

You Should Know...

Ten items included in the State Budget that will significantly impact the Cambridge School District.

1. Cambridge School District, and schools across the state, will have their state aid cut to allow for voucher expansion-these are public tax dollars used to pay for a student's private education. Voucher expansion will mean less money for public schools, including the Cambridge School District. Any decision that is made to publicly fund religious and other private schools will diminish the quality of education in our public schools.
2. This budget drives Wisconsin under the national average in per pupil spending (according to Michael Griffith, a senior policy analyst for the Education Commission of the States). Wisconsin has had a proud tradition of adequately funding our public school system. The legislature is pouring money into private schools at the expense of maintaining a public system that has been a source of pride in our state for over 100 years.
3. In year 1 up to 10 students from the Cambridge School District could receive vouchers to attend private religious or secular schools. \$7,856 for each high school student from our district would go with each student for a total of \$78,560 in the first year. In year two up to 20 students and \$157,120, in year 3 up to 30 students and \$235,680, etc. In year 10 up to 100 students and \$785,600 could leave the Cambridge School District to support private school education- these funds are state tax dollars. After year 10 there would no limit on the number of voucher offered to students in our school district. If private schools are publicly funded as proposed, the Cambridge School District will struggle to maintain the educational quality that people in this community have worked so hard to build.
4. The new law would allow home school students and virtual school students to participate in any extra-curricular or athletic team our district offers. Students from area private schools would also be eligible to participate on our school teams in certain sports. This raises a multitude of eligibility questions and different eligibility requirements for members of the same team. The WIAA has come out strongly against this proposal as have many home school advocates.
5. The new law would allow "learning portfolios" to replace up to one-half the credits needed to graduate from high school. The law would require a diploma earned in this manner be the equivalent of a diploma earned through actual course completion. This proposal has the potential to change what high schools look and feel like across the state; including the likelihood that the rigor needed to earn a high school diploma will be significantly reduced jeopardizing both in and out-of-state college acceptance.
6. The new law eliminates many standards for licensing teachers- no bachelor's degree needed to teach our students in multiple subject areas. Educational programs and training have been built and improved over decades with Wisconsin having one of the top performing educational

systems in the nation. With this one legislative change, students could have undertrained and ill-prepared educators without the prerequisite knowledge to meet the many needs of our students.

7. The proposed law allows students in special education to use \$12,000 in publicly funded annual vouchers to attend private and parochial schools. In these schools they would not be guaranteed the legal rights and protections afforded to them by federal law. In addition, the dollar amount is completely arbitrary as actual costs vary drastically from student to student. At the same time the legislature is allocating money for special education students in private/parochial schools it has not increased funding for public school special education students in eight years.
8. There is a new requirement in the law that mandates passing a civics assessment for high school graduation-this would be a 100 question test. This test is in addition to the multitude of other state mandated tests that students are already required to take. This proposal, set to become law, has had very little discussion and a plan for implementation of this test does not exist.
9. Our school will be subject to a rating system based on stars, much like a hotel rating system. Can a star rating system adequately portray the quality of our school?
10. The tests that students are required to take will be different for the third consecutive year. Districts will not be required to take the same test; making district to district comparisons very difficult. Our students do extremely well on the standardized test they are given and we welcome the opportunity to compare ourselves to any competing school. Common sense tells us adequate comparison can only be made when students in each district are taking the same standardized tests.

If you too are concerned about the impact this state budget has on the Cambridge School District please contact our district legislators as soon as possible at:

[Senator Scott L. Fitzgerald](#) - (R - Juneau) [Senate](#) District 13 - [\(608\) 266-5660](#) Sen.Fitzgerald@legis.wisconsin.gov

[Representative Joel Kleefisch](#) - (R - Oconomowoc) - [Assembly](#) District 38 - [\(608\) 266-8551](#) - [\(888\) 534-0038](#) - Rep.Kleefisch@legis.wisconsin.gov

[Senator Stephen L. Nass](#) - (R - Whitewater) - [Senate](#) District 11 - [\(608\) 266-2635](#) - Sen.Nass@legis.wisconsin.gov

[Representative Cody Horlacher](#) - (R - Mukwonago) - [Assembly](#) District 33 - [\(608\) 266-5715](#) - [\(888\) 529-0033](#) - Rep.Horlacher@legis.wisconsin.gov

[Representative Andy Jorgensen](#) - (D - Milton) - [Assembly](#) District 43 - [\(888\) 534-0043](#) - Rep.Jorgensen@legis.wisconsin.gov

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Cambridge School Board Communications Committee