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**LEGISLATORS EARN GRADES, TOO!**

Fox Cities Advocates for Public Education commends the public schools of the Fox Cities for their ongoing tradition of excellence. We also commend the dedicated educators and staff who provide the care and instruction needed for all children to become valued citizens of our communities.

Our public schools connect us to our communities and to each other, and are vital to a democratic society. Therefore, Wisconsin has traditionally prioritized the funding of public schools. Unfortunately, the 2019-21 budget failed to provide essential and much-needed resources for public schools. Fox Cities public school districts continue to face significant challenges: unpredictable and often insufficient state aid; frequently changing and often unfunded state mandates; and growing student needs that require increased investments.

Special education funding is one such area of concern. In this year’s budget, the state reimbursement of special education costs was increased to 26% (from 25.3%). The meager increases do not keep pace with inflation, much less address ever-increasing student needs. To fill the shortfall, Fox Cities public school districts must continue to transfer funding from general education to cover these mandated services. “Robbing Peter to pay Paul” is not the way to fund public education.

**Shortfall and the Resulting Transfer of Funds  
from General Education**

	<b>Prior to Budget (25.3% reimbursement)</b>	<b>2019-20 (26%)</b>	<b>2020-21 (30%)</b>
Appleton	\$ 24,769,758	\$ 24,567,904	\$ 23,414,454
Kaukauna	5,309,060	5,267,091	5,027,265
Kimberly	4,922,170	4,878,343	4,627,903
Little Chute	1,815,121	1,797,619	1,697,611
Menasha	6,000,442	5,943,715	5,619,562
Neenah	7,753,405	7,677,835	7,246,009

It is vital that lawmakers work with public school districts to ensure that all students thrive. Creating a complex system of ‘accountability’ that blames schools for things they cannot control does not result in student success. It is time to hold lawmakers accountable for the one thing they can control: **Their Vote!**

Wisconsin Public Education Network’s Legislative Report Cards shine a light on the performances of our lawmakers, the majority of whom did not meet the high expectations required to ensure every child has an equal opportunity to succeed. **Seven out of eight Fox Cities legislators failed to meet expectations.** The report cards can be found at: <http://www.WisconsinNetwork.org/blog/report-cards>.

We expect the best from our students and our educators. We also expect the best from the lawmakers who represent them. We can and must do better for the 36,000 public school students in the Fox Cities.

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