

Sen. Schilling: Republicans cut rural school aid, delay payments

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GOP cuts K-12 funding, prioritizes tax breaks for foreign corporation

MADISON – School districts continue to face an uncertain future almost two months after the state budget deadline. Many rural schools, already struggling to cope with years of Republican education cuts, were dealt another blow as Republican members on the Joint Finance Committee cut \$18.1 million from school sparsity aid and delayed rural school payments that were scheduled to be paid this week.

“We need to make sure we are retaining quality teachers, investing in modern facilities, and meeting high education standards across Wisconsin,” said Senate Democratic Leader Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse). “Rather than restoring school aid and investing in our future, Republicans are prioritizing tax breaks for out-of-state corporations and cutting additional K-12 funding from Gov. Walker’s budget.”

In June, Democrats on the Joint Finance Committee introduced an education funding alternative that would have fully restored the historic cuts to Wisconsin schools and invested \$729 million more into school classrooms than Gov. Walker’s proposal. Additionally, the Democratic plan would have lowered property taxes by nearly \$25 million compared to Gov. Walker’s budget. Today, that Democratic proposal was rejected by Republican lawmakers on a party-line vote.

“It’s time to stop shortchanging Wisconsin children and start investing in our state’s future,” added Sen. Shilling. “By prioritizing local schools rather than tax breaks for the wealthy, we can expand economic opportunities, strengthen communities and grow Wisconsin’s middle class. Despite the misplaced priorities from Gov. Walker

and Legislative Republicans, Democrats remain committed to restoring Wisconsin's reputation as a leader in K-12 education."

The education proposal adopted by Legislative Republicans cuts \$18.1 million from school sparsity aid, diverts additional funding to unaccountable private voucher schools and caps 2018-19 general school aid at a lower funding level than 2010-11. As a result of Wisconsin's ongoing budget delay, many school districts across the state have not been able to finalize their budgets for the current school year, set staffing levels and purchase classroom supplies.