

PRESS RELEASE

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JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS DEFUNDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

After representatives from the School District of South Milwaukee met with our Assembly Representative, Jessie Rodriguez, who also serves on the powerful Joint Finance Committee, the district learned that the Joint Finance Committee is recommending flat school funding for the upcoming two years. This recommendation will place our public schools in great peril for the foreseeable future. State lawmakers are indicating that the one time federal revenue that is designed to address the COVID-19 recovery should be used instead to take the place of State and Local funding for ongoing operations. It is no time for the State to transfer their responsibility to provide school funding for ongoing operations to the Federal Government.

It is not the place of the State to revise the purpose of the COVID-19 funding of providing ADDITIONAL relief to schools, to instead be the ONLY new funding for schools. What is even more concerning is that the COVID-19 Federal funding is one time funding, which if used for ongoing costs will create a fiscal cliff that will cause significant hardships in the future. Our State representatives are operating with complete malfeasance with their recommendation to defund our public schools.

When the state defunds public education, schools are forced to utilize referendums to cover operational expenses. Relying on local referenda to fund schools is an inequitable and irresponsible way to fund schools.

Disclosing the defunding plan two days before the Joint Finance Committee votes right before a holiday weekend is also concerning. Our communities and schools need to be funded adequately. The State has the funding to meet the needs, however they are deciding to vacate their responsibility to provide a school funding increase for this budget.

It is imperative that you contact Joint Finance Members and share your support for funding our public schools, specifically a \$200 per pupil revenue limit increase, and 50% reimbursement for special education programming. You can find the contact information for Joint Finance members on the School District of South Milwaukee home page. Emails and phone calls will be most impactful since we were only given a day's notice of their draconian recommendation, the vote is tomorrow, Thursday, May 27, 2021.

#SMWay