

Sens. Larson and Smith, Reps. Pope and Considine: Release pandemic school stability legislation

Posted on Tuesday, Oct 6, 2020

>> **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.](#)**

Madison, WI - “Since passing woefully inadequate COVID-19 response legislation on April 15th, then suing to take pandemic response authority away from Governor Evers, the Republican-controlled Wisconsin Legislature has done virtually nothing to craft a coordinated state response to this disease. As case rates and hospitalizations have reached record highs, and the death toll for our state continues to climb, the public deserves action.

“A recent analysis from the National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL) revealed that Wisconsin has been the least active full-time legislature in the entire country since the beginning of the pandemic. As Wisconsin’s schools have reopened, whether virtually, in-person, or some combination of the two, it is clear our public education system is at risk.

“Today, in partnership with Sen. Smith and Reps. Pope and Considine, I began circulating for co-sponsorship a package of education bills that will help our local school communities adapt to the post-pandemic landscape. Please find attached the full co-sponsorship memo, as well as the draft bills.”

(Co-Sponsorship Memo)

To: All Legislators

From: Sen. Larson and Sen. Smith

Rep. Pope and Rep. Considine

Date: October 6, 2020

Re: Pandemic School Stability Package

DEADLINE: October 13, 2020

In these unprecedented times, our neighborhood public schools have faced mounting challenges in providing quality public education to the children of our state while ensuring their safety and that of their staff. The resilience of these institutions, as they face the realities of COVID-19, is owed to the ingenuity and problem solving of administrators, staff, and community members.

Our schools have worked commendably to support and share ideas across district borders to meet these new challenges head-on. However, whether meeting virtually or in-person, our public schools are experiencing increased costs and logistical challenges. Milwaukee Public Schools alone has spent an additional \$24 million to support students through this pandemic.

It is important to note that the current school funding formula was not designed to compensate for fluctuations caused by this pandemic. Our districts are staring down a future of uncertainty which, without legislative action, will harm the future of public education in Wisconsin.

These pieces of legislation provide clarity on the future financial outlooks for districts while recognizing the need for flexibility in the expectations placed on students and educators.