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(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

## WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

### 2011-12

(session year)

### Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

### Committee on Education...

#### COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

#### INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
  - (**ab** = Assembly Bill)                      (**ar** = Assembly Resolution)                      (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
  - (**sb** = Senate Bill)                              (**sr** = Senate Resolution)                              (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

\* Contents organized for archiving by: Stefanie Rose (LRB) (December 2012)

## Senate

### Record of Committee Proceedings

#### **Committee on Education**

##### **Senate Bill 174**

Relating to: closing the parental choice program for eligible school districts to additional school districts.

By Senators Ellis, Cowles, S. Fitzgerald, Olsen, Jauch, T. Cullen, Taylor, Schultz, Lassa and Hansen; cosponsored by Representatives Vos, Kestell, Brooks, Krug and Endsley.

August 30, 2011      Referred to Committee on Education.

October 5, 2011      **PUBLIC HEARING HELD**

Present:     (7)      Senators Olsen, Vukmir, Grothman, Darling,  
   Vinehout, C. Larson and T. Cullen.

Absent:       (0)      None.

Excused:     (0)      None.

##### Appearances For

- Mike Ellis, Madison — Senator
- Michael Blecha, Green Bay — Green Bay Area School Board
- Mike Thompson, Madison — DPI
- Michelle Langenfeld, Green Bay — Superintendent, Green Bay Area Public Schools
- Toni Lardinois, Green Bay — Green Bay Education Association
- Amy Bahena-Etner, Green Bay
- Jeff Spitzer-Resnick, Madison — Disability Rights Wisconsin
- Dan Rossmiller, Madison — Wisconsin Association of School Boards
- Steve McNeal, Beloit — Beloit School District

##### Appearances Against

- None.

##### Appearances for Information Only

- None.

##### Registrations For

- Laura Chern, Madison
- John Forester, Madison — School Administrators Alliance
- Keith Patt, Madison — Green Bay Education Association

- Bob Jauch, Madison — Senator
- Deb Sybell — WEAC
- Lena Taylor, Milwaukee — Senator, 4th Senate District

Registrations Against

- None.

Registrations for Information Only

- None.

October 5, 2011

**EXECUTIVE SESSION HELD**

Present: (7) Senators Olsen, Vukmir, Grothman, Darling,  
Vinehout, C. Larson and T. Cullen.

Absent: (0) None.

Excused: (0) None.

Moved by Senator Vinehout, seconded by Senator Olsen that  
**Senate Bill 174** be recommended for passage.

Ayes: (6) Senators Olsen, Grothman, Darling,  
Vinehout, C. Larson and T. Cullen.

Noes: (1) Senator Vukmir.

PASSAGE RECOMMENDED, Ayes 6, Noes 1

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Sarah Archibald  
Committee Clerk

## Vote Record Committee on Education

Date: 10/5/11

Moved by: Vinehout

Seconded by: Olsen

AB \_\_\_\_\_ SB 174 Clearinghouse Rule \_\_\_\_\_  
 AJR \_\_\_\_\_ SJR \_\_\_\_\_ Appointment \_\_\_\_\_  
 AR \_\_\_\_\_ SR \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_  
 A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_ to A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_  
 A/S Sub Amdt \_\_\_\_\_  
 A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_ to A/S Sub Amdt \_\_\_\_\_  
 A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_ to A/S Amdt \_\_\_\_\_ to A/S Sub Amdt \_\_\_\_\_

Be recommended for:  
 Passage     Adoption     Confirmation     Concurrence     Indefinite Postponement  
 Introduction     Rejection     Tabling     Nonconcurrence

<u>Committee Member</u>	<u>Aye</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Not Voting</u>
Senator Luther Olsen, Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senator Leah Vukmir	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senator Glenn Grothman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senator Alberta Darling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senator Robert <del>Jauch</del> <u>Gardner</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senator Kathleen Vinehout	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senator Chris Larson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Totals:</b>	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	_____	_____

Motion Carried

Motion Failed



October 5, 2011



GREEN BAY AREA  
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT  
All learning. All growing.

Senator Olson, other Senate Education Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Mike Blecha, a member of the Green Bay Area School Board. I also am a member of the board of directors for the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, representing 35 school districts in Northeastern Wisconsin.

I appear today to testify in favor of Senate Bill 174, which would insure that private school vouchers would not be expanded beyond Milwaukee and Racine without further specific action by the Legislature.

As you know, the 2011-13 state budget contains language that could easily pave the way for the expansion of private school voucher programs to other communities beyond Milwaukee and Racine. In particular, those provisions could readily expand the state's voucher program to school districts located in 16 second class cities in Wisconsin if they meet certain criteria. That category includes the Green Bay Area Public School District, which I and my fellow board members represent.

I would first like to thank Senator Mike Ellis for drafting the legislation and also thank other members of both parties in the Senate for signing on as co-authors, including Senator Rob Cowles and Senator Dave Hansen, both of whom represent portions of our school district.

There has been no evidence submitted that vouchers would improve the quality of education for students in Green Bay. Indeed, all research both nationally and in this state shows that students in voucher schools perform no better than students in public schools.

I know all of you senators have a great deal of respect for the Legislative Audit Bureau and the quality work performed by state auditors in examining programs. I hope you all have had a chance to read the recent audit by the audit bureau of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, which found no significant difference in math and reading test scores between students in Milwaukee's school voucher program and those in the city's public schools.

Given that data and also the tremendous expense to taxpayers, why would the Legislature expand the voucher program to Green Bay or other school districts?

We know that legislators often talk about the need for local control and for state and federal government to not become overly prescriptive when dealing with local units of government.

Senator Olson, I respectfully ask you: How would you feel if you woke up one morning and picked up the newspaper and read a story that state government was instituting a program in your

District Offices

200 South Broadway

Green Bay, WI 54303

Phone: (920) 448-2000

www.greenbay.k12.wi.us

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 23387

Green Bay, Wisconsin 54305

Superintendent

Michelle S. Langenfeld, Ed.D.

Phone: (920) 448-2100

Fax: (920) 448-3562

**2011**

A.P. Achievement List

**District**

senate district that you had not been consulted about and that would cost your taxpayers millions of dollars?

Well, that is what almost happened to Green Bay, and what still may happen if this bill is not passed.

The proposal to extend vouchers to Green Bay came in a speech the governor made earlier this year in Washington, D.C. that blindsided the seven elected members of the Green Bay Board of Education. Subsequently, the push for vouchers in Green Bay came, not from those in our community, but from outside lobbyists paid by pro-voucher groups.

I have served on the Green Bay Area Board of Education for more than six years. Previous to that I finished a 33-year career in the newsroom of the Green Bay Press-Gazette with eight years as opinion page editor. In the past 14 years --- first as opinion page editor closely tracking community issues and now as an elected school board member -- I have not heard ONE PERSON in our community talk about the need for vouchers in Green Bay.

Simply put, senators, vouchers are not needed, or wanted, in the Green Bay Area Public School District.

Later, you will hear from our superintendent, Dr. Michelle Langenfeld, who will talk about the many choices Green Bay public school students already have and about the many achievements of our students, who are guided by an exceptional teaching force.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Mike Blecha







To: Senate Committee on Education

From: Green Bay Education Association

Date: October 5, 2011

Re: **Support for SB 174 (closing the voucher program to other school districts)**

The Green Bay Education Association supports SB 174, closing the taxpayer-funded private school voucher program to school districts beyond Milwaukee and Racine.

Vouchers do not raise student achievement. Data released by the Legislative Audit Bureau found no significant difference in standardized test scores between students in Milwaukee public schools and voucher schools. In some cases, test scores of voucher students were actually worse than their public school counterparts.

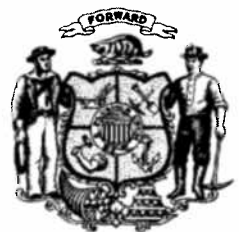
Voucher schools have access to taxpayer dollars without the same accountability required of public school districts. Voucher schools are not required to accept students with exceptional needs which include special education, English as a second language and low socio-economic status. The high costs of providing services to students with exceptional needs remain with the public schools. Voucher schools are not required to follow the same mandates which apply to public schools.

Teachers and administrators in taxpayer-funded private voucher schools are not required to meet the same high standards required of public school employees. Members of the Green Bay Education Association have worked closely with the Green Bay Area Public Schools to collaboratively develop and revise the Supervision and Evaluation model in alignment with nationally recognized research. In addition, the Association and District have also collaboratively developed and implemented high quality professional development for all staff, also based upon research based models. These efforts have resulted in highly qualified staff working with students every day and deeply engaged in professional learning to further develop their knowledge and skills.

As a result of the state budget, public schools are faced with unprecedented loss of revenue. Expansion of voucher schools in such difficult fiscal times is not only unsound educational policy; it is an unwise use of limited taxpayer resources. We strongly urge passage of SB 174.



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



October 5, 2011



GREEN BAY AREA  
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT  
All learning. All growing.

Senator Olson and members of the Senate Education Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Michelle Langenfeld. I am the Superintendent of the Green Bay Area Public Schools serving more than 21,000 students.

I am here to testify in favor of Senate Bill 174, which would limit the expansion of private school vouchers beyond Milwaukee and Racine. I wish to personally thank Senators' Ellis, Cowles and Hansen as well as all who have shown their recognition and support for stopping the expansion of private school voucher programs.

Since beginning my position as Superintendent and becoming a resident of the great state of Wisconsin and Green Bay in August of this year, I have come to learn much about the threat of vouchers in Wisconsin – an issue that has not taken root in Minnesota as well as the wonderful things happening in the Green Bay Area Public Schools.

Proponents of private school vouchers often speak of “failing public schools.” There is little recognition that the schools of yesterday, where students were sorted and selected, no longer exist. A small number of thinkers and great number of “doers” were needed for jobs in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a “doer” you could enter the workforce with little more than an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education and earn a living wage. That’s no longer the case. While it’s true that some school districts across the country have yet to make the shift to the 21<sup>st</sup> century – recognizing the critical importance of educating ALL students to insure a highly educated citizenry – Green Bay Area Public Schools do not fall into that group. We recognize that ALL students need to be prepared for post secondary... we need them ALL to be thinkers... We do not sort and select.

I am very proud of our teachers and staff in the Green Bay Area Public Schools who work tirelessly responding to the needs of ALL students. I am proud of the fact that we hold our students and ourselves accountable and to very high expectations. I am very proud that:

- Green Bay Area Public Schools once again outpaced the state and the nation on the ACT and SAT tests.
- Every year several of our schools are acknowledged as Schools of Recognition by the state of Wisconsin. These schools are characterized by above average student achievement in reading and mathematics as compared to like schools. They are also schools with the highest rates of poverty in the state.

District Offices  
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Mailing Address  
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Superintendent  
Michelle S. Langenfeld, Ed.D.  
Phone: (920) 448-2100  
Fax: (920) 448-3562

**2011**  
A.P. Achievement List  
District

- Green Bay Area Public Schools have been recognized nationally as Blue Ribbon schools.
- Green Bay's Howe Elementary was featured in September in the documentary – "Bridging the Gap" on Wisconsin Public Television for significantly closing the achievement gap.
- 100% of our exiting English Second Language Learners in grades 3, 4, 5, and 7 scored proficient or advanced in reading.
- 100% of our exiting English Second Language Learners in grade 3 scored proficient or advanced on the WKCE in mathematics.

All of these accolades have been given to the Green Bay Area Public Schools because we have made the shift to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. While we still have much work to do, we continue to embrace each student who comes through our doors. We are NOT failing.

Proponents of private school vouchers often speak of the need for "Choice." Green Bay Area Public Schools offer students and families an extraordinary menu of academic and co-curricular choices.

Here are some examples:

- World Languages offerings include: German, French, Spanish, Chinese, Italian and American Sign Language
- Two-way bilingual programs
- K-8 programs – one focused on individualized progressive education with instructional plans responsive to students
- International Baccalaureate at Green Bay West High School, with an (IB) Primary Year Program that includes Spanish and Pre IB at the middle school level soon to follow
- Nationally recognized Project Lead the Way
- Youth Apprenticeship
- Online learning
- Advanced Placement courses
- Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)
- Financial Literacy, Technology and Engineering, Business and International Law
- Work Experience/Career Exploration
- Project-based learning at our charter school – John Dewey Academy for Learning
- East High School Fine Arts Institute

These are just some of the many course offerings and we are in process of expanding to include more online learning opportunities as well as more courses to develop technical skills. We also have award winning and nationally competitive teams/programs including DECA, INVENTEAM – partnering with MIT, Mock Trial, Show Choir, and many, many more!

Our mission in the Green Bay Area Public Schools is to "embrace learning for all as our highest priority." We do not select or sort our students but rather work to

provide dynamic educational opportunities for ALL students including those students who come to us with limited English and students with disabilities – student groups who are often underrepresented in private school settings.

During my visits to public school districts in the south, I have seen schools and communities struggling where families have chosen to take advantage of aggressive school choice plans by sending their children to private schools. Graduation rates are typically low in these districts. The vibrancy of the schools and the community is very questionable.

As the discussion of vouchers continues, I ask, “Do we really want to create a system that is reflective of aggressive school choice plans including state vouchers, such as Florida?”

Consider this: Recent data identifies Florida ranking 46<sup>th</sup> in the nation on the SAT; 48<sup>th</sup> on ACT (19.6) - beating out only Mississippi and Tennessee. Wisconsin ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation on the SAT and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation on ACT (22.2). Florida is ranked 44<sup>th</sup> in the nation in graduation rates. Wisconsin leads the nation, ranking 1<sup>st</sup> in the country.

Ask yourself, “Does it make sense to continue to invest in public education; leading the nation where all students are well-prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?”

The future of our country can be summed up by how we respond to the question: “How are the children?” The only way we will be able to respond “ALL the children are well” is to continue to invest in our public schools.

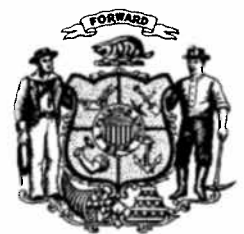
I appreciate your support of Senate Bill 174 and invite you to come to Green Bay to visit our vibrant and very successful public schools.

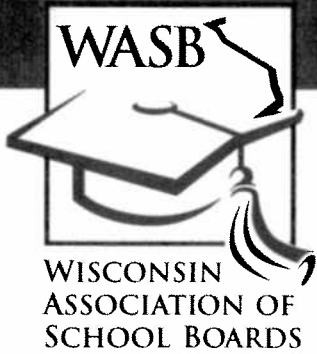
Thank you.

Michelle Langenfeld



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





122 W. WASHINGTON AVENUE, MADISON, WI 53703  
PHONE: 608-257-2622 • TOLL FREE: 877-705-4422  
FAX: 608-257-8386 • WEB SITE: WWW.WASB.ORG

JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Members, Senate Committee on Education  
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, Government Relations Director  
DATE: October 5, 2011  
RE: Senate Bill 174, relating to: closing the parental choice program for eligible school districts to additional school districts.

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) *strongly supports* Senate Bill 174.

Senate Bill 174 would limit the expansion of the parental choice programs, which provide publicly funded vouchers to pay for private schooling of students, without explicit legislative approval. The bill would require specific legislative action to expand taxpayer-financed vouchers for religious and private schools to any new communities

In practical terms, Senate Bill 174 would remove Green Bay and any school district located partially or totally within a second class other city from consideration for a private school voucher program, barring specific future action by the Legislature.

This bill is necessary because of provisions in 2011 Wisconsin Act 32, the 2011-13 state budget, that expanded the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (voucher program) to Racine. While the intent was only to expand the private school voucher program to Racine, and the criteria created by the budget language *currently* apply only to Racine, those criteria could conceivably bring other districts into the voucher program in the future without specific legislative authorization. At the time, a number of legislators stated it was not their intention that the provision be drafted in such an open-ended fashion.

To their credit, as the budget was being taken up in mid-June, Sen. Mike Ellis and Rep. Robin Vos agreed to introduce and act on legislation this fall to rectify the original error. Governor Walker, through his spokesperson, agreed to sign the bill into law when it passes. On behalf of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, I would like to thank each of them for their willingness to step forward to do the right thing and rectify the original error.

Without the enactment of Senate Bill 174, Green Bay and possibly other districts located wholly or partly within a second class city could fall into a situation where a voucher program not specifically authorized by the Legislature could suddenly spring into existence. This could occur without a public hearing or any other opportunity for the taxpayers and parents of these communities or the locally elected school board to be heard on the question.

We believe Senate Bill 174 is about honesty and transparency in government.

Senate Bill 174 simply says the Legislature must pass legislation specifically authorizing any additional voucher program that would use public funds to pay for private schooling before such a program could begin. The Legislature would be free to specifically authorize additional voucher programs in the future if it chooses to do so; however, it must do so by passing new legislation and taking a new vote.

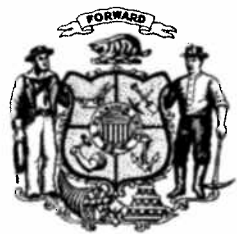
We agree with Senator Ellis that there needs to be careful, thoughtful and open deliberation by the Legislature on the voucher program before any further expansion.

We urge you to **support** Senate Bill 174.





# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



**TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB 174**

by

Jeff Spitzer-Resnick

Managing Attorney

October 5, 2011

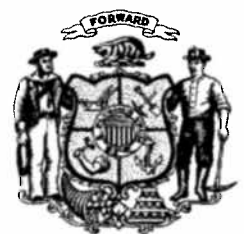
As many of you may be aware, Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW) is Wisconsin's protection and advocacy agency for people with disabilities. In my work as Managing Attorney for DRW's Schools & Civil Rights team, we have a strong interest in any educational programs that impact upon children with disabilities. In fact, although the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) is allegedly available to all students in Milwaukee, it has become clear that the schools in that program simply do not serve many children with disabilities. That failure to serve children with disabilities in significant numbers has caused unhealthy segregation within Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) which now has 20% of its students who qualify for special education compared to only 1.6% in voucher schools. This segregation means that children both with and without disabilities are being educated in unnatural environments, which is not the best way to educate any child.

DRW supports SB 174 because, if passed, it would close an important loophole in Wisconsin's current law on voucher programs by not allowing them to expand into other districts. Our position is that private school voucher programs should not be expanded in Wisconsin until it is clear that students with all types of disabilities can receive quality integrated education through such programs.

I would be glad to answer any questions you may have about our position either during this hearing or at a later date.



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



**Senate Committee on Education**  
**October 5, 2011**

**Testimony of Deputy State Superintendent Dr. Mike Thompson**  
**on 2011 Senate Bill 174**

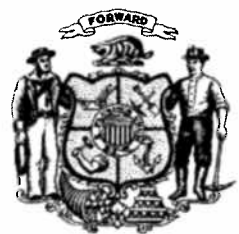
I want to thank Chairperson Olsen and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify before you today on behalf of the State Superintendent in support of 2011 Senate Bill 174 (SB 174).

I want to extend my thanks to Senator Ellis for introducing this bill as it will ensure that private school choice is not expanded beyond the school districts of Milwaukee and Racine. Without this bill there is the potential for school districts across the state to be eligible for the expansion of vouchers with no public debate or local input. The local taxpayers of these districts could end up with vouchers without any voice or vote in the process. They deserve both.

Finally, I want to thank both Representative Vos and Senator Ellis for so quickly recognizing this and committing to passing this legislation way back on June 16 of this year in their public comments to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel; and the Governor for stating in that same article that he would sign the legislation that kept the expansion to Racine.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





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# WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

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To: Senate Committee on Education  
From: Wisconsin Education Association Council  
Date: October 5, 2011  
Re: Support for SB 174 (closing the voucher program to other school districts)

The Wisconsin Education Association Council supports SB 174, closing the taxpayer-funded private school voucher program to school districts beyond Milwaukee and Racine.

As enacted, the 2011-13 state budget contained a provision to automatically expand the voucher program to school districts located in cities of the second class if certain criteria are met. Only Racine currently meets the criteria. At the time, legislative leaders indicated that it was not their intent to expand the program to communities other than Racine and trailer legislation would be introduced to make this clear. SB 174 delivers on this promise and now it is up to legislators to see it through by passing it in both houses of the Legislature and presenting it to Governor Walker for his signature.

Prior to making a decision on whether to expand the voucher program to a particular school district, it is vital to listen to the voices of the community including parents, educators, and school board members so they have an opportunity for meaningful input. Community members should be apprised of the effect of the voucher program on their local schools. As has been the experience in Milwaukee, the voucher program draws significant resources away from neighborhood public schools and drives up local property taxes. The community has paid a heavy price while the voucher program has failed to produce higher test scores compared to the public school system. In fact, private school voucher students have performed similarly or worse than students attending public schools in Milwaukee.

In addition to imposing the voucher program on Racine as part of its state budget proposal, the Joint Finance Committee floated the idea of expanding the program to Green Bay, without public hearing or local input. The budget provision would have required a tiny percentage, only 5,143 signatures, on a petition from voters in the Green Bay Area School District, rather than letting the community decide by a majority vote. The Legislature rightfully abandoned this proposed expansion that relegated the whole of the Green Bay community to the sidelines.

As a result of the state budget, Wisconsin's public schools are grappling with nearly a \$1 billion state aid cut and a \$1.6 billion loss in revenue authority. These budget cuts have translated into larger class sizes, educator layoffs, reduced course offerings and fewer opportunities for our children. It is a tragedy that during these difficult fiscal times the Legislature opted to allocate more state taxpayer dollars to the voucher program, diverting resources away from public schools to private education. While SB 174 is a step in the right direction and deserves support, it doesn't undo the damage that has been done to our public schools and our children's future.

*If you have any questions, contact Deb Sybell, WEAC Legislative Program Coordinator, at (608) 298-2327.*

Deb Sybell, President

1000 University Drive, Racine, WI 53405

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