



WAUWATOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT
• Your Educational Community •

School Board

RESOLUTION in Support of Increasing Special Education Funding in Wisconsin Public Schools to 90% of the Cost Incurred

January 2019

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the 422 local Wisconsin public school districts to support the educational needs of ALL students, INCLUDING those who are differently abled; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has a stated commitment to fund 40% of the costs of supporting students with special needs, but funds merely 15%, and

WHEREAS, the state of Wisconsin had statutory language to fund over 60% of costs related to these students, but now funds merely 26%, and

WHEREAS, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau recently concluded that because of the historic underfunding by the state and federal governments, public school districts must now fund over \$1 billion to cover the educational costs associated with implementing Individual Educational Programs (IEPs), and

WHEREAS, districts across Wisconsin must cut critical education programs for students in order to comply with the underfunded special education mandate, and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has not increased funding in public school special education categorical aid for more than a decade, but increased funding for private schools by enacting Wisconsin's Special Needs Scholarship Program in 2015, which provides special needs scholarships in the form of vouchers for students to attend eligible private schools, and

WHEREAS, for any amount greater than \$18,500, private school vouchers reimburse at a 90% rate, while students with special needs in Wisconsin public schools are only funded at a 26% reimbursement rate, and

WHEREAS, even when private schools provide special education services to students with mild to moderate learning needs, students with more complex learning needs or behavioral needs can be referred to the public school for enrollment and thereby reimbursed at the lower rate, and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin public schools are required by law to continue serving all special education students in private schools, even if they receive a voucher, by providing them access to public school special education educators e.g. teachers, physical/occupational therapists, speech/language pathologists, and

WHEREAS, private schools, despite getting increased funding for special needs students, are not required to have certified/licensed special education staff, and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin public schools are held accountable to taxpayers while private schools are not, and

WHEREAS, for the Wauwatosa School District, special education funding would increase by \$6,267,378 when using the same percentage of reimbursement (90%) presently used for private schools.

FURTHER, it is believed that Wisconsin public school students are worth reimbursement equal to that of private school students.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wauwatosa School District calls on Governor Evers, Speaker Vos of the Wisconsin State Assembly and Majority Leader Fitzgerald of the Wisconsin State Senate to increase Special Education funding by increasing the reimbursement for public schools to 90%, matching the reimbursement rate given to private schools under the legislated Special Needs Scholarship Program.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being all of the members of the School Board for the Wauwatosa School District have executed this resolution the ____ day of _____, 2019.

Shawn Rolland, President

Leigh Anne Fraley, Clerk

Sharon Muehlfeld

Eric Jessup-Anger, Vice President

Michael Phillips, Treasurer

Michael Meier

Steve Doman