

Sen. Larson, Rep. Emerson: Introduce legislation to improve transparency in private education funding

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Madison, WI – On Tuesday, January 25, 2022, State Sen. Chris Larson, Rep. Jodi Emerson, and State Senator Jeff Smith held a joint press conference introducing legislation (LRB-5108) designed to improve transparency in the use of taxpayer funding for education as part of the state’s private school voucher programs.

State Sen. Chris Larson:

“Wisconsinites work hard for their money, and they deserve to know exactly where their tax dollars are going. Sadly, many of our neighbors are unaware that voucher programs are funded largely by taking money away from local public schools. This bill lifts the veil on this unfortunate reality, allowing taxpayers to make more informed decisions about how we fund education in our state moving forward.”

State Rep. Jodi Emerson:

“Many Wisconsinites feel our public schools are underfunded, this bill helps provide transparency on the topic by allowing our state’s tax payers to see how much tax payer money is being diverted to private schools instead of going to our public schools.”

Every year, Wisconsin property owners receive tax bills including certain essential information: the total amount owed, and an allocation breakdown by taxing authority. This include state, county, municipal, school district, and technical college spending. Unfortunately, the cost of Wisconsin’s other taxpayer-funded school system, made up of multiple private school voucher programs, is often hidden from

taxpayers by its inclusion in the listed allocation for public schools.

For the 2021-2022 school year, Wisconsin taxpayers will have spent \$166,224,887 on a cadre of schools that operate outside of the rigorous taxpayer oversight our traditional public schools have. The legislation proposed today gives taxpayers a greater understanding of how this private school funding scheme impacts their local public schools. It does so by requiring all property tax bills issued in Wisconsin to include information regarding the amount of all reductions in state aid local school districts experience as a result of the statewide, Racine, and Milwaukee voucher programs, as well as the Special Needs Scholarship Program.

Click below to see the historical state aid reduction information per district:

[Milwaukee, Racine, and Statewide Voucher Programs](#)
[Special Needs Scholarship Program](#)

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