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The Arc Wisconsin will Continue to Advocate for Increased Funding for Students with Disabilities

Madison, WI - Families of students with disabilities across Wisconsin are reporting significant concerns about the eroding quality of special education supports and inclusion in their schools. The Arc Wisconsin is disappointed that the majority members of the Joint Finance (budget) Committee did not hear these concerns and instead proposed a significantly smaller increase in funding than what is necessary to meet the needs of children with disabilities and to improve overall quality of instruction in classrooms for all students.

“Wisconsin has a poor track record of supporting local school districts to fund special education needs,” says Lisa Pugh, State Director. “While we support a 60% increase, as many have recommended, it is unbelievable that our legislature could not at least get us to covering one-third of costs.”

In a 2019 report the Wisconsin Policy Forum said that Wisconsin was one of only five states that used a special education reimbursement method instead of funding student needs upfront. Of those 5 reimbursement states, Wisconsin provided the lowest amount - covering just 27% of costs while other states like Nebraska, Vermont and Wyoming covered at least 50% or more of costs.

https://wispolicyforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Taxpayer_19_01.pdf

The bi-partisan Blue Ribbon Commission on school funding recommended that Wisconsin fill this gap and fund special education at 60% of costs. The Governor also recommended that the state get to a 60% commitment. The proposal passed by the Joint Finance Committee on Thursday is 1/6 of what many, including school districts and school boards, indicated was needed.

The Arc Wisconsin joins with our partners who request that the legislature take a second look at support in this budget for students with disabilities:

[Survival Coalition statement.](#)

[Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities statement](#)

[Disability Rights Wisconsin statement](#)

The Arc Wisconsin advocates for and serves people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD), including Down syndrome, autism, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, cerebral palsy and other diagnoses. The Arc Wisconsin has 15 local chapters and is connected to a network of more than 650 chapters across the country promoting and protecting the human rights of people with I/DD and actively supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes and without regard to diagnosis.

Editor’s Note: The Arc is not an acronym; always refer to us as The Arc, not The ARC and never ARC. The Arc should be considered as a title or a phrase.