

# Assembly approves bill to break up Milwaukee Public Schools

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Dem Rep. Sondy Pope blasted Republicans for passing a bill that would disband Milwaukee Public Schools for what she called a racist attempt to grow the voucher program by splitting up the state's largest school district.

The Assembly today in a voice vote approved AB 966. The bill would break up MPS and create in its place four to eight city of Milwaukee public school districts. Republicans argue the move would bring the system more in line with smaller suburban Milwaukee school districts, which they say are doing better because the smaller districts are better suited to respond to the needs of students and parents.

But Pope, D-Mt. Horeb, slammed the effort for incurring more administrative costs without addressing the district's academic performance issues, among other problems.

"This is simply a racist attack on Milwaukee public schools and it is purely political in nature," she said.

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Later she said GOP "intentions are clear: this is a scheme to further fracture and weaken MPS in order to continue to allow inspiration from the voucher program."

Bill author Rep. Robert Wittke, R-Racine, argued the bill provides a framework for a change and allows Milwaukeeans a say in how the district is restructured.