

Gronik campaign: How Gov. Scott Walker broke: Public education funding and higher education

Posted on Wednesday, Jan 24, 2018

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MILWAUKEE – The following is the statement of Democratic gubernatorial candidate Andy Gronik with regards to Gov. Scott Walker’s record on education:

“If you want something to grow you don’t let it starve, you nurture it. It’s not that complicated. Scott Walker’s actions would have you believe that public education is the bane of Wisconsin’s existence when, in fact, high-quality public schools in our state has always been a major driving force as to why families and companies have both chosen to live in Wisconsin.

“The fact is Scott Walker’s assertions about public schools, our teachers, and the public employees who he decided to single out because, historically, these groups didn’t vote for him, was an elaborate and well-told lie intended to divide our state and destroy his political opponents. And, boy, did Walker’s plan ever work for Walker! It boosted his national profile and his political aspirations. But for us Wisconsinites, Walker’s plan has been devastating to the quality of our children’s educations; devastating to villages, towns and cities throughout Wisconsin where public schools are the heartbeat of these communities: devastating to our state’s reputation where public education was once our national treasure; and devastating to our teachers, often debilitated and reduced to tears after being routinely humiliated and undervalued.

“It’s widely known that Walker stripped more than 1 billion dollars from Wisconsin’s public schools and then looked for applause when infusing \$649 million back into

the system because he needed to claw back the voters he hemorrhaging. Schools throughout Wisconsin have been forced to grovel for the essential funding needed to stay open for business in Walker's much-touted "Open for Business" Wisconsin by repeatedly having to go to referendum to raise \$1.35 billion in 2016 alone. You see, Scott Walker, the people of Wisconsin, do care about public education in their communities even though you don't.

"Under Scott Walker, our system of public education is eroding right before our eyes. Everyone knows that teachers are the most important connection to quality education in the classroom but, under Walker, 10.5% of public school teachers in Wisconsin left the profession after the 2010-2011 school year and the exit rate for teachers remains at 8.8%. Walker's pressing to reduce the teaching standards; reduce the length of the school year; and sought to reduce the funding to rural schools disproportionately affected by his budget slashing before he figured out this was bad for his political future and reversed himself. "Walker's attacks do not stop at K-12 public schools - our university system has been in his crosshairs from the beginning, too. He's cut \$250 million from UW-System funding and cost the system nearly \$8 million in research grants, \$24 million in retention bonuses to keep professors who were lining up to leave our state - all while watching UW-Madison drop out of the Top 10 national rankings and lose world-leading researchers. Walker is attacking our student's 1st Amendment Rights of free speech on college campuses; offered no leadership on the student debt crisis; and has no real plan to keep young graduates from leaving our state other than to spend millions in TV advertising to encourage them to come back. And, why should they governor after you've spent seven years schooling them about what your Wisconsin is all about?"

"When I'm governor, I'll prioritize our state budget and invest in our public schools, educators, and kids. I'll stop the expansion of voucher programs and focus our resources and best practices on a plan that makes our public schools the very best choice for our kids. We'll return local control to school districts, so they're positioned to make decisions that are in the best interests of the kids in their classrooms and their surrounding communities. We'll simplify the ridiculously complicated funding formula that's left rural schools disadvantaged when compared to schools in more populated areas. And, we'll connect our kids to high-speed Internet, so all public schools are enabled to provide 21st learning for 21st-century jobs."

A closer look at Gov. Scott Walker's record on education:

- 10.5% of public school teachers in Wisconsin left the profession after the 2010-2011 school year. Exit rate for teachers remains at 8.8%.[1]
- Facilitated more than one billion in cuts to education funding.[2]
- Cut \$250 million from UW-System funding.[3]
- Wisconsin school districts approved through referendums borrowing \$1.35 billion in 2016.[4]

Background:

[1] "In addition, 10.5% of public school teachers in Wisconsin left the profession after the 2010-2011 school year, up from 6.4% the year before. The exit rate remains elevated, at 8.8%" Here's what happened to teachers after Wisconsin gutted its unions, CNN, Lydia DePills, [11/17/17](#)

[2] "Gov. Scott Walker and the Republican-controlled legislature have cut over \$1 billion from K-12 public schools since taking office and, by the end of the current budget cycle, will have doled out in excess of \$1 billion in taxpayer dollars through the private school voucher program to unaccountable private and religious schools." One Billion Dollars in cuts to K-12 Public Schools...And Counting, One Wisconsin Now Institute, [2/10/16](#)

[3] "Walker on Sunday signed a new state budget that, among other things: slashes \$250 million from the University of Wisconsin, one of the country's great public institutions of higher education, and ensures that most K-12 school districts will get less funding than they did last year;" Gov. Scott Walker savages Wisconsin public education in new budget, Washington Post, Valerie Strauss, [7/13/15](#)

[4] "According to the report, voters in districts across the state approved through referendums borrowing \$1.35 billion last year, 10 times more than in 2011 and the most since the alliance began keeping records in 1993. The previous high, adjusted for inflation, was \$1.04 billion in 1996." Wisconsin school districts' debt soars after \$1.35 billion in new borrowing, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Anyessa Johnson, [3/6/17](#)