



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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Survival Coalition Says State Education Budget on Right Track to Address Inequities for Students with Disabilities

The Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations is pleased with State Department of Public Instruction Superintendent Tony Evers' plans, announced yesterday, to address significant achievement gaps for students with disabilities, along with other issues.

DPI laid out their plans for the next year and foreshadowed budget priorities that align with Survival Coalition solutions. Specifically, Evers indicated he would address the dire need to make reinvestments in special education to counteract a decade of flat funding.

“Schools and educators must have appropriate resources to address the needs of students with disabilities,” says Beth Swedeen Co-Chair. “Youth with disabilities who leave school unprepared for adult life are more likely to end up living in poverty and are more reliant on public benefits over their lifetime.”

The Survival Coalition is asking for an increase in state special education categorical aid funding to keep pace with local costs. Specifically, they are asking the state to support local school districts at least to 44% of costs - up from 26%, addressing a decade-long funding freeze.

Data shows the academic performance of students with disabilities lags significantly behind their peers. In the 2014-15 school year, 8th graders with disabilities were only one-third as likely to be proficient in language arts as their peers; only 1 in 10 8th graders with disabilities were proficient in math.

Evers also prioritized mental health supports for students, indicating that up to one in five Wisconsin students has a mental health challenge.

“Best practice in working with children with behavioral challenges necessitates consultation among all individuals involved in children’s lives, including professionals and parents or caregivers,” says Kit Kerschensteiner, Co-chair. “This will require a financial commitment on the part of the state and we are glad it is a priority.”

To read about the Survival Coalition’s other education budget priorities, go here:

<http://www.survivalcoalitionwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Survival-Budget-Recommendations-2016-Final.pdf>

Survival Coalition is comprised of more than 30 statewide disability organizations that advocate and support policies and practices that lead to the full inclusion, participation, and contribution of people living with disability.