

JFC Advances Budget to Full Assembly & Senate- July 2, 2025

With a divided state government, the path to passing a budget required significant compromise between legislative leaders and the Governor's office. Throughout the last month, budget negotiations repeatedly stalled and restarted, at times placing the passage of the 2025–27 state budget in serious doubt. Today's meeting of the Joint Finance Committee and tomorrow's extraordinary floor sessions in both houses signal the plans to deliver this budget to the Governor with a bipartisan vote in the Senate.

In their meeting today, JFC concluded its work on the budget with omnibus Motion #130, which finalized remaining areas of the budget and revisited several K-12 education provisions previously adopted in Motion #48. (Items # 11-15 in Motion [#130](#))

Motion #130 made several changes:

- **Increased the Primary Special Education Categorical Aid** from 35%/37% to **42% in the first year and 45% in the second**—a long-overdue step forward.
- **Restored funding to support the Mental Health Categorical Aid (“Get Kids Ahead”)** **\$15 million per year** to support student wellness.
- **Authorized literacy funding** originally tied to Act 20 mandates for resources for curriculum, materials, and training.

These changes reflect acknowledgment by lawmakers of the mounting financial strain schools face in meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

The final agreement, however, fails to provide **additional general school aid** to offset the costs of the \$325 per-pupil revenue limit increases. This decision pushes the burden onto local property taxpayers, ignoring the interconnected nature of school finance and failing to treat district budgets as a whole.

This gap in state support comes at a time when **Wisconsin school districts are also potentially absorbing an 11% loss in federal funding**. The combination of shrinking federal dollars and stagnant state support in core funding areas poses a serious challenge to districts across the state, rural, suburban, and urban alike.

While this agreement includes an increase to special education, it also reflects the limitations of governing in a politically divided environment. It is disappointing that broader funding challenges were left unaddressed. SAA

remains committed to advocating for long-term, sustainable funding that addresses school budgets in totality. Every Wisconsin student—regardless of zip code, background, or ability—deserves access to the high-quality education and support they need to succeed, and we'll continue to push toward that.

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