

Walker touts proposed school funding hike at Waukesha South

Walker

By Lauren Anderson

Freeman Staff

WAUKESHA — Gov. Scott Walker called on Wisconsin legislators to keep his proposed education funding increase in the final version of the state’s spending plan during a stop at Waukesha South High School on Monday morning.

Surrounded by superintendents, public school advocates and area lawmakers, Walker urged lawmakers to support his proposed \$649 million increase for the state’s K-12 schools over the biennium. That funding increase would come in the form of a per-pupil payment of \$200 more in the first year and \$204 in the second year of the biennium.

Walker’s plea comes as some lawmakers on the Joint Finance Committee have proposed building the 2017-19 budget off current funding levels, rather than Walker’s proposed levels.

“My argument would be we need, if anything, to build off of the foundation we put into this budget,” he said. “So at a minimum, I would hope that the Joint Finance Committee to begin with and then subsequently the state Assembly and state Senate would build off of what we have invested with the idea being that this isn’t a blank check.”

Walker added that districts have already implemented the “tools” provided by his 2011 Act 10. He said his proposed increase in aid will “overwhelmingly” go to “student success.”

See **WALKER**, PAGE **5A**

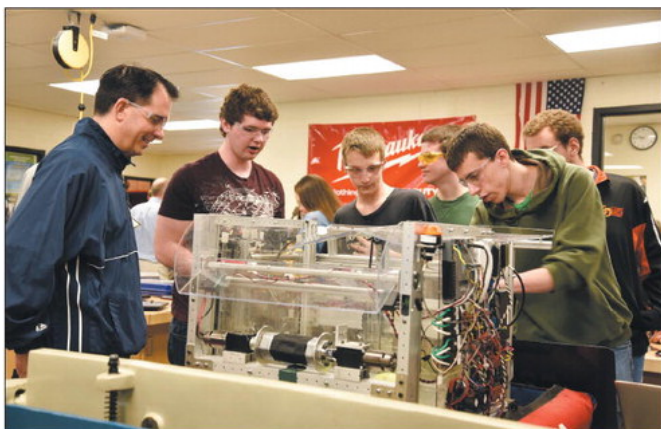
Gov. Scott Walker (left) speaks with Waukesha South High School students Thomas Durnil, Xander Blaetter, Brett Diedrich, David Zastrow and Joshua Spleas about the CORE 2062 team’s robot.

Lauren Anderson/Freeman Staff



Gov. Scott Walker, joined by a group of Waukesha South High School students, area superintendents, and public school advocates, addresses the media Monday.





Walker touts proposed school funding hike at Waukesha South

Walker

From Page 1A

The stop at South on Walker's way to the Brewers' Opening Day drew superintendents from throughout southeastern Wisconsin, including Elmbrook's Mark Hansen, Wauwatosa's Phil Ertl, Kettle Moraine's Patricia Deklotz and incoming Pewaukee superintendent Mike Cady.

Following Walker's tour of South's engineering and manufacturing area, school leaders praised Walker's budget proposal.

"We're really supportive of his efforts to put some serious funding back into public education," Waukesha School District Superintendent Todd Gray said. "And I think this school is an example of the things we're doing throughout our entire district where it's college and career readiness, with an emphasis on career as well because we're helping to put some skilled labor back into our state."

Terri Phillips, executive director of Southeast Wisconsin School Alliance, said Walker's budget proposal recognizes that schools have been fiscally responsible and have used the fiscal tools provided

under Act 10.

"Although this increase doesn't resolve all the fiscal issues that we face, it goes a long way in helping public schools provide the necessary resources for all of our students," Phillips said. "Anything less than this will create significant financial stress for public schools."

John Ashley, executive director of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, said the funding increase will prevent some schools from having to cut programs or go to referendum.

Also in attendance were State Senator Chris Kapenga, R-Delafield, and Rep. Scott Allen, R-Waukesha. Allen isn't on the committee that will determine whether the budget will build off of Walker's or start from zero, but he said he supports most of what the governor has proposed.

"I think he's right on target," Allen said. "As any proposal would be, it's not a perfect proposal so I'm looking forward to working on it."

Email: landerson@conleynet.com