

## Senate Democrats Push for Real Accountability for Voucher Schools

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MADISON - Senate Democrats announced today introduction of legislation to protect voucher schools students, and their parents as well as taxpayers by requiring real accountability measures for schools that participate in the taxpayer funded private voucher school program.

The legislation being introduced by Senators Nikiya Harris-Dodd and Chris Larson would require voucher schools to hire licensed teachers, conduct criminal background checks on their teachers and administrators, meet basic graduation standards and be based in Wisconsin.



“For too long we have seen how the lack of strong accountability standards for voucher schools has cost students, families and taxpayers,” said **Senator Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay)**. “We can no longer afford to keep investing tax dollars into a private school program that is unaccountable to taxpayers and that has produced so many expensive failures.”

Taxpayers gave over \$139 million dollars to fifty voucher schools that ultimately were barred from receiving taxpayer support after they failed to meet minimal existing requirements. Still others have closed costing state taxpayers millions and leaving families who put their trust in them out in the cold.

Just last month, the Travis Technology High School closed after failing to meet existing minimal state requirements. In 2013, the LifeSkills Academy in Milwaukee closed in the dead of night leaving behind 66 students who were not proficient in math or reading.

Hansen concluded: “We shouldn’t be taking money from our public schools and giving it to private schools at a time when we are forcing our public schools to make difficult and painful cuts. But if the Governor and Republicans are going to force taxpayers to fund a separate, private school system then the taxpayers have a right to expect that that their teachers will be able to teach, the students able to learn and that the schools will be safe.”

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