



SONDY POPE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
80TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



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SCHOOL CHOICE WISCONSIN FALSELY CLAIMS GROWING DEMAND

MADISON – Today, Representative Sondy Pope (D-Cross Plains) took issue with a release from School Choice Wisconsin making the misleading claim that the demand for the school choice program is growing. This claim is based on data released by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) which Jim Bender, President of School Choice Wisconsin clumsily fudges in a poor attempt to strengthen his case for statewide voucher expansion.

“Mr. Bender is either misleading Wisconsin parents to believe in his snake-oil pitch or doesn’t actually understand the numbers,” Rep Pope said. “In either case, his exaggeration is clearly irresponsible, incorrect, and I assume, intentional.”

In the release, Mr. Bender cites an increase in applicants as an increase in demand. What is not mentioned is that current students participating in the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) must reapply for a voucher each year to continue to attend their current school. This supposed “demand” should then consist of new eligible applicants to the program. When previously participating students are factored out and the increase in WPCP voucher caps are factored in, new applicants drop from 2,924 (2014) to 2,613 (2015). This is not a growing demand.

“Even after a reckless open records request involving personal student data from 30 school districts, School Choice Wisconsin still failed to increase the number of new applicants to the WPCP,” said Rep. Pope. “Numbers never lie; it is unfortunate the same cannot be said for School Choice Wisconsin.”

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