



of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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## 2011-2013 Legislative Budget and Priorities

### **EDUCATION**

*School funding reform is essential to improving the education success of most children with disabilities.*

#### **Survival Recommendations:**

- Support the Department of Public Instruction's school finance reform proposal.
- Maintain Special Education Categorical Aid reimbursement levels at 26.7% for regular aid and 42.3% for high cost aid
- Pass either the Seclusion and Restraint bill Survival supported last session or a good bill drafted by DPI.
- Pass legislation to require universal screening for reading problems.
- Pass legislation to improve the qualifications of teachers who teach reading.

**Background:** The Department of Public Instruction has proposed a reform plan called "Fair Funding for Our Future." It contains some reform elements, increases funding for 94% of districts, and holds the other 6% harmless. Following are some key provisions:

- Keeps revenue cap system in place, with modifications
- Establishes a floor of minimum state aid/pupil=\$3,000
- Adds 20% for every child in poverty in each district
- Transfers School Levy Tax Credit to schools (mostly an accounting maneuver, but could cause opposition from cities and counties)
- Establish predictable growth in revenue caps of 2% or inflation (whichever is greater)
- Keeps Special Education Categorical Aid reimbursement level the same, which costs \$48.8 million to stay at 26.7% for regular aid and \$2.5 million to keep at 42.3% for high cost aid
- Consolidate small categorical aid programs and take that \$20 million to create competitive grant program to improve results in districts with worst graduation and drop out rates and possibly another factor, such as suspensions

**Seclusion and Restraint:** Wisconsin has no law on the seclusion and restraint of children in schools and children continue to be harmed by the inappropriate use of seclusion and restraints in schools. Last session Survival supported legislation that was introduced to regulate seclusion and restraint. It is likely the legislation will be reintroduced.

**Universal screening and reading improvement:** Legislation is likely to require universal screening for reading problems (e.g., dyslexia and other learning disabilities), and to boost the requirements for

teacher qualifications to teach reading. Improving the qualifications of teachers who teach reading is critical for all children, including children with disabilities. Universal screening will help identify children with disabilities earlier and better and help get them the assistance, which may include special education that they need.

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Investing in People with Disabilities