

After Years of Cuts, Schools Deserve a Raise

Written by Jennifer Shilling, State Senator 32nd District
Friday, 15 May 2015 11:46 -



MADISON - Imagine you took a pay cut each of the last four years. Now suppose you were pulled into your boss's office and told that you wouldn't get a raise this year, even though the company is growing and seeing record profits. Would that seem fair?

Well, that's the position our local schools are in after years of historic cuts. Despite spending billions more, the current Republican budget continues to roll back state funding for our schools to 2010 levels.

While avoiding another round of cuts is certainly important, is that really a victory? Should we be satisfied with the broken status quo of school funding that forces communities across our state to go to referendum year after year?

Democrats believe that education must be our top budget priority. That means putting the needs of children and our schools ahead of tax breaks for the wealthy and giveaways to special interests.

We know the funding is available. It has been for years. But Republicans made the decision to prioritize tax breaks for special interests and the wealthy while forcing our schools to do more with less.

To fully restore the cuts our schools have seen over the past four years, we need to invest an additional \$200 per student above what Gov. Walker and Republicans have proposed. In the grand scheme of multi-billion dollar special interest tax giveaways, surely we can find \$200 per student.

If budgets are about priorities, it's time we invest in our children first and give them the same shot at the American Dream that our parents handed down to us.

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Let's not settle for the broken status quo. Let's invest in our state and make our schools a shining beacon of opportunity for Wisconsin's children once again.

On Tuesday, the Legislature will be voting on whether or not to restore the historic funding cuts to our local schools. I encourage everyone to contact your legislative representatives toll-free at 1-800-362-9472 and urge them to support our children by voting for a \$200 per pupil increase in school funding.

Anything less than that amount continues the troubling trend of chronic underfunding that has forced larger class sizes, more local referendums and higher property taxes.

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Jennifer Shilling serves as the Senate Democratic Leader and represents the 32nd District which covers La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford and parts of Monroe County.