And There's A Hole In The Bucket

MADISON - Governor Scott Walker says he plans to incorporate funding relief for rural schools into his 2017-19 biennial budget.

Unfortunately, Governor Walker's announcement amounts to a drop in the bucket and pales in comparison to three budgets of school cuts, totaling $1 billion.

Overall state aid, including the categorical aids noted today, was less per pupil in our most recent school year than it was six years ago because of aid diverted to private schools. And property taxpayers are having to make up the difference.

Northern schools, and Northern property taxpayers, have taken the brunt of budget cuts to our schools. Districts have had to go to taxpayers time and again to make up for deep cuts.

Even worse – more diversions of state aid to unaccountable voucher and charter schools have put a hole in the bucket. Tax dollars that should be coming home are sent to private charter schools before our local public schools are even considered.

Wisconsin taxpayers who work for a living will give $27 million to the statewide voucher industry this year alone.

Instead of congratulating themselves on taking baby steps, it’s time for Republican leaders to plug the hole that is draining local schools that have been the foundations of our communities in the North for generations.