



SONDY POPE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
80TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



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PUBLIC SCHOOLS AN AFTERTHOUGHT FOR JFC REPUBLICANS

MADISON – Ranking Democratic member of the Assembly Committee on Education- Representative Sondy Pope (D-Cross Plains) expressed disappointment about the actions of Republican members of the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) yesterday. The JFC passed several items as part of a motion that was introduced yesterday by Sen. Darling (R-River Hills) and Rep. Nygren (R-Marinette) without public input or debate.

“Republican legislators have carefully crafted the illusion that they deserve to claim victory for the still inadequate funding they restored. When you take a closer look at the other destructive policies that were unleashed on public education, the path in which we are heading is appalling and frightening,” said Rep. Pope. “Our education system has fallen victim to Republican leadership that has prioritized unaccountable private schools over public schools. This step towards privatization is one school district administrators, teachers and parents did not ask for. It disappoints me that our state’s and our children’s futures are up for sale to the highest bidder.”

Major items in the budget package passed include:

- A removal of the cap on statewide vouchers. This will bleed roughly \$48 million from public schools.
- The creation of a special needs voucher program, which offers no protections for students with disabilities and allows a \$12,000 per student payment for a special needs student to transfer to an unaccountable private school.
- A program that would allow schools within the Milwaukee Public School system to be taken over by an appointed commission.
- Creating a new system of teacher licensure that will allow individuals with no experience to teach in our schools

These are just a few of the many harmful provisions that will have a tremendous impact on our public education system, none of which help with student achievement. These provisions also fail to address major issues that directly affect student performance such as language barriers, classroom sizes and poverty.

“What Republicans are essentially doing is creating a second for-profit school system which they are making taxpayers fund. It is scary to think about what Wisconsin’s public school system will look like 10 or 20 years down the road. Should Governor Walker and the Republicans continue to put personal ambition, special interests and campaign donors above the Legislature’s constitutional duty to adequately fund public education, Wisconsin’s once cherished tradition of high-quality, high-performing schools may cease to exist.”

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