

BPDD: Encouraged by Governor's call to increase investment in K12 education

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The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) supports the Governor's proposal to consider additional investments in K12 education through a special session. With the projected revenue surplus, the legislature can take bi-partisan action to provide additional funding for programs that would support over 116,000 children with disabilities in Wisconsin in our public schools.

The proposal includes increasing special education categorical aide to a 34% reimbursement. Until this current year, state funding had remained flat over the last decade while costs increased by 60%. Legislators agreed to an increase to 30% funding in the second year of the biennium, but families continue to advocate for a larger increase to fill the gap.

Beth Swedeen, Executive Director, said "Our agency hears from families on the erosion of quality special education services over the last decade and how it is affecting their children. We support 60% funding for special education but are grateful for the Governor's action today to increase the funding now, before the next biennial budget process begins."

The Governor's proposal also includes reinstating the state's share of overall public education costs at two - thirds. Specific to students with disabilities, it proposes increased investment in school-based mental health services, youth transition grants, and special education high cost needs funding. Each of these helps to improve the lives of children with disabilities in our Wisconsin public schools and help to prepare them for independent life in the community.