

# Rep. Pope: Requests veto of harmful K-12 budget provisions

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MADISON, Wis. – The ranking Democrat on the Assembly Committee on Education Representative Sondy Pope (D-Mt. Horeb), along with several Democratic colleagues, sent a letter to Governor Walker requesting that he veto certain provisions regarding K-12 education in the state budget. These provisions include limits on school district referenda, expansion of eligibility in the statewide voucher program, and an increase in special needs voucher payments and eligibility.

“I, along with my Democratic colleagues, am disappointed in the budget that was passed by Republicans in the Assembly and Senate. So much more could have been done to enrich our public schools, fix our roads and protect our environment,” Rep. Pope said. “We are viewing this time before the governor signs the budget as an opportunity to give our input in order to correct budget mistakes and missed opportunities.”

Should the governor proceed with his planned vetoes and sign the budget afterward, he would limit local school districts to only three opportunities to raise funds through referenda per biennium. In addition, existing budget provisions expand income eligibility in the statewide voucher program from 185% of the federal poverty limit (FPL) to 220% FPL. This would expand the program by approximately 550 students at an estimated cost of \$4.4 million. Special needs voucher eligibility and payments were also expanded by around 250 students at an estimated cost of \$3.1 million.

“As a legislator who has always cared deeply about public education in our state, I

firmly believe that vetoes of these policies would be an important step in righting the public education ship in Wisconsin,” Rep. Pope said. “It is my hope that through thoughtful bi-partisan input and cooperation, the reputation of public education in Wisconsin can regain and retain respect and prestige on a national level.”