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Commission Offers Recommendations to Improve School Funding System

Madison—Senator Luther Olsen (R-Ripon) praised the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding as they released their recommendations on Wednesday. “One year ago, the Wisconsin Legislature convened a first of its kind bicameral and bipartisan commission to look for bold ways to improve the state’s school finance system. After a year of work, the commission offered recommendations for improvement in critical areas,” said Senator Olsen. In addition to legislators, the commission also included education professionals.

The Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding held nine public hearings around the state throughout the year. “While each school district is unique, we heard some common themes. Districts are facing declining enrollment, increased poverty and more bilingual/bicultural needs,” Olsen explained. “We need to make improvements to our school funding system that reflect the realities schools face today.”

By listening to teachers, administrators and parents, the commission identified 19 key issues the state could address to improve the school funding system. For some of the issues, the commission made specific recommendations. For example, it is recommending tying revenue cap increases to inflation. On other issues, like increased funding for special education, it is presenting the legislature with a variety of options.

“This is the most in-depth conversation on school funding that we’ve had in the state in a long time,” Olsen said. “Through the state budget process and the upcoming legislative session, I hope we can address these issues and give school districts the tools they need to successfully educate the children of the state.”