

# Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools Board of Directors: Call on Gov, legislature to reject harmful bills

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As members of the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools Board of Directors, we take seriously the work of aligning Wisconsin's resources with the needs of our students and their public schools. WAES has long warned Wisconsin that it risks violating its Constitutional obligation to its children when it fails to adequately fund its public schools. The action taken by the Joint Committee on Finance falls well short of the state's constitutional responsibilities in the area of K-12 education and must be dramatically improved by the state legislature. If not, the budget must be vetoed by the governor and recrafted in order to pass Constitutional muster.

Our chief concerns with this budget deal:

- Public school students have been defunded relative to inflation for fourteen years and the per pupil adjustments proposed by the Joint Committee on Finance will extend that defunding streak to 16 years.
- During that period of time, funding for students with disabilities was frozen for a decade and the promised, but not guaranteed, 33% reimbursement rate for special education will continue to keep Wisconsin near the very bottom of all states in that category
- Local property tax payers will be forced to cover the costs of a massive expansion of the unaccountable voucher program.
- Private schools will be provided more direct aid from the state than most public schools are even allowed to spend.
- Shared revenue deal usurps the authority of the MPS board by requiring

reinstatement of police officers on school property.

Over the past decade, because of the actions of the state, there are fewer teachers available to educate our students, there are fewer academic programs available to our children, and more and more dollars are being diverted away from our children in Wisconsin's public schools. With a \$7 billion surplus the Joint Committee on Finance can offer no excuse for digging this hole deeper.

We call on the state legislature to fix this budget bill by restoring special education reimbursement to a minimum of 60%, providing an inflationary increase in spendable aid to all students in public schools, and removing irresponsible provisions to expand spending on private education. We urge Governor Evers to veto any bill that arrives at his desk that fails to meet these critical needs of Wisconsin students.