



WISCONSIN BOARD FOR PEOPLE
WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

For Immediate Release

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BPDD supports greater investment in education for students with disabilities

Madison, WI- The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities supports Wisconsin legislator's efforts to increase special education funding in school districts across Wisconsin.

As is the case with all students, education is the foundation that prepares students with disabilities to become contributing members of their communities and a valuable asset to Wisconsin's skilled workforce. A quality education prepares students with disabilities to move with their peers from school into employment within the community.

More than 120,000 students receive special education supports in Wisconsin. Schools are struggling to meet the needs of children with disabilities as the state's commitment to funding has eroded over time.

The Governor's proposed budget did not include any increases for special education funding, which has remained flat for almost ten years. Costs have increased over time while the state reimbursement rate has gone from a high of 66% in 1980 to a low of 26% in 2017.

Poor educational preparation of students with disabilities translates into a lifetime of high unemployment (63% unemployment rate), lower wages (30% less than workers without disabilities), and reliance on public benefit programs (27% have incomes below the federal poverty line). Wisconsin cannot afford to leave students with disabilities behind.

New legislation has been introduced that would increase the level of reimbursement for school districts from 26% to 33% percent. Legislators across the State have the opportunity to sign onto this important bill which would increase the State's commitment while freeing up other local funding that could be used to provide education for all students.

"BPDD strongly supports increases in education funding so that children with disabilities can access their neighborhood schools alongside their peers and receive the same high-quality education and supports and services that will enable them to succeed in college and careers throughout their lives," said Beth Swedeen, Executive Director of BPDD.