

JFC Democrats: As our children go back to school, nearly \$300 million in taxpayer money given to private schools

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MADISON - Today, Democrats serving on the legislature's Joint Finance Committee (JFC) released a memo from the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau which revealed the following:

- In the 2017-19 biennium so far, voucher schools have received \$269.6 million in state funding, while public schools have seen a \$90.6 million reduction in state aid.
- Approximately \$475 million of taxpayer dollars were paid to voucher schools over the 2015-17 biennium, during which time public schools in those districts faced a \$150 million aid reduction
- Private school voucher programs in Wisconsin have already received over \$2.5 billion [\$2,576,900,000 approx.] in total state funding, and that number is only growing.

"As our children go back to school, we want the best for them and their bright futures. But Republicans have funneled millions of tax dollars to unaccountable voucher schools while our K-12 public schools continue to go to referendum just to keep the lights on," said Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point). "Instead of

funneling tax dollars to private schools, the legislature should fairly fund our public schools so that everyone in Wisconsin has the same opportunity to learn and succeed.”

“Taxpayers have the right to know how much of their hard earned dollars are going toward voucher schools, especially since voucher schools are not required to meet the same accountability standards as public schools and have shown no significant improvements over public school performance,” said Sen. Jon Erpenbach (D-Middleton).

“Access to a quality education should not depend on your zip code. Unfortunately, eight years of misplaced Republican priorities have made it impossible to ensure our public schools can meet and exceed our standards for educational excellence. We must invest in our public education system so that all of our children have equal access to the best educational opportunities—it’s what they deserve,” said Sen. LaTonya Johnson (D-Milwaukee).

“As a mother of two children in public school and a member of the budget committee, I hear from people across our state who question why my Republican colleagues and Governor Walker are creating a second, private school system while not adequately and consistently funding the public school system where most of our Wisconsin children are educated,” said Rep. Chris Taylor (D-Madison). “Republicans’ big campaign donors want to privatize public education to make a buck, and they are willing to destroy our public school system to do so. People should be outraged by their disregard for the 870,000 children in public schools, whose future, and our state’s future, depends on a strong public school system.”

See the
memo: https://legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/71/Shankland/media/1833/lfb_voucher-school-funding-memo_532018.pdf