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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 38th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

For Immediate Release
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Wisconsin Kids Set To Have More Opportunity

Rep. Dittrich's bill to expand School Choice gets closer the becoming law

Madison –Representative Barbara Dittrich (R – *Oconomowoc*) issued the following statement regarding the Passage of Assembly Bill 59:

“Closures and difficulties with online learning have left children in educational peril. Students in some cases have been found to be falling 6 months to more than a year behind in their learning because of the disruption brought on by the COVID-19 virus. By advancing AB 59, allowing more families to choose which school is best for their child, we accelerate educational recovery.”

The pandemic and virtual learning is hindering our students' learning opportunities, educational performance, and mental health. According to the CDC, there was a 24% increase in mental health related emergency room visits for children ages 5 to 11 and even greater increase of 31% for children ages 12 to 17. Students need to have the ability to learn in person, collaborate with their peers, and receive the services offered by schools, <https://bit.ly/3y3Pe0Z>.

“The needs of Wisconsin students have been put on hold for far too long. There are students in our state that have not had in-person instruction for nearly 14 months.”

Under AB 59, during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 schools years, a parent would be allowed to submit full-time open enrollment applications for their child to as many nonresident school districts as they would like. As open enrollment is the largest form of school choice in the State of Wisconsin, this the best way to ensure equity and fairness is prevalent in our state's educational choices.

The income eligibility for parents enrolling their children in the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program would also be increased from 220% to 300% of the Federal Poverty Line for the 2021-22 school year. In addition, a resident school district would not be allowed to deny a student from open enrolling to a nonresident school district under the alternative application procedure under the open enrollment program.

“I hope to see the Senate take action on this bill in its Assembly version soon and for the Governor to take the opportunity to support children and families by signing this piece of legislation into law.”

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