

Gov. Walker: Student success: Walker discusses bolstering Wisconsin's K-12 schools at schools across the state

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MADISON – Governor Scott Walker is visiting schools in Potosi and Fish Creek today to highlight investments in student success and to discuss his support for legislation authored by Representative John Nygren (R—Marinette) and Senator Howard Marklein (R—Spring Green) that will provide additional Sparsity Aid and a Low Revenue Ceiling increase for rural schools. This increased aid for rural schools is in addition to the historic \$11.5 billion investment in K-12 education, increased support for High-Cost Transportation Aid in rural areas, new support for mental health services and expanded efforts to provide broadband access statewide included in the state budget.

“Every child in Wisconsin, regardless of where they live, deserves access to a quality education which provides them with the skills they need to succeed in college, career, and life,” said Governor Walker. “This bill, in addition to our historically-high investment in K-12 education and initiatives driving student success throughout Wisconsin, ensures our students get the support they need to become the next generation of leaders.”

Representative Nygren and Senator Marklein are authoring legislation (Senate Bill 690) that increases Sparsity Aid by \$6.4 million for the 2018-19 school year. The bill provides an increase from \$300 per pupil to \$400 per pupil for districts that currently qualify for Sparsity Aid.

“I am very proud to be joining Governor Scott Walker to introduce this legislation that will provide significant additional resources for public schools across Wisconsin. In particular, relief for low spending districts,” said Representative Nygren. “This bill will provide more resources for the classroom and increase educational opportunities for students, regardless of their zip code. I would like to thank Governor Walker for his collaboration and leadership on this issue and I look forward to continuing to work to ensure that all students get the world-class education they deserve.”

The Sparsity Aid Program aims to offset the challenges faced by low-population school districts through providing \$300 in per-pupil funding for school districts with 745 students or less and a population density of less than 10 students per square mile.

“SB 690 enhances the historic \$11.5 billion investment in K-12 funding in the biennial budget by providing additional support for rural schools,” Senator Marklein said. “I am proud to champion good policy on behalf of the school districts I serve.”

Investments from the Governor’s budget supporting rural school districts include: increased funding for High-Cost Transportation Aid to help offset the increased cost of transporting students to schools in rural areas; Broadband Expansion grants providing schools and students access to fast, reliable internet service in underserved areas, as well as mobile hotspots for school buses; and \$6.65 million to address students’ mental health needs. These initiatives are in addition to the historically-high \$11.5 billion investment in K-12 education included the 2017-19 state budget that provides a \$200 per student funding increase for every student in every school in the state this year and, on top of that, an additional increase of \$204 per student next year.