



SCOTT FITZGERALD

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 27, 2016

Contact: Scott Fitzgerald, (608)-266-5660

Fitzgerald: Democrats' Red Herring Attack on School Choice

[Madison, WI] Last week, Wisconsin Democrats released a series of attacks on Wisconsin's school choice program, arguing that recent reforms have increased spending on voucher students at the expense of Wisconsin's public schools. Not only did this argument use incomplete data to attempt to describe funding totals for recent years, but this comparison intentionally ignores the facts, presenting an apples-to-oranges comparison of two very different funding mechanisms.

We wanted a full picture of Wisconsin's K-12 education spending and requested the attached memo from the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau. This memo revealed a much more accurate picture of how much Wisconsin truly spends on voucher students. For the most recent school year (2015-16):

Total State Spending on Public Schools:	\$10,099,200,000
<u>Total State Spending on School Choice:</u>	<u>\$229,900,000</u>
Percentage of State School Spending on Choice:	2.2%

Yes, you're reading that right. Less than three percent of total state spending on schools goes to Wisconsin's choice program—and this figure doesn't even include federal aid, which only goes to public schools.

If this weren't enough, the most recently available enrollment totals (2014-15) demonstrate how many children currently participate in the choice program:

Number of Pupils in Public Schools:	854,419
<u>Number of Pupils in Choice Schools:</u>	<u>28,399</u>
Percentage of Pupils Enrolled in Choice Schools:	3.2%

So while choice school participants make up 3.2% of total K-12 pupil enrollment, they only make up around 2% of the total state cost of K-12 education. Perhaps state democrats will keep these figures in mind the next time they want to attack the small percentage of Wisconsin families trying to provide a better educational opportunity for their children.

Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau) represent the 13th Senate District, which covers portions of Dodge, Jefferson, Waukesha, Washington, Dane, and Columbia counties.

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STATE CAPITOL

P.O. Box 7882 • MADISON, WISCONSIN 53707-7882 • SEN.FITZGERALD@LEGIS.WISCONSIN.GOV

TELEPHONE: (608) 266-5660