http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/walker-school-promise-s5.jpg

Sen. Janet Bewley (D-Delta) and Rep. Sondy Pope (D-Mt. Horeb) discuss state funding for schools.

MADISON - Rural schools in Wisconsin need and deserve increased sparsity aid and revenue relief.

They needed and deserved it in 2014 when the Speakers Task Force on Rural Schools recommended it. And they needed and deserved it last fall when GOP budget-writers eliminated sparsity aid hikes and the Governor vetoed relief for low-spending districts less than four months ago.

Democrats put forward a comprehensive plan in June. Republicans spent the next two and a half months passing the single largest giveaway to a foreign corporation in history before completing the state budget. And in that budget Republicans made their priorities for Wisconsin schools, especially in rural districts, clear:

- GOP budget-writers held a public hearing on Foxconn before resuming work on the state budget
- Six days later GOP members of Joint Finance voted to eliminate sparsity aid increases
- GOP budget-writers passed a budget that devotes the 2nd-lowest percentage of the state's general fund to school aids since 1995. (LFB 9/21/17)

- And Governor Walker vetoed relief for low spending districts

Students, families and schools in rural Wisconsin should have this relief today, and should have the relief the Rural Schools Task Force* recommended on sparsity aid eligibility. Democrats put forward a plan to do just that. We voted for it the same day our Republican colleagues voted to eliminate sparsity aid increases. And we put forward bills to restore that relief last fall.

We've already missed a school year because of Republican delays and Republican priorities. And too many students, families and schools that were promised relief in the budget Republicans just passed four months ago won't see it from this latest Republican promise.

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*Rep. Pope served on the Task Force on Rural Schools that recommended changes to sparsity aid eligibility. http://thewheelerreport.com/wheeler_docs/files/0506taskforcereport.pdf