

Sen. Knopp, Lisa, et al,

Below please find a list of the policy recommendations pertaining to the top priority issue of disrupted learning. As referenced, OEA will have a range of additional policy proposals for 2019 that we believe will improve our education system, but at this juncture we wanted to focus on what we believe to be the most urgent matter facing students and educators at this time.

Among the policies we discussed on Tuesday evening at the JCSS committee meeting were:

- Making class size a mandatory subject of collective bargaining in order to increase educator voice in setting manageable class size limitations at the local level while maintaining local control and flexibility
- Invest in hiring more teachers to ensure the workforce needed to bring down class size
- Hire more school counselors, school psychologists, speech language pathologists, behavioral specialists and other mental health and support staff
- Improve approaches to attracting and retaining these professionals, who are often presented with opportunities to work in the private sector in easier conditions with better pay and benefits. This would include ensuring that retirement and health care benefits are protected so educators who have sacrificed salary and other compensation to answer the call of education do not further have their financial security eroded.
- Longer retention and more continuity of education support professionals, along with improved training
- Better wrap-around services and connection to mental health and social services for students who have experienced trauma or have other mental health needs
- Clearer policies to guide the use of protective intervention or physical restraint in order to keep students and staff safe
- Better school and district-level reporting of the frequency and severity of room clears and other serious behavioral issues
- Improved reporting of the frequency and severity of physical injuries to students and staff
- Better and more widely available training on mental health interventions and the use of protective intervention for all school personnel
- Sharing of best practices across districts and schools for the use of innovative practices like quiet rooms, positive behavioral management, restorative justice, and push-in supports

Thank you,

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