



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Memo Highlights Significant Reduction in General Aid to Rural Schools under GOP Leadership

Madison – Today, Assembly Democratic Leader Peter Barca (D-Kenosha) and Assistant Democratic Leader Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) hosted a press conference in the State Capitol to discuss a [memo](#) from the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau that shows state general aid payments to rural school districts, defined in the memo as those that receive sparsity aid, has declined by 13.5 percent from 2010-11 to 2015-16. This loss in general aid from the state represents a reduction that is over three times larger when compared to general aid payments that non-rural schools have received over the same time period. Nearly a quarter of the rural districts saw general state aid decrease by over 50 percent. Following the press conference, Representative Barca and Representative Shankland released the following statement:

“Every community deserves a strong school,” said Rep. Barca. “Rural schools are passing referendums just to keep the lights on. This is unacceptable. Democrats have led the way in addressing the unique needs of rural schools. We consistently fight for more funding for all public schools. We’ve fought against the expansion of unaccountable, private voucher schools that is done at the expense of public schools with taxpayer dollars. We’ve attempted to pass a fair funding bill to fix the antiquated funding formula, but Republicans voted against even debating the bill. We need to support all our public schools and invest in the future of our state.”

“There is no denying that our state’s rural school districts face significant challenges,” said Rep. Shankland. “What isn’t helping our rural communities is the fact that Republicans have had over five years to invest at a reasonable level in rural schools and improve the state’s school funding formula so it will work for our rural communities. Instead, we’ve seen Republican legislators massively expand the private voucher program, taking hundreds of millions of tax dollars away from our public schools over the next decade.”

Shankland concluded, “Our rural districts are at a breaking point. They’ve pinched all the pennies they can. Rural school districts cannot continue to rely on band-aid programs that come and go with each state budget as they figure out how they’re going to keep their doors open for the children of their community. It’s time to commit to sustainable funding for our public schools and ensure our children have the best opportunities to succeed in life.”

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Attachment 1 from [9/1/2016 LFB Memo](#):

ATTACHMENT 1

**Total Change to General School Aid Payments From 2010-11 to 2015-16 for All Districts
Receiving Sparsity Aid and All Districts Not Receiving Sparsity Aid in 2016-17**

	<u>Net General School Aid Payment</u>		<u>2015-16 Change to 2010-11</u>	
	<u>2010-11</u>	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Districts Receiving Sparsity Aid	\$311,835,133	\$269,759,237	-\$42,075,896	-13.5%
Districts Not Receiving Sparsity Aid	<u>4,233,148,884</u>	<u>4,077,731,323</u>	<u>-155,417,561</u>	-3.7
All Districts	\$4,544,984,017	\$4,347,490,560	-\$197,493,457	-4.3%