in K-12 education is more than \$11.5 billion over two years. This is an all-time high in actual dollars.
- K-12 schools receive a \$636 million increase in state aid in this budget. This is the largest increase in a decade.
- This budget invests \$35.5 million to expand broadband in our state. This investment will benefit rural schools and underserved areas in Wisconsin.
- New funding for school mental health programs is included in this budget. This includes \$6.5 million for school social workers, mental health services, and trauma-informed care training for school staff.
- \$6.1 million is invested into special education incentives. These incentives are geared toward schools that enroll special needs students into postsecondary education training or employment.
- The tuition freeze for University of Wisconsin System in-state undergraduates will continue for another two years. This will protect college students from tuition increases for a historic six years in a row. The freeze will have cumulatively saved the average student \$6,311 over four years.
- Wisconsin Technical Colleges receive \$5 million to help train students to fill high-demand fields.
- Wisconsin Grant program needs-based financial assistance for college students will rise by \$15 million to the highest levels in state history.

ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT

- We are keeping our commitment to reduce property taxes. Property taxes on the typical home are estimated to be lower than they were when Governor Walker first took office in 2010. This is estimated to cumulatively save the typical homeowner roughly \$3,000 compared to the trend prior to 2010.
- The state portion of the property tax bill is now eliminated.
- At the end of this budget, Wisconsin taxpayers will have received \$8 billion in cumulative tax relief since Governor Walker took office, as existing reductions continue and reductions in this budget take effect.
- The budget eliminates onerous taxes by exempting small businesses from \$74 million in taxes on machinery equipment.
- Increases for local road and bridge improvements are the largest in 20 years.
- The budget ensures major projects like I-39/90, US Highway 10-441, and Verona Road remain on schedule. It also provides the lowest levels of transportation borrowing since the 2001 – 03 budget.

REWARDING WORK

- We continue our efforts to move people from government dependence to true independence through the dignity that comes from work. The budget creates a pilot program for able-bodied adults with school-aged children who are enrolled in FoodShare to work, look for work, or enroll in worker training. Tens of thousands have found employment since statewide implementation of the FoodShare Employment and Training program.
- Wisconsin Fast Forward worker training grants receive an additional \$11.5 million. This money is used for apprenticeships, dual enrollment, and other competitive worker training programs.
- \$1 million is provided to increase fabrication laboratory (Fab Lab) grants. FabLabs provide hands-on experience to students so they can get the skills they need for jobs in the 21st century.

Governor Walker issued 98 vetoes to the 2017 – 19 state budget.

Please Note: The veto list released yesterday included an item that was removed from the governor's official veto message, called the "Study on the Use of Physical Medicine and Proposal for Physical Medicine Pilot Program."

A copy of Governor Walker's official veto message [can be found here](#).

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