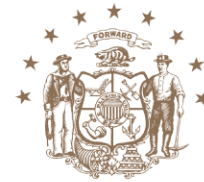




# SONDY POPE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
80TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



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**Contact:** Rep. Sondy Pope  
608-266-3520

## REP. POPE INTRODUCES BILL TO REFORM SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA

MADISON – Today, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) released general state aid figures for the 2015-2016 school year. Representative Sondy Pope, Ranking Democratic member on the Assembly Committee on Education, released the following statement regarding the aid numbers:

“This is the first time in Wisconsin’s history that districts face an aid reduction in order to foot the bill for voucher programs,” said Rep. Pope. “To make up for these reductions, local districts are being asked to raise property taxes on middle class families to pay for Republicans’ misplaced budget priorities.”

These reductions are part of a growing trend that continue to funnel money from public schools to the unaccountable voucher program. Wisconsin public school districts are losing about \$16 million dollars to prop up unaccountable voucher schools statewide. While this currently amounts to a small percentage of the overall money spent in education, consider that in 1990 the Milwaukee Voucher Program began with only 500 students and has now grown to over 25,000.

“Public schools have been asked to sacrifice to the point that every dollar they receive can make a difference. I am deeply concerned about what this will mean for public schools in the years ahead,” Rep. Pope said. “If the Racine and Wisconsin voucher programs continue to grow unchecked, I fear that future aid reductions may spiral out of control and an even higher unsustainable portion of school costs will come from middle class property taxes.”

In an effort to stem this negative tide, Representative Pope, along with Senator Chris Larson (D-Milwaukee) released a school finance reform bill today. The legislation is modeled on Superintendent Evers’ “Fair Funding for our Future” proposal. It would alter the state funding formula for school districts, controlling for issues like poverty and declining enrollment that plague many of our districts.

“I believe that every student, no matter where they live in our state, deserves a fair shot at a quality education. I’m introducing this bill to ensure that the legislature meets its constitutional obligation to provide every student the adequate education he or she needs to succeed.”

“With over 70 percent of Wisconsin students attending a traditional public school, it puzzles me why this Republican-led legislature has prioritized the expansion of voucher funding. In order to guarantee all students receive a quality education, we must refocus our priorities, adjust the school funding formula, and make responsible changes that benefit students, families, and communities.”

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