



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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For Immediate Release

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Survival Coalition Applauds Efforts to Increase Special Education Funding

Madison, WI- Survival Coalition applauds the efforts of Wisconsin legislators to increase special education funding in school districts across Wisconsin. The Governor's proposed budget did not include any increases for special education funding, which has remained flat for almost ten years. Costs have increased over time while the state reimbursement rate has gone from a high of 66% in 1980 to a low of 26% in 2017.

Survival Co-Chair Beth Swedeen said, "More than 120,000 students receive special education supports in Wisconsin. Funding allows children with disabilities to access their neighborhood schools alongside their peers and receive the same high quality general education programming with the necessary supports and services. But schools are struggling to meet the needs of children with disabilities as the state's commitment to funding has eroded over time. This increase would be a step in the right direction."

New legislation has been proposed that would increase the level of reimbursement for school districts from 26% to 33% percent. Legislators across the State will have the opportunity to support this important proposed legislation which would increase the State's commitment while freeing up other local funding that could be used to provide education for all students.

"It is long overdue for the state to make a commitment to support all students by investing more in special education," said Kit Kerschensteiner, Survival Coalition co-chair. "Adequate school supports pay off long-term in equipping our students with disabilities for college and career after they graduate."

"Increasing special education funding has been a common thread among families, advocates, and schools during this week's Joint Finance hearings," said Maureen Ryan, Survival Co-chair. "They have all asked that increased funding be included in the Governor's budget but this proposed legislation gives additional hope that funding levels increases may be on the horizon."

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