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### Voucher Expansion ‘Deal’ a Trojan Horse

*Beware legislators bearing gifts*

MADISON — State Superintendent Tony Evers issued a statement today on a proposal released to the media that would expand school vouchers statewide. The plan is likely to be introduced very soon as a motion to the Joint Committee on Finance, which is finishing its work on the 2013-15 state budget.

“The reports of vouchers going statewide should be alarming for the parents of the state’s 870,000 public school students and property taxpayers.

“At the state level, Wisconsin battles every two years to barely fund, and more recently cut, its constitutionally mandated public education system. Locally, under 20 years of revenue caps, school boards have been making cuts that affect students’ classrooms. Statewide vouchers set up another system that is guaranteed full funding under state law and will increase property taxes wherever vouchers are used.

“Moreover, the reports of statewide voucher expansion mention nothing on increasing accountability and point to a 9 percent increase in the voucher payment. This proposal means more taxpayers’ money with no real accountability for results or transparency.

“Within a few years, there will certainly be ‘a voucher in every backpack,’ costing taxpayers over \$1 billion dollars to subsidize families, including the wealthy, currently paying private and religious school tuition.

“As the chief champion for our public school children, I have long argued against expansion of vouchers. I am not alone, just read the editorial pages of newspapers across the state. Just listen to grandparents, parents, and students on the visits I make to schools.

“Let’s be clear, no cap on voucher enrollment or income limits has ever stayed in place over the past 20 years. History shows, and I predict, these caps are temporary. And, the result will be more and more funding pulled out of public school classrooms and put into private and religious schools. This is the future being set for a state whose public schools year after year educate students who are among the tops nationally in high school graduation and on the ACT college entrance exam.

(more)

“This is not about Milwaukee anymore. It is now about Potosi, Eau Claire, Wausau, River Falls, Ashland, Ashwaubenon, my hometown of Plymouth, and everywhere else in Wisconsin.

“This is no deal for kids, their families, all taxpayers, and the future of our great state.”

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**NOTES:** Issue papers on voucher expansion and recent research on the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program can be found on the Department of Public Instruction’s 2013-15 state budget page [http://news.dpi.wi.gov/news\\_2013-15-state-budget-information](http://news.dpi.wi.gov/news_2013-15-state-budget-information). This statement is available electronically at [http://news.dpi.wi.gov/files/eis/pdf/dpinr2013\\_72.pdf](http://news.dpi.wi.gov/files/eis/pdf/dpinr2013_72.pdf).