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STATE SENATOR • 20TH DISTRICT

For Immediate Release:
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Senator Stroebel: Democrats Wrong on School Choice

Wisconsin will have spent \$59 billion on K-12 education under Governor Walker

Madison, WI – Senator Duey Stroebel (R-Cedarburg) has issued a statement following several Democrat legislators’ false attacks on school choice and the current budget.

The first day of school should be used to welcome students to their new grade and fresh opportunities. Instead, Wisconsin Democrats have chosen to falsely attack the school choice expansion. Their idea of education reform is simply more revenue. They emphasize Wisconsin will have spent \$1.1 billion on school choice from 2011-17 while forgetting Wisconsin taxpayers will have spent over \$59 billion on public schools during the same time. School choice is a mere 1.97% of K-12 spending.

The press releases yesterday show a lack of understanding of the school choice program and the goals of Wisconsin Republicans. I want to set the record straight.

Democrat Claim: Choice schools are unaccountable vouchers for high priced private schools.

Reality: *These schools are accountable to DPI monitoring including on the same report card as public schools. Parents with vouchers will choose the best school for their child. What parent intentionally sends their child to a failing school? Furthermore, on average the taxpayers spend about \$12,700 per public school student. Contrast that number to the voucher amount of \$7,222. By doing the math, taxpayers spend nearly \$5,500 more per public student.*

Democrat Claim: The wealthiest Wisconsinites paying for private schools benefit the most.

Reality: *The legislature expanded school choice to include families making less than 185% of the federal poverty rate. A family of four making roughly \$51,000 is hardly part of the wealthiest Wisconsinites. When talking about the tuition tax deduction Democrats also fail to understand the wealthiest Wisconsinites are subject to the itemized deduction phase-out meaning middle class families are using the deduction in order to keep more money in their pocket – which Democrats claim they support.*

Democrat Claim: We are taking away money from Wisconsin’s children.

Reality: *The taxpayer money associated with the choice student follows the student to the choice school. The home public school district then counts the student for general aid purposes. Additionally, this budget maintains a per student aid that **increases** in the 2016-17 school year. Democrats continue to forget private school students are also Wisconsin children – and their parents are Wisconsin taxpayers.*

In the end, Wisconsin Republicans are seeking alternatives to ensure parents have the ability to decide where their children are educated. Democrats’ claim Wisconsin public schools are less successful under Governor Walker also misses the mark. A recent report states Wisconsin as having the second highest [ACT scores](#) in the nation.

I have toured several school choice campuses in recent months and have witnessed the great success accomplished by these Milwaukee students. These schools are achieving positive results with literacy rates, graduation rates and college admittance. I invite Minority Leader Jennifer Schilling and any other Democrat to join me on additional tours.

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