

News Release

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UW Madison analysis shows reported cuts to negatively impact schools

MADISON — State Superintendent Tony Evers commented today on the Feb. 25 working paper from Dr. Andrew Reschovsky, a professor at the La Follette School of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Reschovsky's study, "An Analysis of the Proposal to Reduce Revenue Limits for Wisconsin School Districts," is based on widely reported reductions in school aid of more than \$900 million and a new revenue limit that mandates a \$500 per-pupil reduction in property tax authority. The study reports that "Even with sharp reductions in the costs of employee benefits, over the next two years school districts across the state are likely to face rising costs elsewhere in their budgets." Additionally, Reschovsky states that "Facing lower revenue limits, many school districts will be forced to eliminate programs and increase class sizes." And he "would predict that many districts will find it hard to avoid substantial teacher and staff layoffs." He also found that the burden of cuts would be inequitable. "Districts with higher property values would be forced to reduce revenues by a smaller percentage than poorer districts."

Evers' statement follows:

"Professor Reschovsky's study exposes that public school children will suffer the greatest state cut to education since the Great Depression under Governor Walker's reported budget, which is to be introduced tomorrow.

"Already, districts are issuing teacher layoff notices, sometimes to half or more of the school staff, in reaction to public comments about massive cuts in revenue caps and state school aid. Public school districts have been consistently making cuts for 18 years under revenue caps. But Dr. Reschovsky's study makes it clear, the savings to school districts by employee contributions to pensions and health care premiums contained in the governor's budget adjustment bill may be insufficient to cover the estimated \$600 million mandated reduction in revenue limits. The additional \$900 million in state aid cuts puts Wisconsin education funding back to 2003 levels.

(more)

“When you make unprecedented and historic cuts like these to schools, it means teachers are laid off, class sizes are larger, course offerings are reduced, extracurricular activities are cut, and whole parts of what we value in our schools are gone. These cuts to public education will do substantial damage to Wisconsin’s schools and the students and communities they serve.”

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NOTES: A link to the analysis is available at http://www.lafollette.wisc.edu/news/Spring_2011/Analysis_outlines_possible_effect_of_state_budget_on_local_school_district_revenues.html.

A printout of the impact of reported per-pupil revenue limit reductions for the state’s 424 school districts is available on the Department of Public Instruction’s newsroom website at http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2011_22_districtprojections.pdf. This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2011_22.pdf.