



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 1, 2021**

## **Milwaukee School Board Members on the Actions of the Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee**

### *Do What's Right for Wisconsin's Children*

Years from now, young people attending public schools in Wisconsin may look back in bewilderment and ask:

- Why, in 2021, did Republican legislators undermine the constitutional right to a public education?
- Why did they refuse any increase in general aid to school districts or any increase in per-pupil funding?
- Why, in the midst of the deadliest global pandemic in a century, did Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester) call federal pandemic relief funding for education “obscene?” Or claim that local school officials would not spend the federal money “smartly?”

After more than a year of the COVID-19 pandemic, our schools, our students and our families need a helping hand. Instead, Wisconsin's Republicans are giving them the back of their hand.

The Milwaukee Public Schools, along with many other urban and rural districts, will bear the brunt of decisions made last week by the Republican-controlled Joint Finance Committee. While we speak on behalf of the 75,000 children in MPS, (89 percent of whom are children of color, 82 percent of whom are low-income, and 20 percent of whom have special needs) we raise our voice on behalf of all Wisconsin's children.

Education has always been the path forward in our state. Some of the Republican legislators undermine our public schools at the risk of undermining everyone's future — especially during this era of COVID-19.

The all-powerful Joint Finance Committee determines what budget proposals will move forward in the state legislature. On May 27, 2021, the committee took a sword to Governor Tony Evers' education budget and slashed funding, seemingly without any concern for what it would mean for our state's 800,000 children in public schools.

In addition to the JFC's refusal to increase per-pupil funding or general aid to school districts, it moved forward only 10% of Governor Evers' proposed education budget. Most appalling is the fact that the JFC refused to increase funding for special education, despite widespread calls throughout the state to do so.

***Start. Stay. Succeed.***  
***Comienza. Quédate. Triunfa.***

Perhaps most disturbing, the Joint Finance Committee's actions may violate federal requirements for receiving much-needed federal relief funds allocated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As much as \$1.5 billion in federal funds [could be lost](#).

Budgets are about priorities, moral values, and one's hopes for the future. Our children should not be political footballs in the partisan games being played by Republican powerbrokers in Madison.

In the coming days, it is essential that Wisconsinites speak up, call, text, and email their legislators, especially Republican representatives.

Call your representatives today. Tell your mother, your brother, your sister, your cousin, your long-ago friend, your hunting buddy, your Packers, Bucks, and Brewers friends — especially those who have Republican representatives — to take action today.

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For more information on how to be heard by the legislature, go to [Wisconsin Public Education Network](#).

There have been several analyses of the Joint Finance Committee's actions. Three that may be useful: one by the [School Administrators Alliance](#), one by the [Wisconsin Association of School Boards](#), and one by the [Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance](#).



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