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Online Public Charter School Advocates Join School Choice Coalition in Sounding the Alarm Over Onerous, Anti-Parent Budget Proposals

Wisconsin Coalition of Virtual School Families to Hold Capitol Day Tuesday

[MADISON...] An attack of the private school choice and special needs scholarships in Wisconsin is being opposed by a group of committed *public* charter school advocates.

“We, too, have been the target of arbitrary enrollment caps and heartless attempts by the education bureaucracy to slowly choke away opportunities for our kids,” said Ty Babinski, President of the Wisconsin Coalition of Virtual School Families. “We oppose these latest attempts to squash education reform; they are a step backwards, do not help children and are a signal that bureaucrats do not trust parents. We may not be in the crosshairs yet, but if opponents of parents get momentum, we know we’re likely next.”

The WCVSF is holding their annual Capitol Day in Madison on Tuesday. Students, teachers and parents will bring their message directly to the Governor and lawmakers.

The budget introduced by Governor Tony Evers includes the following policy changes.

- Callously freezes the number of slots available in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, the Racine Parental Choice Program, and the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program in Fiscal Year 2021 based on Fiscal Year 2020 headcount
- Arbitrarily halts the authority of entities to authorize new independent charter schools without permission from DPI and freezes the authority of the Office of Educational Opportunity to authorize new schools from the enactment of the budget through July 1, 2023
- Incredulously prevents new students from enrolling in the Special Needs Scholarship Program (SNSP) beginning in FY21

School Choice Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Federation for Children welcome the support of the WCVSF and vow to continue their efforts to remove these provisions from the budget.

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ADD ONE - WCVSF Capitol Day Preview April 8, 2019

“This budget puts politics ahead of children with unnecessary friction over how a child is educated,” said Jim Bender, President of School Choice Wisconsin. “Public charter school parents have faced these same misguided political battles over the last 15 years. We welcome their support in our efforts.”

The American Federation for Children says the collaboration is appreciated.

“The Governor’s proposal to “freeze” the parental program and limit charter school expansion with arbitrary caps is somewhat duplicitous and malevolent. The program is already “capped” every year by the amount of demand,” said Justin Moralez, Wisconsin State Director, American Federation for Children. “Just because families continue to embrace education options outside of their assigned school does not mean the Government should step in and seize control from a parent over what is the best learning environment for their child. This limits success and opportunity. We look forward to collective cross-sector collaboration and hope that it helps enhance the achievement of all schools.”

The Wisconsin Coalition of Virtual School families will be visiting lawmakers’ offices and dropping off letters to them and Governor Evers on Tuesday morning.

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About the Wisconsin Coalition of Virtual School Families

Created and led by parent volunteers, this nonprofit coalition was formed in 2005 to protect Wisconsin’s educational choices and make sure parents’ and families’ voices are heard in the Capitol and around the state. We have successfully fought for the utilization of online education in Wisconsin schools and for the legalization of online public charter schools. We encourage and salute policy makers who are willing to say, “I Trust Parents,” and who then back up their words with pro-education reform actions.

About School Choice Wisconsin

It is a top priority of School Choice Wisconsin to be the leading resource for schools regarding their involvement in Wisconsin’s parental choice programs. Wisconsin’s school choice programs serve more than 30,000 students annually at more than 200 participating schools throughout the state. With offices in the Milwaukee area and Madison, School Choice Wisconsin’s experienced staff works with schools, parents and communities interested in school choice programs in Wisconsin. Primary roles include: providing program research, acting as a conduit between schools and the state government, creating community awareness and advising on program administration.

About Federation for Children Wisconsin

Federation for Children Wisconsin is a non-profit organization dedicated to advocating for school choice, which empowers parents to choose the best educational environment for their children, so all children, particularly low-income children, have access to a better, quality education—whether that’s at a public school, private school, charter school, home school or any other learning environment parents choose. We are a project of the American Federation for Children (AFC). For over 25 years, AFC has revolutionized the K-12 system in an effort to take it to a 21st century model where all children, regardless of their socio-economic status, have access to a quality education. <http://wifederationforchildren.org/about>