

For more information:

Jeffrey Browne
President
Public Policy Forum
414-276-8240

For immediate release

**Cedarburg ranks first in reading among
southeastern Wisconsin's 50 school districts**

Milwaukee, Wisconsin – *October 28, 2004* – Cedarburg School District ranks first in reading proficiency in this year's *Public Schooling in Southeastern Wisconsin* released today by the Public Policy Forum. Cedarburg moved up from 5th in last year's schooling book and took over the top spot from Kettle Moraine, which dropped to 2nd.

Rounding out the top 10 districts, in order, were Arrowhead Union, Elmbrook, Grafton, Greendale, Mequon-Thiensville, New Berlin, Shorewood, and Germantown.

All 50 public school districts in the seven counties (Milwaukee, Washington, Waukesha, Ozaukee, Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth) of southeastern Wisconsin were included in the ranking, which took into account standardized reading tests administered annually to students in the 3rd, 4th, 8th, and 10th grades.

Among the top 10 school districts, Arrowhead Union showed the greatest improvement from last year, moving up 11 spots from 14th to 3rd. Other school districts in the top 10 that improved were Grafton, moving from 13th to 5th; Greendale, from 11th to 6th; and Germantown, from 12th to 9th. New Berlin had the greatest decline in the top 10, going from 2nd to 7th.

Overall, Elkhorn Area School District showed the greatest improvement, shooting up 14 spots from 39th to 25th. Williams Bay School District had the greatest decline among all districts, declining 19 spots from 17th to 36th.

Results of the Wisconsin Reading & Comprehension Test were used in the ranking for 3rd grade students; results of the reading portion of the Wisconsin Knowledge & Concepts Exam were used for 4th, 8th, and 10th grade students. The ranking was based on the percentage of students who scored at or above “proficient.”

Part I of *Public Schooling in Southeastern Wisconsin* covers school finance, including school district property tax and state aid revenue, federal aid, school district budgeted spending, and salary & benefits spending. Part II covers school district rankings based upon enrollment, student participation, student performance, and college preparation.

“The schooling book provides a comprehensive look at the 50 public school districts of southeastern Wisconsin, providing some interesting and surprising comparisons,” says

Jeffrey C. Browne, Forum president. “It is an excellent tool for administrators and supervisors in formulating policy.”

Other key findings from the schooling book include:

- Benefits spending among all districts in southeastern Wisconsin rose 8.1%, versus 6.2% statewide. Racine County districts averaged the greatest increase, at 19.8%; Waukesha County districts showed the smallest increase, at 5.4%. Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) had an 8% increase.
- Minority enrollment is increasing throughout southeastern Wisconsin. The number of Asians increased in 28 districts; African American enrollment rose in 31 districts; and Hispanic enrollment went up in 44 districts.
- Although Wisconsin’s attendance rate increased slightly to 94.35%, southeastern Wisconsin’s attendance rate dropped to 92.96%, from 93.02%.

This year’s public schooling book was underwritten by Northwestern Mutual Foundation and the investment banking firm of Griffin, Kubik, Stephens & Thompson, Inc.

To order a copy of the book, go to www.publicpolicyforum.org and download, complete, and send in the order form. Each book costs \$20, plus shipping and handling. There is a discount for 10 or more copies.

The Public Policy Forum – which has been publishing the schooling book since 1987 – is a nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to enhancing the effectiveness of government and the development of southeastern Wisconsin through objective research of public policy issues.