

Survival Coalition of Statewide Disability Organizations: Responds to state agency budget requests

Posted on Wednesday, Sep 19, 2018

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Survival Coalition of Statewide Disability Organizations responds to state agency budget requests

(MADISON) – The Survival Coalition of Disability Organizations of Wisconsin recognizes key funding initiatives intended to support people with disabilities in state agency budget requests shared this week, but also notes critical areas that continue to be ignored.

Specifically, the Survival Coalition supports the Department of Public Instruction's budget proposal which takes bold steps to finally end nearly a decade of flat funding for special education by the State, increase mental health supports and services, support students in transition and repeal the current funding formula for the special need scholarship program.

DPI requests an investment of \$600 million dollars in special education categorical aid to bring the reimbursement rate to 60% by the end of the biennium. In addition to this commitment, the department prioritizes school mental health services with increases of over \$63 million dollars for student services, training, and school and community mental health collaborations. The Department also proposes a further investment of \$5 million annually in its Transition Readiness grants to better prepare students with disabilities for community employment and independence

after high school by better equipping school district transition programs.

Survival Coalition also supports the DPI recommendation to repeal the current unfair reimbursement rate for the special need scholarship program to more closely match the reimbursement rate for students with disabilities in public schools, where most children attend.

Survival also supports the Department of Health Services recommendation to increase funding for the Children's Long-Term Support program by \$1.56 million per year for a total of \$3.2 million to address growth in the waitlist for children who need critical supports.