



SONDY POPE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
80TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



For Immediate Release

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Contact: Rep. Sondy Pope

608-266-3520

GENERAL AID FUNDING AT ZERO DOESN'T ADD UP

Newest estimates indicate over half of Wisconsin school districts will lose out in 2015-2016 school year

MADISON - Today, the Department of Public Instruction released general aid estimates for the 2015-2016 school year. According to the estimate, over half of Wisconsin's public schools are set to receive *less* funding than the previous year. Ranking Democratic member on the Assembly Committee on Education Representative Sondy Pope (D – Cross Plains) released the following statement regarding school funding:

“This estimate affirms what we’ve known for quite some time – at every turn, Republican legislators are putting the governor's presidential politics before the values of Wisconsin citizens. The easiest example of that is what is happening with our public schools,” said Rep. Pope. “School aid being held at zero will cause *over half* of our school districts to lose funding, and that is plainly unacceptable.”

“Public education funding in our state is on a dangerous trend. Whether it’s cutting resources to public schools, making a mockery of teachers through ridiculous licensing standards, leeching money off public education for unaccountable voucher programs, or any of the other ludicrous proposals for public education in this budget – Republicans are eviscerating our public education system at every turn. Budgeting is about priorities – and in this budget, Republican legislators have said loud and clear they are focused on restricting the freedom to choose a high-quality public school.”

For the first time in the history of our current funding formula, schools will receive no new revenue limit authority in both years of the proposed budget. Coupled with the reduction in aid, these policies are expected to have impacts well outside of student performance. In order to make up for reductions in funding, school district and cities will have to make difficult choices to increase property taxes or cut school resources, both of which will have negative impacts on local economies.

“For decades, Wisconsin was a leader in public education with a longstanding tradition of excellence in student performance. It has only taken four years for Republican legislators to demolish this reputation. While most states are reinvesting in schools after cuts during the Great Recession, Wisconsin continues into a death spiral. We need to act fast to reverse this trend, re-invest in public schools, and bring back our quality education before it’s too late.”

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