



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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SURVIVAL COALITION SUPPORTS INCREASING STATE INVESTMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING

(MADISON) -- On Thursday May 27 the Joint Finance Budget committee will be voting on special education funding for the 2021-2022 budget. Despite large number of parents and education advocates testifying about the need for increases in special education funding at state budget hearings this spring, the legislature's Joint Finance Committee is only considering a small increase or perhaps no increase at all in special education funding.

This follows the first increase in over a decade in the last budget, which only brought the state's share of special education funding to 29 percent. The state is paying less than one-third the cost to educate students with disabilities.

Wisconsin is emerging from a year-long interruption in schooling and services that impacted all children, but for children with disabilities and learning differences, the negative effects of the pandemic on their education goals will last for years.

The Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations released a survey from 300 Wisconsin families earlier this year:

<http://www.survivalcoalitionwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/survey-2021-Spec-edu.pdf>

Among the results:

- 9 in 10 families report a negative change in special education services.
- 3 in 4 families expect their child to experience skill regression.
- 2 in 3 expect or are experiencing increased behavior challenges.
- Over 2 in 3 say they expect their child to lose friendships and critical social connections.

Survival Coalition supports The Governor's budget and the Department of Public Instruction recommendation that would raise the state funding to 50 percent. With rising costs, increasing student needs and chronic underfunding, it is only equitable that the state share at least half of the special education costs with the local school districts.