

Taxpayer Cost for Voucher Schools Now \$1.1 Billion and Counting

Written by Wisconsin Senate Democrats

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GOP vouchers undermine public education in Wisconsin and are costing the taxpayers a bundle.

MADISON, WI – According to a [newly-released budget analysis](#), spending on Wisconsin's taxpayer-subsidized voucher school program is now expected to exceed \$1.1 billion since Gov. Walker and Legislative Republicans took power in 2011. Additionally, the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimates that private school income tax deductions largely benefiting wealthy families will cost approximately \$30 million per year. As taxpayer subsidies for private voucher schools have skyrocketed in recent years, public schools and communities across Wisconsin have seen historic funding cuts.



“With declining family wages, a shrinking middle class and statewide teacher shortages, we need to stop taking money away from Wisconsin's children and start investing in quality public schools,” said Senate Democratic Leader **Jennifer Shilling** (D-La Crosse). “The fact that Wisconsin's public schools have seen historic funding cuts while the unaccountable voucher program has doubled in size should raise serious alarms for parents and property taxpayers.”

While state taxpayer subsidies for the voucher program have doubled in recent years, from \$89 million annually to almost \$175 million, issues of waste, fraud and abuse remain unresolved. Over the past decade, more than fifty taxpayer-subsidized private schools have been kicked out of the voucher program for issues ranging from financial mismanagement and fraud to student health and safety concerns.

“At a time when schools and communities across Wisconsin are being forced to take millions in cuts, it's not fair that unaccountable voucher schools and special interests are being given a blank check from Legislative Republicans,” added Sen. Shilling. “In order to strengthen Wisconsin communities and improve economic outcomes, we need to invest in our public schools and stop the expansion of unaccountable and under-performing voucher schools.”