STATE AFFAIRS
WISPOLITICS
Wisconsin's Premier Political News Service

Rep Pope: Time for Republicans to level the playing field for special education

Posted on Wednesday, May 22, 2019

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. Get the app or access via desktop.

Rep. Sondy Pope

608-266-3520

MADISON, Wis. – Tomorrow, the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) will hold an executive session on the Department of Public Instruction budget. A major piece of this budget is to increase the district reimbursement rate for special education to 60% from the current rate of 25% by the end of the biennium. According to recent media reports, JFC Republicans are expected to reject this increase. Representative Sondy Pope (D-Mt. Horeb), ranking member of the Committee on Education responded:

“Over the last decade Republicans held special education funding flat while district costs have steadily risen. Administrators, educators, and advocates have clearly identified this increase as a key item that will improve education for all public school students statewide,” said Rep. Pope. “This is also about fairness. “The incongruity between public schools waiting for crumbs and voucher schools getting nearly quadruple the rate guaranteed is disturbing, but not surprising.”

Students receiving vouchers through the Special Needs Scholarship Program are funded at a base rate of $12,431 per pupil with costs above that being guaranteed up to 150%. Costs after that are reimbursed at a rate of 90%.

“Republicans have shown time and again, their will to appease their pro-voucher donors always overrides the best interests of Wisconsin public schools,” Rep. Pope said. “Citizens statewide have spoken and overwhelmingly support this increase.

It’s time that Republicans listen to the people they represent and produce results for the 860,000 students relying on public education as a foundation for their futures.”