

Status of Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendations

Among the key recommendations drafted in bill form and the legislators who have agree to be lead authors of the bills are the following:

Topic	BRC Issue Paper	Lead Authors	Description
Tying per pupil revenue limit adjustments to inflation	(Paper 16)	Sen. Olsen/Rep. Kitchens	Annually index any per pupil adjustment provided under revenue limits by inflation.
Revenue limit adjustment for declining enrollment	(Paper 11)	Sen. Marklein/Rep. Quinn	<p>Modify the current declining enrollment adjustment to, instead, account for long-term enrollment declines, and delete the current prior year base revenue hold harmless adjustment.</p> <p>(Under this alternative, the 2018-19 three-year rolling average (adjusted to reflect any other changes in pupil weighting recommended by the Commission) would serve as the base number for all subsequent years in calculating a declining enrollment adjustment. Each year's three-year average would be compared to the 2018-19 average. If the current year average was less than the 2018-19 average, a district would receive an adjustment equal to what 90% of the decline would have generated. If a district loses more than 10% of the 2018-19 enrollment, the declining enrollment adjustment would be calculated as if the enrollment decline had equaled 10%).</p>
Counting full-day 4K pupils as 1.0 FTE for purposes of calculating general aid and revenue limits	(Paper 25, option 1)	Sen. Olsen/Rep. Kitchens	<p>Allow districts that offer full-day 4K to count participating pupils as 1.0 FTE.</p> <p>(Under current law, each 4K pupil is included in equalization aid and revenue limit counts as 0.5 member if the pupil attends for at least 437 hours, unless the program provides at least 87.5 additional hours of outreach activities, in which case the pupil is counted as 0.6 member.)</p>

Sparsity aid	(Paper 21)	Sen. Marklein	<p>The Commission recommended a range of options for the Legislature to consider, with a preference for using an approach under which districts with a membership between 746 and 1,000 and fewer than 10 pupils per square mile would qualify for the current (\$400 per pupil) aid payment and districts with a membership of between 1,001 and 2,700 and a population density of less than seven pupils per square mile would qualify for a payment of \$100 per pupil. (This is similar to an approach recommended by the Rural Schools Task Force in 2013.)</p> <p>The Commission recommended providing an additional \$16.5 million GPR annually to fully fund the proposal.</p>
Weighting ELL pupils as 1.2 FTE for purposes of calculating general aid and revenue limits	(Paper 18)	Rep. Quinn	Weight ELL pupils as 1.2 FTE in the general school aids and revenue limit formulas
School Aid Payment Schedule	(Paper 13)	Sen. Olsen/Rep. Hutton	Modify the equalization aid payment schedule so school districts receive aid in equal payments
Excluding costs funded by referenda from shared costs for the purpose of determining a district's general equalization aids	(Paper 12)	Sen. Marklein and Sen. Kooyenga/ Rep. Kitchens	Provide that any additional costs generated by a referendum (debt, operating, or both) would be excluded from aidable cost for negative tertiary aid districts.
Rehiring of WRS annuitants in the who reenter service under a hardship waiver awarded by the DPI	(Paper 24)	Sen. Roth/Rep. Kitchens	<p>The Commission recommended restoring pre-2013 Act 20 law regarding rehiring annuitants, including the 30-day break-in-service requirement and the choice of whether to terminate the annuity or continue to receive it.</p> <p>This proposal appears to differ from the Commission's recommendation in that it would require DPI to make some sort of hardship (shortage) determination and issue a waiver before a district could hire an WRS annuitant that would qualify to be treated under for the pre-2013 provisions.</p>

			<p>(Under 2013 Act 20, changes were made to the law regarding rehiring annuitants, including increasing the number of days a WRS participant must wait between termination of his or her employment and returning to covered employment with any WRS employer from 30 days to 75 days. Additionally, under prior law, an individual who terminated employment and received an annuity could choose one of the following options: (a) terminate the annuity and become a WRS participating employee again; or (b) continue to receive the annuity in addition to the earned wages from covered employment.</p>
Grants for consolidation or whole grade sharing feasibility studies	(Paper 24, option 4)	Sen. Olsen/Rep. Kitchens	<p>Provide one-time funding of \$250,000 in a continuing appropriation for a grant program to fund feasibility studies of consolidation or whole grade sharing by two or more districts.</p> <p>Allow consortia of two or more school districts to apply for grants of up to \$10,000 each for a professional financial analysis of how consolidation or whole grade sharing would affect the district.</p>
Supplemental state aid for consolidated school districts	(Paper 24, option 5)	Sen. Marklein/Rep. Kitchens	<p>Reduce mill rates for consolidating school districts with disparate property tax rates by setting the newly consolidated district's mill rate equal to the lowest mill rate among the consolidating districts in the year prior to consolidation.</p> <p>To accomplish this, the revenue limit calculation could be made for the newly consolidated district and the mill rate and gross levy amount determined, under the assumption that the district chooses to levy the maximum allowable amount. The gross levy amount could then be compared to the gross levy that the new district would receive if its mill rate was equal to the lowest mill rate of the consolidated districts in the year prior to the year in which the consolidation takes effect. Additional general aid could then be provided in an amount equal to the</p>

			<p>difference between the two levy amounts from a separate general aid appropriation established for this purpose. Such aid could be provided in the amount calculated in the first year after consolidation and gradually phased out over the next four years. In year two, the consolidated district would receive 80% of what it received in year one. In year three, the district would receive 60% of what it received in year one. These reductions would continue, until in year six, no additional aid would be received. To ensure that the additional aid would reduce property tax levies, the aid would be counted under the district's revenue limit.</p>
Whole grade sharing categorical aid	(Paper 24, option 2)	Rep. Felzkowski	<p>Provide an incentive of \$150 per pupil for up to five years for school districts that enter into a whole grade sharing agreement, and declare an intent to explore consolidation, and appropriate \$750,000 annually for the program.</p>
Shared services aid for school districts	(Paper 26)	Rep. Felzkowski	<p>Create a categorical aid incentive for districts that choose to share administrative positions such as human resources director, IT coordinator, or business manager, similar to that included under the 2017-19 biennial budget bill) and deleted from Act 59 through a gubernatorial veto. Under the program, two or more school districts could qualify for aid based on the following amounts for each position shared, with no limit to the number of positions that could be shared: (a) for a district administrator, \$40,000; (b) for a human resources director, information technology coordinator, business manager, \$22,500; (c) for any other non-faculty administrative position, excluding principals and assistant principals, \$17,500. Aid would be paid in full for the first three school years of the plan, with a 50% payment in year four, and no payment in the fifth year.</p>

			The Commission recommended providing \$2 million annually for the program.
Authorizing K-12 districts to reorganizing into a union high school and K-8 districts	(Paper 24, option 1)	Sen. Darling	Modify current law to allow two or more existing districts to jointly create new K-8/UHS districts. This would allow small districts to continue operating their own elementary and middle schools but share a combined high school.
Age at which a child may enroll in/attend 4K	(Paper 25, option 3b)	Sen. Olsen/Rep. Kitchens	Specify that a pupil can begin 4K in September if he or she turns four by December 31, and in January if he or she turns four between January 1 and the last day of the school year.
Revenue limit adjustment for energy efficiency projects	(Paper 15)	Rep. Horlacher	Provide revenue limit adjustments for energy efficiency measures.
Revenue limit adjustment for lead abatement or remediation	(Paper 15)	Rep. Kitchens	Provide a revenue limit adjustment for costs incurred to remediate lead contamination in drinking water

Among the key recommendations **not drafted** in bill form

Topic	BRC Issue Paper	Description
Per pupil adjustments in revenue limits (rather than per pupil categorical aid) to provide increased resources for schools	(Paper 10)	The Commission recommended that the Legislature provide future increases in resources for school districts through increases in the per pupil adjustment under revenue limits.
General school aids rather than the school levy tax credit as the main method of state support for school districts.	(Paper 14)	The Commission recommended that the Legislature provide future increases in state support through the general school aid formula rather than through school levy tax credit.
School-Based Mental Health	(Paper 23)	The Commission recommended that the Legislature consider providing either \$5 million annually in additional funding for community and school mental health collaboration grants or creating a new categorical aid for mental health services, with payments calculated in a manner similar to per-pupil aid under current law. It was suggested that these payments be set at \$25 per pupil in 2019-20 and \$50 per pupil in 2020-21.

Gifted and Talented Grants	(Paper 22)	The Commission recommended that the Legislature consider increasing funding for gifted and talented grants by either \$2.5 million per year or \$1 million per year.
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Among the key recommendations no legislator has agreed to author:

Topic	BRC Issue Paper	Description
Special Education Categorical Aid	(Paper 17)	<p>The Commission determined that additional funding should be provided for special education aid, and recommended a range of options for consideration by the Legislature:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase funding by \$45.1 million GPR in 2019-20, so that the proration rate will equal an estimated 28%, and by \$81.3 million GPR in 2020-21, so that the proration rate will equal an estimated 30%. 2. Increase funding by \$74.7 million GPR in 2019-20, so that the proration rate will equal an estimated 30%, and by \$126.4 million GPR in 2020-21, so that the proration rate will equal an estimated 33%. 3. Increase funding by \$119.0 million GPR in 2019-20, so that the proration rate will equal an estimated 33%, and by \$381.5 million GPR in 2020-21, so that the proration rate will equal an estimated 50%. 4. Increase funding by \$75.1 million GPR in 2019-20, so that the proration rate will equal an estimated 30%, and by \$531.1 million GPR in 2020-21, so that the proration rate will equal an estimated 60%. 5. Modify the special education appropriation to be sum sufficient and specify that the appropriation would reimburse 26% of eligible costs in 2019-20, and that percentage would increase by one percentage point in each of the next ten years, until it reaches 36% in 2029-30. This option would increase expenditures from the special education appropriation by approximately \$15.5 million GPR in 2019-20 and \$36.3 million GPR in 2020-21.
Weighting low-income pupils for purposes of calculating general aid and revenue limits	(Paper 19)	The Commission recommended weighting low-income pupils as 1.2 FTE in the general school aids and revenue limit formulas

<p>High Cost Transportation Aid</p>	<p>(Paper 20)</p>	<p>The Commission recommended the following change to increase the number of districts eligible for aid under the program, and the amount received by each district:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modify the program to provide aid for transportation costs above 125% of the statewide average, rather than 145% as under current law. Provide an additional \$10.6 million GPR annually to maintain the current 85% proration rate <p>Additionally, the Commission recommended that the Legislature consider adopting one of the following two options to increase the proration rate for districts qualifying for aid under the stop-gap provision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Provide an additional \$130,000 GPR annually for the stop-gap provision. Based on 2017-18 data, this additional funding would have resulted in a proration rate of approximately 85% for the stop-gap provision, comparable to that of the program as a whole. 3. Eliminate statutory language limiting the stop-gap provision to \$200,000 annually. This would result in the proration rate for the stop-gap provision being the same as the proration rate for the program as a whole. (In 2017-18, this would have resulted in an overall proration rate of 82.7%, rather than 84.8% as under current law.)
<p>Summer School Grants</p>	<p>(Paper 27)</p>	<p>The Commission recommended that the Legislature consider the following options to address this issue:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand the existing summer school grant program to other districts, allowing any district to apply for a competitive grant under the program to develop, redesign, or implement a summer school program, and provide an additional \$3.6 million GPR annually. (Under current law, only Milwaukee Public Schools is eligible for a grant under the program, and funding is equal to \$1.4 million GPR annually.) 2. Create a new grant program to support year-round schooling pilot programs. Allow districts to apply for grants to implement year-round schooling at one or more schools in the district. Provide \$3 million GPR for the grants beginning in 2020-21.