

# Special Education in Crisis:

*Time to Invest in All Students*



**Survival  
Coalition**

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

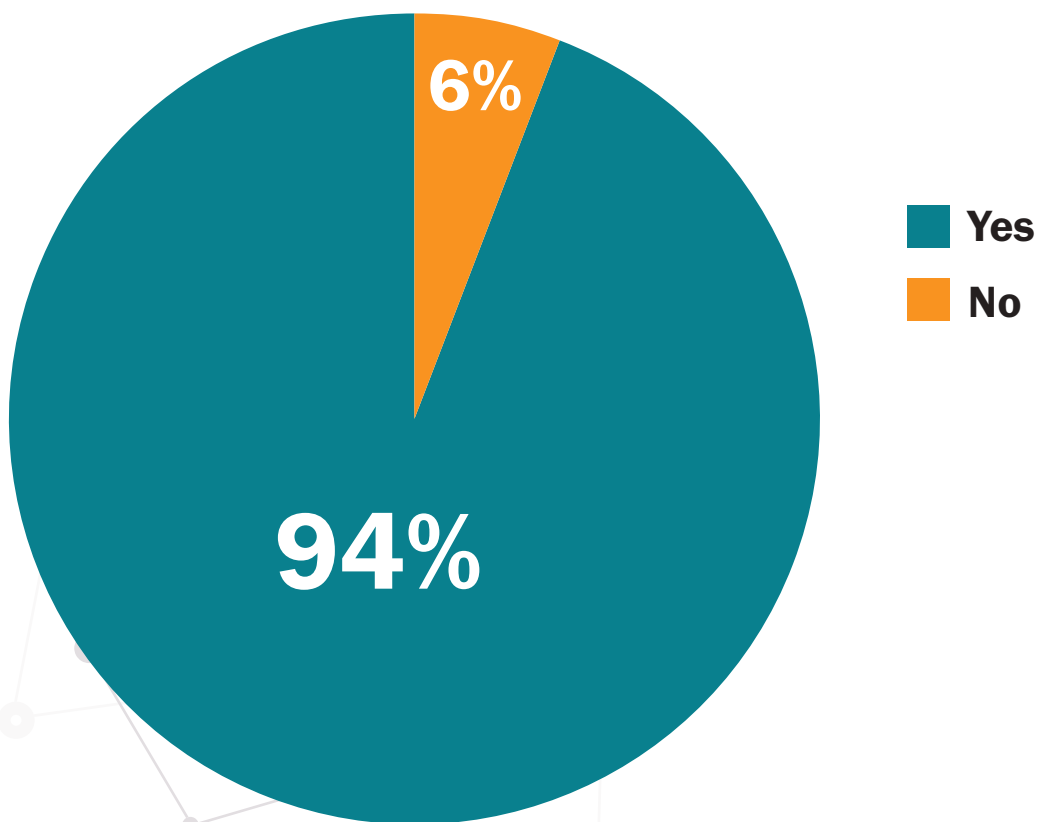
[www.survivalcoalitionwi.org](http://www.survivalcoalitionwi.org)  
[survivalcoalitionwi@gmail.com](mailto:survivalcoalitionwi@gmail.com)

The Survival Coalition of Disability Organizations launched a survey in March and asked families and professionals whether an increase in state investment in special education would help better support their child or students in their schools. 176 people answered the survey from all over the State, urban and rural areas. The results were a resounding YES to an increase in state funding. The survey also gathered personal stories to share with the Joint Finance Committee on why people felt this investment was important.

## Would increased state investment in special education services help your district better support your child/students with disabilities?

176 people answered survey question. 165 said yes and 10 said no.

### Support for Increases in Special Funding



# Help Children with Disabilities - Keep \$600 Million Investment for Special Education in Budget

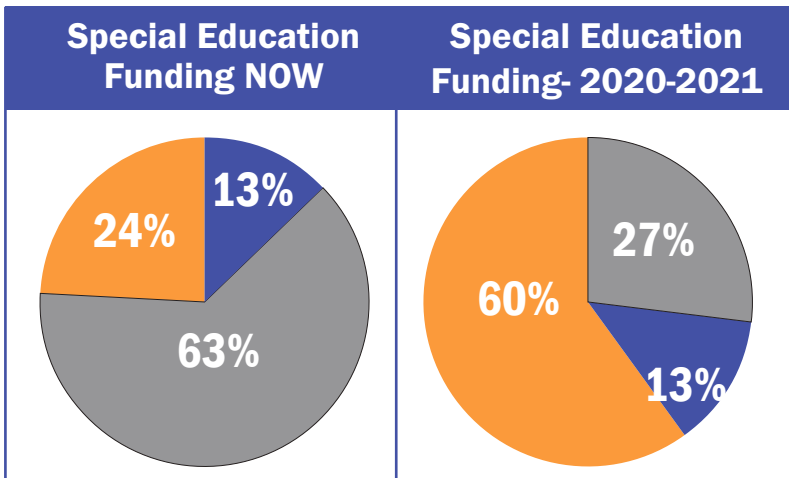
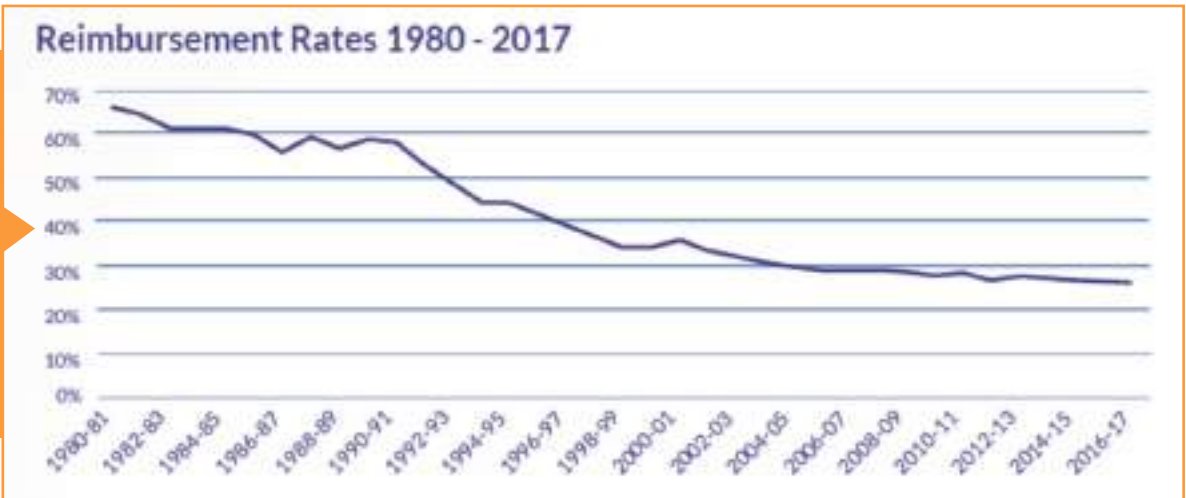


Over the last 10 years, Wisconsin school districts have been forced to use over \$1 billion in local taxpayer funds to make up for special education costs the state has not been covering. The State currently reimburses less than a quarter of a school district's actual special education costs. The state's share of funding has not increased in a decade while costs have increased by 60%. Wisconsin rates are one of the lowest in the nation for state reimbursement. In 2018 the state's Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding heard from stakeholders across the state that lack of special education funding was the biggest driver of local funding problems—impacting quality for students with AND without disabilities. The commission recommended several proposals including the Governor's proposal of an increase to 30% reimbursement in 2019-2020 and an increase to 60% reimbursement in 2020-2021.

reimbursement in 2019-2020 and an increase to 60% reimbursement in 2020-2021.

In 2000, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that students with disabilities have a fundamental right to “an equal opportunity for a sound basic education...” and that “So long as the legislature is providing sufficient resources so that school districts offer students the equal opportunity for a sound basic education as required by the constitution, the state school finance system will pass constitutional muster.”<sup>1</sup> Insufficient funding puts the equal opportunity for a sound basic education in jeopardy for over 100,000 students receiving special education services in Wisconsin.

Reimbursement rates have fallen from a high of 70% in 1980 to the new low of 24.5 % in 2018-2019.



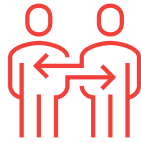
- Federal
- State
- Local School District

<sup>1</sup> Vincent v. Voight, 236 Wis. 2d 588, paragraph 3

# Statewide Family Survey



**172 families** reported their child experienced a reduction of supports and resources.



**120 families** reported their child experienced a loss of special education aide support.



**126 families** reported their child is more socially isolated.



**114 families** reported their child is having more behavioral challenges.



**154 families** reported they are concerned for their child's future.

## Stories from Wisconsin Families

“ My daughter always loved school but now she comes home in a terrible mood and sits in her room. She worries the whole weekend about going to school, says she hates school constantly and makes the morning routine very stressful for me and my son. The whole family is exhausted and frustrated. ”

“ My son has seen an increase in bullying. He feels that he doesn't have friends and most kids just want to hurt him. He is only 8 years old. ”

“ Our child is being segregated and isolated at his high school. He has been kept in windowless rooms with no access to any programming. We have picked him up early every single day he's attended, once while he was having a seizure that was completely unnoticed by staff. ”

“ My child often has the brakes on his wheelchair set because there are not enough aides in the classroom. It saddens me when I enter the classroom and he is sitting alone and he's unable to interact with anyone. ”

## Key Findings- 574 Responses

**58% of respondents** indicated they were concerned for their child's future due to lack of funding.

### The top areas of concern:

- a reduction in supports and resources (**38% of respondents**)
- loss of special education aides (**31% of respondents**)
- lack of child's progress (**35% of respondents**)
- child more socially isolated (**47% of respondents**)
- experiencing more bullying (**25% of respondents**)

### Will an increase in Special Education Reimbursement impact Maintenance of Effort?

The federal government requires state and local school districts to sustain a level of spending on special education each year - this is called Maintenance of Effort. Local school districts cannot reduce their spending for special education except under particular circumstances. MOE is met when at least the same total combination of local and state funds are budgeted as the last year the LEA expended the most local and state funds on special education activities. Spending will stay the same but additional local funds for all students will be freed up. Students with disabilities will also benefit from more funds for all kids. This should be considered an important shift in funding that will not be tracked as an increase in Maintenance of Effort under federal law.



[www.survivalcoalitionwi.org](http://www.survivalcoalitionwi.org)  
[survivalcoalitionwi@gmail.com](mailto:survivalcoalitionwi@gmail.com)

Share your story how under funding in special education has affected your child.  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SpecialEducationSurvey>

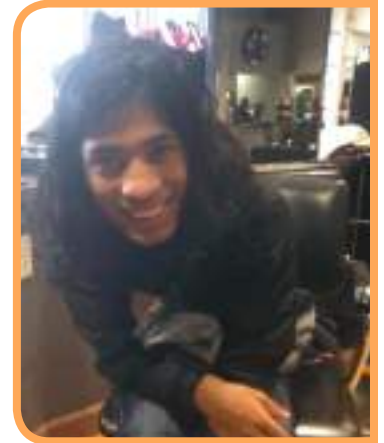




**M**y 16-year-old is not able to access all of the help she needs because there are not enough staff. She needs tutoring in math and science as well as language arts but the special ed staff is spread very thin because of high need students. My 21 one year old need more community-based instruction but was only able to receive that through the one year of project search. He needed a program that would allow him to access more of the community before he entered project search. He needed to receive more services than the state allowed him.

**T**hank you for the opportunity to share my story. My son graduated from a WI public high school in 2014. He has a physician diagnosed and documented learning disability – Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder. He chronically needed special ed. & the district always failed to formally provide it. I applied for it 3 times – 3 different years, starting in middle school and again twice in high school. EACH TIME the district instead steered him to the school psychologist (& away from special ed). He was/is not a behavior problem, and his only psychological condition is the ADHD – a bona fide learning disability. The psychologist always had the same plan – teach him study skills, then gradually taper off the help & eventually stop it a few months later. While he was getting help, his grades improved. As soon as the help stopped, the grades tanked again. THIS WAS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE “PLAN”. He has ADHD, a \*permanent\* disability, not something you cure by teaching study skills. He graduated near the bottom of his class, little thanks to the school district. He was never a behavior problem. He just needed accommodation...which he deserved but never got. Each time I

ed roadblocks. It wasn't easy for them either. One mom was a lawyer, the other a teacher in another district, so they naturally had a leg up on me on how to push for their kids' rights...& finally GET them. I tried to find & hire an advocate to help me, but the school district was/is too small and remote,



**GETTING SPECIAL ED SHOULD NOT BE THIS HARD, NOR SHOULD ANYONE HAVE TO HIRE AN ADVOCATE/ ATTORNEY TO GET SPECIAL ED!**

and all the education advocates/lawyers are in big cities. GETTING SPECIAL ED SHOULD NOT BE THIS HARD, NOR SHOULD ANYONE HAVE TO HIRE AN ADVOCATE/ATTORNEY TO GET SPECIAL ED! It's abominable that one should have to have money, time, a law degree, &/or the inside track to get a child the special ed (s)he deserves! I can only assume they made parents jump thru all these hoops & red tape in order to discourage us from hogging



applied the district sent me an inch-thick large envelope containing an excess of intimidating academic/administrative documents full of fine print, hard-to-understand gobbledygook & red tape about applying for special ed. There was special emphasis on how to appeal a denial of services. Did that

mean denial is the norm? Couldn't they wait to send me all that until I needed or asked for it? Two other moms who knew The System & had more ability to fight it got their kids adequate special ed after hitting their special

up scarce time & limited \$\$ for special ed. Of course, that's illegal, and nobody in the school system will say that. I even asked if that's why they kept steering my son away from special ed. “Oh no! That's illegal!” the school psychologist said. (She also treated me like I was a kindergartener. I have a master's degree.) I also went to the district's education ombudsman, where I hoped to get some steam to help me cross the moat & get the doors open to the well-protected special ed castle. While the ombudsman was a very nice, well-meaning woman who had 2 sons in special ed, all she did was give me more work – tips for communicating well with teachers, how to motivate my son, etc. I needed EDUCATORS to step up to the plate & assume some of this responsibility, not a do-it-yourself list of how I could do the educational heavy lifting to meet his special needs. Share my story. I might even testify in a hearing if that will help.



**M**y son is in need of a 1:1 aide, but due to funding issues he's made to share an aide with 4 other students which defeats the purpose of it being a 1:1 aide.

Lack of funding directly impacts my child with complex medical needs in multiple ways. There aren't funds for needed staff trainings to keep teachers, paras, and SLP up to date on how to properly utilize and implement my son's AAC device. We personally had to attend trainings and then turn around and attempt to educate staff on how to use the device.

There often aren't enough resources in the special education classrooms in both areas of human resources (under



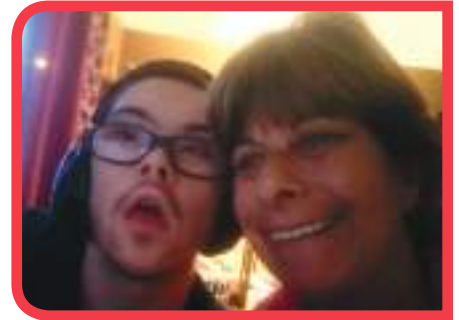
staffed) and technology. Staffing issues directly result in less integration within the broader school community which is extremely frustrating to us as a family because community engagement is a very important part of our desire for our children. Our son is an active member within the community, he has participated in multiple marathons and triathlons. He is well known in our city and surrounding communities because of his active engagement, yet when he goes to school he is limited to only involvement in the secluded special ed classroom, utilizes the gym during adaptive PE, and sits in on a music class. While I fully understand and appreciate that his academic placement due to his disabilities does limit his ability to successfully integrate into the more academic classrooms I would LOVE to see better funding for him to have access to more resources which would allow him to have a more inclusive school experience.



**T**here are limited resources available to my son who has deletion 22Q1.1. Owen has been attending the same elementary school since K, he is now in 2nd grade. It wasn't until this year that iPad applications

were able to be provided to him, to best learn speech, assist in reading, & much more. Additional forms of communication have also been limited, such as sign language, which would assist my son in communication with peers & teachers. This is only the start of the limits within our district.

**L**ack of funding caused a lack of a support system in the special education classroom which in turn causes a delay or inability to provide the services needed to help my child. There has also been a lack of supplies/materials needed to work with my child.



**O**ur school is in need of many necessities for our students. Our speech teacher is forced to use older resources to help our students. Both students and the teachers alike could greatly benefit from more up to date resources including electronics to get students excited and to better keep up with the



needs of families and students. If the district had more resources for special education, they could spread some of what is currently being spent on other areas in the school. We are in

desperate need of drinking fountains. Many updates are needed throughout the school. Teachers are relying on donors choose campaigns to get items for their classrooms. It would make a big difference for everyone in the school.

**M**y district isn't able to meet the needs of my son because there isn't enough funding for training and education for the staff that work with my son. The district doesn't have funds to meet his OT needs to function in the school system. My son has to bused 40 mins from my home to get an education. My son isn't able to be a regular student in the district because of the lack of funds.





**M**y son needs a para with him when in general Ed classes and decrease funding has decreased para availability. I believe increased funding would also allow for smaller districts to have more options of activities, sporting and classes for those impacted. Equal opportunity for all.



I believe increased funding would also allow for smaller districts to have more options of activities, sporting and classes for those impacted. Equal opportunity for all.

**O**ur son has multiple disabilities and requires many accommodations in order to attend school. He requires access to an electronic speech generating device, proficient support for complex communication needs, and special supports for needs related to autism. In the past, when we have advocated for accommodations for our son, schools have responded to our requests in ways that caused hardships for our family. When critical accommodations at school are not provided and efforts to advocate fail, we are forced to withdraw our son from school, because it is either unsafe or not possible for our son to attend school without needed accommodations. These situations have caused our son to change schools five times in the

past five years. Currently, our son's present public school does not provide the requisite special transportation for him, so I drive him back and forth from school myself. This amounts to three hours a day of commuting time for me.



**Currently, our son's present public school does not provide the requisite special transportation for him, so I drive him back and forth from school myself. This amounts to three hours a day of commuting time for me.**

past five years. Currently, our son's present public school does not provide the requisite special transportation for him, so I drive him back and forth from school myself. This amounts to three hours a day of commuting time for me. I am a single parent, and I work full time. While this is logistically challenging for our family, it is also sad for our son. If I lose the ability to transport him to school, I worry that we may be forced to leave this school as well.

**M**ore help is needed in classroom. Last year I had to pull my child out of class because there was only one para and one teacher for 16 special needs children. This was unacceptable.

**M**y daughter doesn't get enough one on one time with her SE teacher. She also isn't receiving as much time in PT,OT, launage. She also isn't covered all day by a para one on one bc they don't have enough staff for every child that should be receiving this!!

**S**pecial Ed services must be funded over the summer. My son operates at a level significantly behind his peers, yet he is not eligible for summer school he needs too much help. Yes, he does! He needs to maintain his skills not wait until the school year starts to see if he regressed. We pay for tutors and private therapies to help him advance. Special Ed services should be committed to this too!



**M**y daughter's school is way understaffed in terms of both special education teachers and aides, and that has had direct effects on my daughter's safety: twice in the last year she's been left outside alone on the playground after everyone



went inside after recess. She's got low muscle tone and very low processing speed, so she has a hard time keeping up with everyone—and there was no teacher there to check that all kids were off the playground. Both days when this happened

were mid-winter, and the school is on a busy street. She could've been lost or hurt or worse because the school didn't have adequate staffing for her safety.



**M**y son needs 1-1 support throughout his day. He needs high quality and well-compensated classroom aides, and there is a severe shortage in personnel. It is my understanding that the “higher needs” students in my son’s school

are concentrated in 2 of the 6 kindergarten classes, so the limited additional resources can be used more efficiently. This is not true inclusion. There are no aides on school buses, and drivers need support. We are also struggling with the lack of quality educational resources during the summer months, have been denied extended school year services, and have no realistic options for after-school care. This all makes it nearly impossible for me to work outside the home.

**F**unding has IMPACTED the type and amount of aids and related services in my child’s IEP.



**I**t has delayed the process of him being integrated in regular ed and has slowed his progress with getting an alternative communication device.

**W**hen my son was 5 years old he was first diagnosed with ADHD. I am so thankful that Head Start



was a tremendous help with that. Soon after he was diagnosed with OCD, Tourette’s and sensory processing disorder. In the fourth grade he was admitted to Meriter Psych Child & Adolescent for 7 days and when discharged he was also diagnosed with dmdd which is disruptive mood dysregulation disorder. It’s sad to say but ever since my son started in the Madison School District with kindergarten up to 7th grade where he’s at now at got your rock middle school, I have been met with nothing but resistance, judgment, deception, let-downs and unprofessionalism. My son is very intelligent and picks things up very quickly yet at times can behave

like a five year old. It is difficult for people to realize he is a special needs child because he looks “normal” and you would never know that at the age of seven he started saying he wanted to kill himself because he was so sad that kids were bullying him for being different.

He sees things from a different perspective in the middle school where he’s at now there’s only a psychologist there two days a week, and OT person there once a week and there is never enough staff to help give my son a break when he is on sensory overload it needs a few minutes. There’s never anyone available to help him do his homework outside of a classroom that is loud and dysregulated. Even with his IEP stating that he needs a communication log to come home every day my assumption is that there is not enough staff to help make that happen because Joshua does not come home with his communication log every day and the school is being non-compliant with his IEP. Badger rock middle school where my son is in 7th grade, the principal feels that he has the right in front of me his mother to point his finger at my son telling my son that he must perceive the situation, he needs to make amends, he needs to make it right, he needs to fix it and that the air was on him. The principal seems to think he is able to tell my son that my son should know better and doesn’t remember that my son does have several diagnoses and does misperceive many situations and



**Even with his IEP stating that he needs a communication log to come home every day my assumption is that there is not enough staff to help make that happen because Joshua does not come home with his communication log every day and the school is being non-compliant with his IEP.**

that is how it will continue into his future. My son is not only battling with one diagnosis, but he is bailing several and there needs to be more money put in the special education system and mental health system because they go hand-in-hand. In the 7th grade it is documented that more than two occasions my son wanted to run



into the street to get hit by a car and physically needed to be stopped. The policies and procedures regarding bullying in that school is not acceptable, the principal acts inappropriately with children of special needs and needs further training on how to deal with Children of special needs and how to help them be more calm in a dysregulated world. Staff from the education system should be professional, courteous, be able to manage difficult situations and throughout my son seven years in the school district I've only come acrossed a handful of people. The reimbursement rate for special education is only 24% no money has been given in 10 years and the reimbursement rate for special education should be at 60%. There should be Medicaid expansion to help these children with special needs get the mental health care coverage that they need so that they can continue to thrive and get back to their community is contributing members. My son would like to go to school without being bullied, not only by children but by staff is well. if there are more staff available to the school district then there would be more opportunities for teachers to make connections with the students I make a difference in their lives instead of just hurting them along as if they were cattle. My child matters in my child is just as important as anybody else's child

**M**y son was denied an IEP until he was 9. The principal refused him because, "he's Black and too many black boys are on the IEP rolls. Mostly she didn't want to pay to access his needs and then provide services. It took years to get him any services and they were so minimal as to make no difference at all. His life, our family's life was permanently impacted by his being denied FAPE because he was disabled, Black and large.



**C**urrently our school cannot support all students with special needs or disabilities. As a parent, was discouraged to seek special education for my son with ASD because the funding was stretched thin. Fortunately for our family, I was able to educate myself and fight for our rights for services. If the funding was

available more kids would get the support services they need without fighting for them. The benefit would trickle down to their classmates and teachers, this improving our schools overall success. We are failing everyone by not having the appropriate special needs funding.

**B**ecause of under funded special education my child went without an IEP and without one on one help in school for THREE years. I had to bed and plead and claw my way into the school to get my son tested for disabilities and to qualify for an IEP. finally this year in 6th grade he is finally getting the help he deserves!



**W**e have 3 children with IEP'S and we have had to fight so hard to access services and supports within our school district which are medically and educationally necessary over the past 12 years. Our family has had one parent unable to work and become fulltime caregiver. This was necessary because schools are not trained or provided professional development to support our children and we were called to pick up our child from school multiple times, often 3+ times per week. Schools need more training, more collaboration with providers, more experts like BCBA'S (Board Certified



have not had to deal with this yet as my son is still a baby but he will need extra services as he grows. I'm very concerned about him getting all of the resources he needs.



**M**y daughter is very complex, i will share one scenario. She has a vision disability and because of low funding she doesn't have a teacher that understands her needs, the one she has is not able to dedicate enough time to supporting her (her overall caseload is too much for one person). My daughter, Violet NEEDS her work modified so

she can see it in a larger size, colored so it contrasts (blue/orange, yellow/purple work the best for her), and this needs to be taught to her regular education teacher. These are fairly easy modifications, but without a budget that supports the teachers as well as the students my kid cannot progress in her regular education classes. This means that she is falling behind more and more each year. This will impact her for years to come if it's not addressed. We want her to graduate, to go to college and continue to advance, but if support is not available she cannot make these advancements on her own with minimal support. Our kids are able to grow and learn just like others when they are given the appropriate supports in our schools. Be the ones that support kids, support our schools and support our futures.

**I** don't think my school district would use the money properly. Many of our special ed students, whether ID students or regular special ed, are only "pushed" along; often given grades that passes them but doesn't teach them anything. My wife works with students at the high school level that cannot read and yet get passing grades on papers because staff do it for them!! DPI is more interested in good numbers and passing schools than actually teaching students to learn. All of these tests are also ridiculous. My daughter is in the "gray" area. She's too high for ID yet to low for regular special ed. There is NO curriculum for her and many of the students just like her. She HATES school and if I was able to have my wife stay home, I would have her home schooled.



**D**ue to lack of speech language pathologist my son didn't have access to speech therapy

**T**he underfunding of special education has affect 3 of my children. The schools had to stop offering certain special needs programs that they offer due to funding issues. My children lost help with reading and writing programs that were essential to educational development. The kids used to be apart of special education classes that included PT and OT and they don't have anything like that now.

**M**y son is in 4K, general education. He does not have his own space that is needed for him to decompress. When my son is calm, he easily moves forward.



**Moved my daughter to online school because district can't protect kids from bullying issues.**



**I** worked with a special education teacher who had come from a district in WI who could only afford to give her one paraprofessional to help all of the students on her caseload. My son needs to be with an adult 1:1 all day long. If there aren't enough paras due to lack of funding, then he doesn't

get the support he critically needs, or other children in special education lose support because of kids like my son who have to have the support constantly. My son is



not able to take the regular education bus because it is so unruly, but this detracts from his ability to be fully included. If special education funding would provide for aides on buses, inclusion could be more widespread and take the pressure off of drivers.



I am constantly looking to find qualified therapists, specialists, child care etc for my child in our area. There is such a need for people to WANT to work in this field, that are educated, and will make the money they deserve to work day to day with my child on basic skills. I've had to settle for child care with people who aren't

trained and who don't care to learn about the extra things my child needs. It's constant worry and wondering if I am doing a disservice to my child. And at the same time its finding the best thing I can, and settling, just knowing he is at least safe. There are not a lot of summer options available to him either and my husband and I work full time. It's a difficult decision putting him in different places bc he is also non verbal. And cannot tell us what is actually going on. At school, we don't have a communicative device for him either, which would be EXTREMELY helpful to have at home/school since he can navigate a tablet wonderfully. I truly wish each

**It's crazy to me that DS has been around FOREVER and yet there aren't people trained in the schools on how their brain works differently.**

school had a person trained in how to work with children who have Down syndrome, or staff would be trained on how their brains function differently and the way they need to change their teaching styles to accommodate. It's crazy to me that DS has been around FOREVER and yet there aren't people trained in the schools on how their brain works differently. I literally had to type up pages about how my son sees the world and how I need them to not react to bad behavior, or how his executive function (impulse control) is weaker and this is why he does the things he does. Or how he is unable to speak and if he gets frustrated, hitting is his last resort bc he has no other means of getting his point across or to get attention. I just really wish more people had training and awareness. Same goes with teaching the other children

about DS. again, I had to be the one to get peer training videos/literature from the DSAW website sent to my kids' school to help the other kids understand why my son does things a little differently or takes a little longer. I feel like this should just be something that ALL Schools do. for all diagnosis. Educate the staff and students. Simple. Make it "normal" and not something "different"

There is not enough support for students. Teachers are stressed, overfull case loads, and getting burned out. Students are becoming segregated and inclusion is not being utilized as it should. Class

sizes are larger. My son is currently attending a high school that is not inclusive and he is unhappy. His friends without disabilities miss him... and he misses them! It makes it more difficult and challenging to get them together outside of school with everyone's busy schedules. We are risking friendships that he has had for years! We are constantly advocating for our son to be included and not forgotten. This funding can help with more teachers, trainings, and making inclusion work for everyone.



Our school district was unable to afford the support necessary to provide and inclusive education to our daughter.

Every year we fight to get routine time with the therapist to see my daughter for Speech,

physical therapy and occupational therapy. We need technology to help her learn that currently is not in the schools budget. If my daughter and other special needs kids are supported you increase productive citizenship where she can get a job and pay taxes, if not she becomes a burden on our society. It make much more humane sense to fund up front.







**M**y daughter who was born Deaf has not had access to an American Sign Language Interpreter for the from age 3 until Kindergarten. The school district fought our family on even adding a Sign Language Interpreter to her IEP. My daughter used to have a Deaf Mentor, in a previous school district but that was also

taken away when we moved as the new district refused to pay for one. (at the time it was her only access to a person who was well versed in American Sign Language) She was left unsupported in the classroom, and continues to struggle to catch up academically.

**S**mall SpED team compared to student need



**I**t has caused a unsafe environment due to a lack of staffing in assistance. Also, with strained resources special needs students do not receive enough special needs services such as speech therapy for example!



**T**he special needs children have suffered due to under staffing caused by lack of funds. Children that should have a 1:1 paraprofessional are with a group of 3-4 other special needs children resulting in less supervision and education.



I continue to sub and see firsthand the decreased levels of support in school staffing including, but not limited to, educators, specialized training for educators, social work and psychological services.

**M**y youngest child would benefit greatly from attending school five days a week, but with the funding available, we can only send her two days a week. Her therapists and teachers work hard to fit all they can into two short mornings, but it isn't enough. My oldest has wonderful staff as well, but they don't have the time to communicate with each other because they are understaffed due to funding. His teachers will often work until 8 or 9 pm just to complete their work for the special education students. That leaves very little time for their families and is also unfair for what they are paid.



**M**y son is kind of nonverbal. They are not trained to work with how my son with autism learns. None of them are skilled in ABA teaching- or have even done it. They ask me what his goals should be. They have no idea how to create a completely inclusive classroom environment so my son is very isolated and it has effected his mental health.

**M**y son has been suspended more than once and sent home in part due to staffing shortages.

**M**y son has almost no options for inclusion because staffing for aids is nonexistent. He is an exemplary student whose education is becoming detrimental to his development.

**W**e strongly believe that our son needs a 1:1 aide to be truly successful in the



school setting to ensure his safety, be included in activities and achieve academic success. However, we were not able to get 1:1 staffing for him, despite written recommendations from the National Institutes of Health professionals who evaluated him during a week-long study.





**M**y daughter has an intellectual disability and is in high school. Under funding special education has caused her to be integrated less throughout the school day in a meaningful manner. There aren't enough aides and case managers to actually develop true co-taught classes. As a

result, she sits in classes that are too difficult for her to access with time to "color" or "pretend" she is taking notes. This time isn't spent meaningfully. The school district wants to support inclusion but for it to be done effectively there needs to be more funding. This funding can allow for smaller class sizes, further training for both special education AND regular education teachers on how to effectively teach integrated classes. In addition, she was placed in required classes with the justification it was for inclusion. This "inclusion" was accomplished at the sake of receiving proper education in life skills, social skills and vocational skills. All the courses for students with an intellectual disability were phased out because it's "cheaper" to do inclusion. At what expense? My daughter's. She doesn't understand Biology or Chemistry and now she has lost the laundry skills she learned at the middle school because there hasn't been a legitimate course to teach and support her in the skills she actually needs. We need to increase special education funding so that a wide array of classes for ALL levels can be offered and inclusion can be practiced when and where it makes sense!

**Most teachers would rather pass along a student to a special class than learn the material to a level that can help the person with special education needs which can also help normal students by making them think harder too.**



**I**n our school, the PT can only come one day per week. My son would have to come to school on no school days just to get PT.

**M**y son, Gabriel, is a nonverbal autistic and requires intensive care. He only receives about 20 minutes per week of occupational therapy and about 20 minutes per week of speech pathology therapy at school due to the staff that specializes in these functions only



being available for these lengths of time, as these two individuals are responsible for helping MANY children throughout the school day. Funding should be provided so that my son receives far more exposure to these sorts of therapies at school. My son was supposed to originally attend kindergarten at Taft Elementary. However, their only intensive needs teacher resigned last summer. The school had no other staff members available who could assist with Gabriel, so he was shuffled last minute to another school entirely. This was extremely disruptive to Gabriel, our family, and the teacher and class that eventually took him on. We all adapted as best we could, but I was shocked to learn that the entire school had only one individual on staff to handle Gabriel's needs. Funding should be provided to schools to enable them to train and/or hire multiple individuals with the skills and experience necessary to provide my son with a proper education. I feel that Gabriel should have his own Ipad at school to help with his communication needs, which are constant throughout his school day. Currently, he must share an Ipad with his classmates. I feel that funding should be provided to enable my son and any other children in his class with communication needs to have the appropriate software available at all times.

**I**'m an adult with a disability. I would like today's children to have the same opportunities I had—and many that I did not: age-appropriate modifications to high-school curriculum rather than Popsicle stick crafts for much younger children. Teachers who understand not being able to regulate one's emotions is not the same thing as being naughty, transition planning starting at 14 years old. If some of these things were in place when I was a girl, perhaps I would not be backtracking with different life skills and going through career change that I'm am doing right now.







**L**ost hours of specialized instruction; ignoring of bullying which undermines learning, poor instruction, few attempts to help child with social problems. Lack of individual instruction.

**M**y daughter, who has Down Syndrome, has been denied open enrollment because of the costs

associated with her services. We are having to move in order to get her in the school we feel is right for her, because the cost of the therapists and aids is too high for a small district.

**C**an't get enough para support for students with challenges to integrate in regular education classrooms. IEP times are determined by time available by staff- not what students need.

Diagnostics are so overloaded that it is an assembly line process- students come out with an identical IEP- goals and services. No services available to those deemed to have experienced trauma.



**W**hen funding is adequate, students like my son have a chance to be contributing members of society after graduation. My son works three

part time jobs in the community, pays taxes and makes our society a better place for being in the midst of the world.

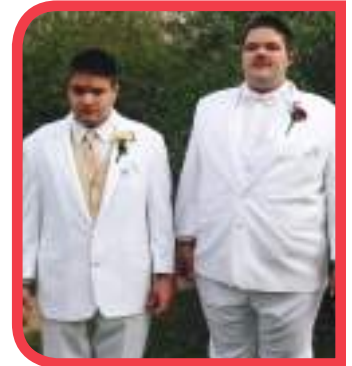
**M**y son has adaptive PE and when he was younger was able to utilize an adapted bicycle. It is a great tool. How once he outgrew the one the school has there was not a bigger version for him to transfer to and no longer had that tool to use.



**M**y son has dyslexia and special education underfunding affects him. With more funding they would be able to use and have more speak to text devices and apps. Also would be able to have more audiobooks and or audio library programs.



**I**t has limited his resources to events funding has been put on teacher and they either fund them out of pocket or creative ways or go without



**W**e are paying \$6000 annually out of pocket for appropriate tutoring that the school can not provide due to lack of teacher training.

**E**very year there is a possibility the school will close. Fairview South is a special needs school serving several school districts. Because it's expensive the enrollment has dropped from 60 in 2010 to 15. Students aren't given the option to attend even when not coping



in large mainstream high schools. It's hugely stressful for parents, students and staff not knowing if the school will close. It has affected staffing levels and hours have been cut so staff turnover is high. Ensuring schools like this are funded is imperative, home schooling would be the only other option for most of the students who attend.

**M**y son only gets a little time with a special education teacher, and I don't feel it's an adequate amount of time.



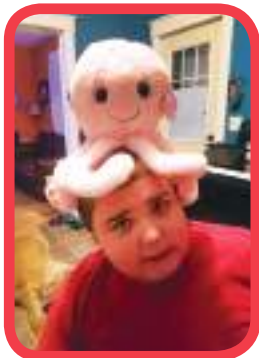




**P**roper supports, in my opinion, is the single most important factor for success for kids with IEP's. Lack of funding affected the schools ability to provide enough staffing support, the staff and faculty that are there don't have time or resources to get additional training that may be required to properly support students with complex

or challenging disabilities. My son was traumatized by burned out staff early in his educational experience due to lack of support for them as educators. This AFFECTS EVERY STUDENT IN THE CLASSROOM. My sons early negative experiences in education are things no child should have to experience, as he has gotten older it has required more supports to help him catch up, and focus on the mental health issues that were created by lack of supports. Fixing problems like this becomes even more costly for our school districts, INVESTING in our children will bring about only positive outcomes for families, schools and communities.

**U**nderfunding has decreased appropriate times he should have special education services and prevented him from having a full time one on one aide. He has a full time one on one aide, but sometimes it is three different people a day which is not appropriate given his severe autism and anxiety. Also, he has previously been abused by an aide, so he really needs just a good person full time.



**O**ur son is on the autism spectrum and is fully included in regular education classes. He has the support of an speech therapist in language arts class and a special education teacher in math class.



An occupational therapist provides consultation services and helped develop a sensory support plan for him. He would benefit from more support in social skills training than the school has the staff to provide. I think that more social skills training in the school environment would make a huge difference for our son and

his classmates. Overall the school has done a great job managing resources to meet our son's need. Recently we met as a team to talk about adjusting supports because of his anxiety and difficulty with the social, organizational, and learning demands of middle school. I looked around the room at his team of regular education teachers: language arts, math, Spanish, social studies, and science, his special education teacher, the school psychologist, and the occupational therapist and felt very grateful for their support. It also hit me just how many resources it takes to support children at school so that they can learn and grow into healthy and productive active citizens and the risks we take when we don't make those investments in our kids.

**F**unding under special education has improved my child School by having the ability to be able to provide the services that the child needs in a school setting to be successful adding more time for special needs Services individually, as well as in a group setting the funding of special education will help improve the school by allowing the special education teachers to have more material to assist each and every individual child with his own or her own disabilities needs. Funding will support the team with the special education supervisors ability to be able to gain more ability with special education services. Our district has significantly reduced the number of educational assistants supporting students in regular



**I** have struggled for 6 years to get my son an IEP. He has suffered at the hand of a broken public education system that allowed him to fall through the cracks because he wasn't "bad enough " to get help. We have spent over \$15,000 out of our own pocket to help him because the school wouldn't. He was diagnosed with Dyslexia at 14 but our schools won't label him because they are not equipped to teach him. His 4 years of reading and math intervention has not help make any substantial gains. We now are spending \$120 a week to have him tutored by a dyslexic therapist. All this money is money the public school system should have paid for but they won't. We need to start screening for dyslexia and to start educating teachers on how to spot it. My son is in



8th grade with a 5th grade reading and math level. He has emotionally and socially struggled to fit in and has been bullied for years. I have cried so many tears for the brokenness in him because of a failed system that wouldn't help him. His confidence is low and we are constantly trying to fill his emotional bucket. I have now decided to home school him in Math so I can teach him the way that works for him.



I feel that the creativity of meeting my autistic daughters needs was stifled. We were told endlessly that the school district had never had a student like my daughter before. (Hence they did not know what to do.)



My son is switching schools for the third year in a row by his school district's recommendation because his current school is "not as equipped" to work with his level of disability. I believe my son bouncing around to different schools because of

his disability reinforces him being "different" and in the "other" category from his peers at an age where it should be easiest to develop his peer relationships. When it can take months for a new person to really learn his "quirks" consistency is critical for my son to be the most successful.

Needs home bound but due to funding not available due to "not sick enough" has to be "closer to death" to qualify. Is doing online schooling but has reduced access to other kids, puts responsibility on my husband and I. We have had "threatening" letters due to missed days of school even with letters from Doctors and his medical team that he will have varying levels of functioning and will need modified school days and scheduling.



This is the first year that my son hasn't qualified for ESY services. Each year the hours have been reduced. ESY is now only three days a week. I also know that his teachers are over-capacity and can't implement the students' IEPs. Many of the teachers and aides don't get time for lunch or regular bathroom breaks due to lack of coverage.



My child has not been successful since transitioning here from Florida. The fight for esy this summer shouldn't be a battle. But I can imagine it's a budget factor. My child's progress should regress during the summer months due to the stagnant budget over the last decade making it hard to support ESY for her. (extended school year)



My daughter has gotten better but still needs assistance and unfortunately due to the amount of kids with disabilities she is getting pushed aside and not getting the assistance needed as they are needed more with others.

Lack of sensory room accessories cause my child more anxiety and more meltdowns. Teachers need to

have more training. We had to switch school districts for my son to get FAPE that he deserves to receive and not be constantly kicked out of school or staff calling the police for outbursts they should be able to handle appropriate.







I can only imagine what goes on behind the scenes... My son requires a one to one para. Thankfully, the local school has never resisted providing one, but I know it must be expensive. When it comes to modifying curriculum, the teachers are on their own to develop resources. It

would be nice if there was a centralized library/resource pool for teachers to pull from when modifying the curricula. Because the teachers simply don't have time to modify the curriculum, parents often take this role on.



I was forced to home school my son due to lack of aids/Paras available for children. My son was in kindergarten for all of two weeks with multiple IEP violations and one para for three classrooms. 98% of his day was spent in the special Ed room because

his teacher had minimal help. My son is academically advanced by needed help with regulating emotions and sensory needs. In the two weeks of prek he was taught nothing at school but was dumped in EBD room to walk on a treadmill, sit in a tent or carry a heavy backpack up and down the hall... Hardly an equal education.



My son needs a one on one para but the school stated they could not afford to hire another para. Due to the lack of support he was kicked out of school on 2 separate occasions due to outburst that could have been prevented had someone be with him.

**My 7 year old doesn't have any special needs teachers that are trained in handling kids with PTSD or high anxiety or any reactive displacement issues.**

**N**ot enough one on one time between aides and students.

**D**ifficult to provide support needed in the general education class for the students to be successful.

**M**y family was forced to relocate when our school district was abusive to both my son and his teacher. His teacher was left unsupported entirely and was told that inservice was enough training, inservice that did not offer ANY training in regards to my child's disability. The school district frequently cited funding as the problem. While I do think that funding is a priority concern, where are the checks and balances to make sure school districts are providing education for ALL students?

**M**y son with Autism is not included with general Ed students as much as he could be because of lack of aides to support. He did not make progress his freshman year towards his goals and in fact backward slid on some. He does not benefit from UDL practices as resources are not available to facilitate.

**T**here isn't adequate staff to screen children who are struggling and no assistance in referring them or treating them within the school. My 4 year old was left to struggle, I had to become a massive advocate (thank goodness for 2 masters degrees and a healthy dose of confidence)

**Underfunding had caused OT and PT to cut from my daughters programing and speech is very close.**

**D**elayed speech therapy, missed having breaks because of no staff

**O**ur school district has to take 2 million dollars out of the general fund to subsidize special education funds. This puts a strain on the general education of all the students.

**T**ransition is not hands on in the prison setting. They are minimal to no vocational classes for students unable to receive their GED.



**R**esearch based interventions cost money as do aides. My son could've used more academic support to close his academic achievement gap compared to his typical peers. We live in a rural locale and transition coordinators are few, as are opportunities for employment support. I am concerned about my son's employment "soft skills."

**S**pecial education funds has benefited me - in rural and community school districts and community activities. The picture I am sharing with you is from my childhood but have many memories alike. I have cerebral palsy which effects my speech, fine hand motor skills and walking. The photo I'm sharing this time is the moment when I had an opportunity to tack a horse for the first time with minimal help and actually ended up teaching others my tricks to accodate a challenging task for individuals with disabilities.

**L**arge caseloads on each special education teacher (18-26 students) per teacher

**Additional funding would provide our district more resources (teachers, aids, programming, etc.) to educate my son, who is struggling in math and reading, has a disability and is African American.**

**M**y son is in a Biology class with 10 other children with IEP's many with disruptive behavioral challenges. My teacher said to me, "It's really not about teaching at this point, it's about keeping everyone safe and putting out fires." My son did not learn a thing except to hate coming to biology.

**D**elays in getting equipment, lack of adaptive equipment, insufficient support throughout school day due to lack of provision of 1:1 support for physically disabled child, no summer educational opportunities provided (ESY or supports to include child in summer school offerings) education classrooms. Special education teacher case manage 2-3 grades and have significantly larger caseloads than 5-6 years ago.

**M**y son has recently graduated from his school. He received no assistance in learning the social or executive functioning skills needed to be successful in life. The special education teacher at his school was licensed in learning disabilities. The district did not have a cross-category teacher or someone who specialized in autism. My son is now struggling in college because he

does not have the skills necessary to be organized and involved in classes.

**F**unding has not impact the outcome is he spending too much money that we're not spending enough time on research and outcomes that fit diagnostics of my children The money and finances it's not broken it's the messages between all of the staff that are ill-equipped to deal with the needs

**M**y son has had an IEP since the end of 4K. Throughout the process of trying to get the initial IEP back then and throughout the IEP annual meeting processes since, it is very clear to me that school personnel are very burdened, and it is probably the financial factor that is causing this. School staff have so many children with special needs. With limited funding in the budget, this leads to their not wanting to help kids who, in comparison with other students, might seem "fine." It was brutal trying to get my son's initial IEP. I was shocked at how much resistance we met. Even with a pediatric neuropsychologist's diagnosis of ADHD and Global Developmental Delay, the school personnel strongly resisted giving my son an IEP. We even had the doctor call in while the IEP team met, and those present were dismissive of his comments. It was unreal to me. I do not think this is because the staff was uncaring, or hard-hearted. I think it definitely is because of severely under-funded school budgets that they are forced to follow, and one more child with an IEP means lots more resources for that school. I also can tell you that in the past two months our family has been going through a very similar experience. Our annual IEP review meeting was in late February. I felt the meeting was hurried and that the IEP was "pushed through" without the team truly listening to the concerns I was raising. Unfortunately, my son has been struggling these past four weeks and has been demonstrating the need for more help. He was told by a staff person (in the OT department of our school) that he will not be having OT next year when he moves to middle school. That was very upsetting to me for two reasons: one is that it is written in his IEP that he receive OT services. Secondly, he NEEDS OT services. Because of a steep drop in his winter standardized test score on the iReady exam, along with his recent behavioral struggles in the classroom, my husband and I requested another IEP meeting. Even though the special education teacher knows that Tuesdays are the only days my husband can meet, this new meeting was scheduled for a different day. My son is adopted from Ethiopia and the trauma and deprivation he experienced as an infant has had a profound impact on his ability to learn, socialize with peers, and self-regulate. His needs are real, and

this should be evident, but again, I see clearly that his needs are not taken seriously because (compared to other students) he is doing “fine”. This is very difficult and frustrating as a parent because the resources that are supposed to be available to us through the state are very difficult to access; parents must be willing to be very determined, organized, and well-informed to get their child what they need.

**T**hey don’t have qualified staff hired as paras. Training in autism would be very beneficial to all schools. He “looks” normal and functions very well so he gets pushed aside because his disability isn’t “big” enough. He doesn’t need speech therapy, more needs social skills help, peer interaction. That’s not something schools work with, but that many kids need. Without these skills he will fall behind his peers. The school should have staff knowledgeable in autism such as a BCBA.

**T**his year our daughter’s school has one less special education assistant and one less special education teacher. She receives less support in her regular education classes and in her special education classes.

**Limits the amount of time with one on one help. 20 min a week isn’t sufficient**

**S**tudents at all levels are not getting their particular needs met. Special Education Teachers have extremely high caseloads and tend to group students to save time, thus their is no real I in IEP.

**I**t makes it difficult for not only the school, but also for the child. When there is not enough funding, there is a limit to how many aids the school can obtain. This leaves more students left without one on one attention because they don’t have the staff to support. In science, social studies, and math, he is no where near the level of his peers. Because of the number of aids to students of needs, he is without support for some of the day. He tends to be more disruptive because he doesn’t understand the material and the teacher can’t always be there to help him all the time with the number of kids in the class. Furthermore, now that he will be moving to the middle school next year, I worry that the level of support may diminish. He has issues with time and space and does better with routine. Having to go from class to class, having many different teachers, and not being up to speed with the others in his class with the homework material, is already going to put his anxiety level at a maximum. I fear that without the proper support, if

needed, he may be more disruptive and will end up being isolated from his peers or in the principles office daily. This will negatively impact him not only socially but academically as well. This funding would provide so many necessary things for all of the kids in need, especially since I feel that the increase of students needing this assistance has risen considerably over the years.

**Due to budget constraints, over the last 10 years, I have seen the program go from 2.5 teachers to 1, 2 aides to 1, 1 part time school psych to as needed, a .2 Director to license only, and a .3 SLP to .2 online.**

**W**hen Legislators changed the laws to favor private schools and capped the special education transfer amount for open enrollment at \$12,000 for public schools, my school really took a hit. We had previously open enrolled Special education students, and we had to simply absorb the cost when this rule changed. We’re a small district, 200 students, and this cost meant limiting services such as aides.

**I**work in a self-contained Autism classroom and we don’t have enough staff to develop curriculum and materials for learning , No time for collaboration and problem solving within the department, not enough specialists to meet the students needs

**T**here are limited opportunities to integrate technology that will help my child communicate.

**N**ext year my child turns 18. Due to lack of funding, the district she attends does not have an 18- 21 year old transition program. My daughter has much fewer options for the next four years because of the districts inability to fund the transition program.

**I**n my district, they rely on student interns instead of paraprofessionals. We have been provided caring paraprofessionals who are not trained in supporting our autistic son. Lack of training and underpaid staff.

**W**e have chosen not to enroll our children in public school due to the low staffing levels. Our children need 1:1 support/a special education aid. Our current district has one special education teacher to 15 special needs children. Our children will never thrive in that environment and it’s not safe for them to have such little adult oversight. My husband and I have always been strong advocates for public schools, but we can not let

our children's education fall through the cracks or risk them getting hurt. We are hoping to move to a district that is better resourced, it's just sad that our children have to leave the only home they have ever known because the elementary school isn't adequate for their needs. When I was speaking with another parent, who's son has the same diagnosis as mine, she told me how her son was sexually assaulted on the playground by another student. Which was due to the lack of staffing/oversight. This is not okay! These children are the most vulnerable and public schools have a responsibility to staff according.

**A**ccording to her iep my daughter is entitled to a paraprofessional in the classroom. In the current underfunded state this equates to 8 part time individuals (without benefits or job security) throughout the day. It interfered so substantially with her progress toileting (fine at home, incontinent at school) that her GI specialist had to intervene. Since being provided nominal consistency she's had no toileting issues

**M**y 14 year old has mental illness and brick and mortar schools are not equipped at all to help her. They just pushed her off.

**I have been a classroom teacher. When there is not proper support for even one child with disabilities, it impacts ALL CHILDREN. I have three school-age children. I want their classmates with disabilities to have all the support they need so the classroom teachers can do their jobs effectively.**

**U**nderfunding has cut many special education teachers and aides that my son desperately need to help him access the general education classroom. The district does not have adequate funds to create sensory spaces that he desperately needs to manage his day. Due to this he often spends time in a dark room with headphones just to cope with the environment meaning he misses out on precious learning time. These teachers are trying everything they can to help him with inadequate resources. He is falling farther and farther behind. With appropriate funding he would be able to thrive and become less of a burden in his adult life.

**M**y daughter was able to have the support she needed to be more independent. That is not available to students now with the current funding.

**M**y 16 year old has dealt with bullying and improper help from adults in the school system since middle school. He was blamed, and punished, for many situations that were a result of being bullied due to his diagnoses. Until the 2nd to last day of 8th grade, the adults in charge of helping him (we always had an IEP) would tell us he was treated the way he was because "boys will be boys" or "this child has a hard life at home," and until this day that we finally were "allowed" to speak with the principal and he stepped in and told us he should have been told of these issues sooner, most the issues that happened were not my sons fault at all and he immediately handled, and punished, the situation and student(s) it involved. But due to the treatment he received in middle school, these same kids treat him this way in high school and we have had to bring it to the new "dean of students" who was specifically created to help with the bullying problem. Unfortunately, the issue is lack of training and I already see it beginning with my younger son.

**B**ecause our school district is small they don't have many resources available to help someone in a wheelchair. Also some of the teaching staff was very lazy and didn't do there job to teach the advocating class that my daughter was enrolled in and instead turned it into a study hall. We did however get the support of CESA 5 director to have her enrolled in the Marshfield transition program and they were great providing services and supports that she could further her job skills.

**H**e is now able to participate in post secondary education due to the least restrictive education he received in grades since he started school at age 3

**U**nder-funding has resulted in a severe loss in quality of instruction and staff support. The impact is far-reaching, and affects services within the school building, as well as community-based services that address the basic skill-building for a our students of highest need.

**T**here is alot of kids with disabilities that need the special education and alot of other help in the world and state I think we need to fight this with Mr Ever Government also we don't need to pay higher taxes on everything! thank you

**Behavior Analyst) who train staff, and look at WHY a behavior is happening and WHAT that behavior is communicating. THEN build a plan in collaboration to meet each child's unique needs. Yes, more funding would help!!!**



**W**e need more in regular classes in school for disabilities.

**M**y son has high functioning autism spectrum disorder. With this comes lots of difficult behaviors. He is unbelievably rigid, has significant anxiety, and struggles socially. He's also very funny, compassionate, and loves to help others. His elementary school started to work with kids with autism and EBD only 2 years ago and he was the first one to receive services. Previously they sent kids to another elementary school. They have been willing to learn but it's been a steep learning curve. They've been resistant to more costly interventions due to funding. These interventions will help my son be successful as he gets older. Increased funding will provide additional teachers aides and education and training on how to effectively provide services.

**N**ot as much individualized instruction as I would have hoped for and that my child needs.

**N**ot enough support - from paras to huge caseloads for special Ed teachers who don't have the time to ensure and individualized plan is understood and happening with all my child's Teachers.

**R**egardless of how much funding our school receives, they went out of their way to not follow the IDEA and provide our children with a free and appropriate public education. Furthermore, as parents, we were regularly written off as not knowing our children and were bullied by staff and administration. More money is not the answer - hold schools accountable for the excessive funds they already receive.

**T**akes dollars away from the general budget, which hurts the school and/or District.

**C**urrently, we have to parce out the services in an inequitable way and live with under qualified personnel working with our most vulnerable population. We have to choose between best practice and staying "just compliant" because of the lack of funding to support our students in the least restrictive environment. We have a lot of restrictions on how we can utilize federal funding dollars earmarked for special education, so increasing the ability to do right by ALL of our students, including those with special needs, through our state and local funding sources would be extremely beneficial.

**W**e no longer have a transition coordinator. Someone who could provide my son with opportunities to experience work in the community. I know I could apply for DVR services for him, but in order for my son

to be successful, he needs exposure to employment opportunities where he can take baby steps. He needed to start when he entered high school, but that wasn't an option because there wasn't anyone to help him at the level he needed. A transition coordinator who knew him could have created a plan for him starting the day he entered high school and then transitioned him to DVR.

**Due to funding our district has a shortage of paraprofessionals and job coaches. Additional funding would also allow for more community outings and job and life skills education.**

**E**A's are being cut, community is being asked and failed twice to support operational expenses. Long term fantastic tenured teachers are leaving the district because of cuts and lack of support.

**A**s a mother of a child with an ultra-rare genetic disease, autism and a slew of other special needs, we need the funding to keep our special needs community thriving and having the ability to be able to function in a world of inclusion. Underfunding has impacted my family in more ways than one - not allowing the financial support puts such a strain on families, schools, educators, physicians etc, which in turn forces families to back down, reduce or even eliminate on therapies for their child.

**N**ot enough support for PT, OT and especially ASD consulting which would help him interact better with his peers and address regulation issues. We moved to a different school district specifically to get our son better services. Most families can't do that.

**M**y child is supposed to have a one-to-one aide, but constantly has to share an aide because of understaffing.

**Our district (MMSD) is running on fumes! Caseloads are excessive and there is no way, even with staff that work double-time, to meet the minimum requirements of the IEPs. We're at the point where even the safety of our kids is jeopardized.**

**H**e has been exposed to opportunities he would never have been able to do i.e. riding horses.....learning to swim....

**W**ithout funding they have to make hard choices on funding for para pros and equipment that help the students succeed.

**The general education staff is not receiving training to be equipped to modify general education curriculum for fully included students needing these accommodations. This prevents the least restrictive environment from occurring for those students with disabilities who would benefit the most.**

**U**nder-funding special education means that educators are not versed in the best practices for inclusive education and classroom supports. As a result, students with disabilities are not achieving their fullest potential academically and socially. When young adults with disabilities have not been included with proper supports in general education, the possibility of finding and maintaining a job is also impacted. The years when our daughter was included in the general education setting with supports are the years where she achieved more academically and socially. Because she was not included in the general education classroom for much of her early elementary years, she struggles with gaining and maintaining friendships. Her reading skills are also not at a place where they could be. Most importantly, she did not have hearing supports. As a result, many aspects of her speech have been further delayed. Because our early elementary team was not versed on inclusive supports, inclusion was sporadic. Access to curriculum was sporadic. Peer supports were sporadic. We knew nothing about hearing supports. It was not until our daughter was an 8th-grader that her special education teacher suggested a hearing evaluation from the CESA 1 experts. They helped get the ball rolling to use an FM system in the classroom, so she could hear her teachers. But there was another hurdle. Sensory processing prohibited use of hearing aid or headphones. Finally, with the team approach of our high school and diligent research by my husband, we were able to find a hat with built-in speakers and a wire to connect to the FM system, so she can hear better. The hat is sensory-friendly. And the results have been excellent. She is speaking more. Her speech is clearer. She is responding to teachers

more quickly. This outcome might have happened sooner if our earlier teams had had funding for inclusion training and knowledge of hearing supports. As an educational assistant at a local elementary school, I support students with disabilities in the general education classroom. This includes developing modified curriculum, so students can participate at their level. In my free-time, I moderate a social media group that collaborates and problem-solves on best practices in education for students with Down syndrome. The group has over seven thousand members worldwide. The two challenges we hear about most often are that students don't have access to the general education curriculum and that building friendships is just about nonexistent. The reasons we hear are that educators aren't sure how to do this or they don't have training. Funding could do a whole lot to improve these outcomes. We still have a long way to go to ensure that curriculum is being modified, students have multiple methods for showcasing their knowledge, and developing peer supports in the classroom. When educators have the knowledge and training in best practices in inclusive education, we all win. So, let's keep education funding in the budget so we can see more success for people with disabilities and they can make stronger contributions to their communities.

**My child is not taught, is not given books and is not given assistive technology. They get work sheets again and again and frequently more than one. Children with retardation are abused emotionally and physically by teachers who do not have appropriate training and burn out. Restrain happens too much.**

**I** work in a very small school district in rural Wisconsin where students and the district are greatly stressed in the area of special education funding. There is not time nor the resources to provide additional transition programming that would give students in special education a headstart in skills required for postsecondary life.

**M**y son receives supports and accommodations to help him with his learning disability. He has excelled with those supports and any loss of funding would be harmful to that progress.

**S**taff to student ratio is very high because the district had to downsize staff during the last 10 years. My son needs more specialized instruction, but right now, he only gets the minimum to get by.

**W**e live in a small school district which has failed to provide an education for our oldest disabled child. I believe a part of that failure is due to underfunding.

**M**y child has complex, mostly hidden disabilities... It was often difficult to get appropriate support in her classrooms because she didn't present with visible disabilities and special education staff with the appropriate expertise were not always available or were stretched very thin due to large caseloads. At one point we were considering a major family move to a new community, but we had to put that on hold until she was out of high school because we knew that her new school would not have the funding for the accommodations (technology) and supports she needed (the new community was a very small district).

**L**uckily, the Holmen School District has done a fantastic job providing quality special education services to my son and his peers. Not all districts are so lucky. Many children with disabilities throughout the state of Wisconsin are not getting the services they need because of funding. The smallest and/or most rural districts experience the greatest hardship with special education funding. Just one student with high needs can devastate the whole special education budget in a small district. In my work as a social worker of individuals with developmental disabilities, I have had numerous parent tell me their districts said their children could not get services because there was no funding available. I personally looked at having my twin boys open-enroll to a neighboring school district due to child care needs, but they would not consider enrolling my son with an IEP. The districts are unwilling to accept out-of-district students with IEP's during open enrollment because they are terrified that they would be held accountable for high costs attached to an IEP. While I do not believe it is ethical or legal to deny a student based on their disability, I do believe the districts are forced to choose between not following the law and risk multi-million-dollar lawsuits or accepting a student and risk budgetary ruin. The choices are not good for the district or the students in the district.

**W**e are paying \$6000 annually out of pocket for appropriate tutoring that the school cannot provide due to lack of teacher training.

**F**or years we have struggled with our child's IEP programming when placing him in residential, hospitals and now he is in corrections when he still is owed an education until 21. He has been ignored in every system and none of the systems are coordinated. I have been involved in talking to systems, but they don't coordinate. Our son was a foster child, with FASD and other mental health disabilities. He was adopted by us at age 3. He was abused in the foster care. He has several traumatic events which shows us the school systems either don't care or are uneducated and unfeeling for families. I would be glad to talk to any population of people.

**Because of lack of funding, transitions programs are not available. My daughter has not had the opportunity to take part of regular sessions because staffing wasn't available, and courses aren't designed to her needs.**



**Notes**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





# Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

[www.survivalcoalitionwi.org](http://www.survivalcoalitionwi.org)  
[survivalcoalitionwi@gmail.com](mailto:survivalcoalitionwi@gmail.com)

