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LEGISLATORS MUST DO BETTER FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

As the state legislature begins debate on the budget, [Fox Cities Advocates for Public Education](#) calls on legislators to approve at least an inflationary increase in per pupil funding and to restore special education funding to a 60% reimbursement level.

The budget, as passed by the Joint Finance Committee, [does not meet the needs](#) of Wisconsin public schools. The per pupil increase does not keep pace with inflation. The meager increase proposed for special education, which has been flat for over a decade, barely moves the needle.

Inadequate funding for special education negatively impacts the education of all kids in Fox Cities public school districts.

In 2017-18, school districts were reimbursed by the state for 25.3% of special education costs. Since the districts are required by federal and state statutes to provide an equitable education to students with disabilities, cutting special education services is not an option.

To fill the shortfall, Appleton transferred \$22,641,853 from fund #10 (general purpose) to fund #27 (special education). Similarly, the other Fox Cities districts significantly reduced their fund #10 accounts with transfers to special ed:

Appleton	\$22,641,853	Little Chute	\$1,603,153
Kaukauna	4,916,434	Menasha	5,774,205
Kimberly	4,571,035	Neenah	7,400,892

Fund #10 contains general purpose funds that pay most instructional costs including teacher salaries and benefits. Without the fund transfers, educator positions could be added that would reduce class size. In Appleton, \$985,000 would reduce the average elementary class size for one grade from 25 to 20 students. There is solid research showing that smaller class sizes increase student outcomes.

The recommendations of the bipartisan Blue Ribbon Commission and the Governor's Budget were created to address the real needs of public schools as expressed by school administrators, educators and concerned citizens from every corner of the state. In [four position statements](#), FCA4PE articulates commonalities between the two documents. A budget that includes inflationary increases and a 60% reimbursement rate for special education costs will put public schools on a path to climb out of the deep hole of cuts and stagnation.

Public schools cannot afford another two years of inadequate funding. Fox Cities Advocates for Public Education calls on legislators to do better.

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<https://sites.google.com/view/fox-cities-advocates-4-pub-ed>

We are a non-partisan advocacy group that seeks common ground in improving public education in the Fox Cities.