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Legislative committee cuts \$900 million from governor's education proposal

(MADISON) – The Joint Committee on Finance voted to strip \$900 million from Governor Tony Evers' education proposal and cut 84 percent of the governor's investment in special education funding Thursday.

The move comes after historic cuts to education shifted costs to local communities. Wisconsin voters approved a record amount of school district referendum spending in 2018, another record year for referendum approvals.

"Every child deserves access to a high-quality, public education," said Senator Patty Schachtner (D-Somerset). "We need to ensure that our students have the resources and support they need to thrive in today's competitive economy."

While state funding for education has recently increased, an April 2019 memo from the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau showed that schools received \$225.7 million less in state funding in 2018 than they did in 2010 when adjusting for inflation.

In addition, special education funding has not increased in the past decade despite rising costs and demand for services. As a consequence of stagnant funding, Wisconsin ranks last in the nation among states that reimburse local schools serving special education students.

In April, a Marquette poll found that 74 percent of Wisconsinites support a substantial increase in state funding for special education. The governor proposed \$600 million for special education funding. The committee's vote reduces the investment by over \$500 million or 84 percent.

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