



A Walk on the Child's Side

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Several Hundred Participate in Walk on the Child's Side

Walk highlights the need to change Wisconsin's school-funding system

MADISON – Several hundred people showed up in Madison, Tuesday, to deliver a message to state government loudly and clearly: “Enough is enough. It’s time to change Wisconsin’s school-funding system.”

People from all over the state came together for the 10th anniversary of the Walk on the Child’s Side, an event first held in June of 1999 to draw attention to the effects of the way the state funds public education. At the time, walkers left Butternut and covered the 240 miles to Madison to build support for funding reform.

One of the event organizers in 1999 and 2009 was Phillips teacher Teri Hanson. “Ten years ago we told the state what would happen. We told the Governor and legislators that children’s education would be hurt,” Hanson said. “We were right and now we have a statewide crisis.”

“Today’s Walk on the Child Side was to remind folks of those predictions and to tell the Legislature we haven’t gone away and will be back pestering them until they do the right thing.”

Hanson is a member of Price County Citizens Who CARE. That group, along with Northern Tier Uniserv (NTU) and the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES), organized the June 16 Walk.

Between 300 and 400 school board members, parents, students, and educators walked from the University of Wisconsin Library Mall to the State Street entrance to the Capitol for a brief rally. The highlight of the noon event was the appearance by a handful of legislators that resulted in an ovation from the crowd.

Speakers at the rally who echoed Hanson's call for lawmakers to address the state's school-funding crisis were:

- Rep. SONDY POPE-ROBERTS, Middleton, chair of the Assembly Education Committee and a legislator who has actually sponsored legislation to change the way Wisconsin fund its public schools;
- Randy Kunsch, teacher in the Phillips School District and an organizer of the 1999 Walk on the Child's Side;
- Mary Bell, president of WEAC;
- Kayla LaPlante, Pulaski High School, and Thomas Aiken, Whitefish Bay Middle School, both officers in the Wisconsin Association of School Councils;
- Randy Braun, superintendent of the Cameron School District and veteran of the original Walk on the Child's Side;
- Jennifer Morales, former board director with Milwaukee Public Schools, and John Smart, member of the Park Falls School Board speaking about the importance of a rural-urban coalition; and
- Art Rainwater, former superintendent of Madison Metropolitan School District and participant in an earlier Walk.

More information about the Walk on the Child Side is available at www.excellentschools.org.

Questions can be directed to: To find out how you can be involved, contact one of the following organizers of the Walk:

- Teri Hanson, Price County Citizens Who CARE, at (715) 474-2272 or hansont@centurytel.net
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Note to editor:

High resolution photos suitable for publication are available for download at: http://www.excellentschools.org/events/Walk_June16/Walk_Pictures%20.htm