

Rep. Felzkowski: Joint Finance Committee passes momentous education package

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Republicans Invest More Money Directly in the Classroom

Madison- The Joint Finance Committee voted Monday afternoon on the K-12 education package in the 2017-19 biennial state budget. As the education Assembly lead for the committee, State Representative Mary (Czaja) Felzkowski released a statement today following passage of the proposal:

“With this student-centered package, we give every child the tools they need and deserve to succeed in school, as well as later in life. We have listened to Wisconsin parents. Our proposal continues down the road of transforming education for all types of learners and adapting for specific needs of individuals.” Rep. Felzkowski continued, “As a representative of a heavily rural district, I wholeheartedly believe that this budget willtake a large step toward ending regional disparity, moving toward true educational equity, and improving outcomes for *all* Wisconsin students rural, urban, and in-between.”

While not exhaustive, below is a list of items included in the K-12 education proposal:

- Increases funding for categorical aid to K-12 schools by \$200 per pupil in the first year and by \$204 in the second year.
- Increases the low-revenue ceiling to \$9,400 per pupil by the second year of the biennium and increases it by \$100 until it reaches \$9,800. This provides a

funding catch-up for financially frugal and responsible districts that have been locked into low levy limits since the 1990s.

- Rewards districts' innovative work to produce savings through the flexibilities provided in Act 10, but also requires districts to report their health care costs annually to the Department of Administration.
- Strengthens the school referenda process for taxpayers by limiting a district referenda to being held only on regularly-scheduled election days and fall elections in odd-numbered years.
- Creates a lifetime license for teachers and administrators that complete six semesters of successful experience.
- Promotes a shared services that will help incentivize districts to work together to offer more opportunities and improve outcomes for students.
- Creates the Early College Credit Program to help high school students take courses while in high school, cutting down on time-to-degree and college tuition costs.
- Increases funding for high-cost special needs, sparsity aid, and high cost transportation aid.
- Provides \$1.5 million in additional funding for the Public Library System.

“This budget sends an additional \$600 million to school districts. This is a huge increased investment directly to the classroom, all while protecting taxpayers and keeping property taxes lower than they are today,” said Felzkowski. “We are focused on improving outputs, not just inputs. This package is about *how* the funds are spent, not just *how much*. Education continues to be our number one priority for the state, and I believe this proposal absolutely reflects that priority.”

Once the budget bill has been voted out of the Joint Finance Committee, it will head to both houses for a floor vote.

Representative Felzkowski represents the 35th Assembly District which includes portions of Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, and Shawano Counties.

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