

Sen. Marklein: Appointed to legislature's Blue Ribbon Commission on school funding reform

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MADISON, WI – State Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) participated in the first public hearing for the legislature's Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding Reform today. Marklein was appointed to this new Commission which will study the school funding formulae and make recommendations for reforms in the coming months.

"I volunteered to be a member of the Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding Reform because I know how important the school funding process is to the schools in the 17th Senate District and around the state. As a former auditor and now a legislator, I know that in the past we have tended to tweak the existing school finance formula, but we haven't made any wholesale changes. I am excited to be a part of a deeper conversation about what really needs to be changed," Marklein said. "As a member of the Joint Finance Committee, I have studied school funding in great detail and recognize areas that could be improved. I look forward to hearing from stakeholders and experts to continue our study."

"K-12 education is the largest area of spending in our state budget," Marklein said. "The funding process for our public schools needs to evolve with the changing demographics of our school districts and communities. Declining enrollment is one of our biggest challenges and we must know how our funding formula addresses this issue."

The Commission held a public hearing and heard testimony from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) as an introductory overview.

The Commission plans to hold additional public hearings throughout the state. Following public hearings, they will receive a comparative briefing from the National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL) about school funding in other states. Members of the commission are encouraged to seek additional briefings and information before the Commission creates recommendations for reforms to be considered for the next state budget.