

CREATING A

BETTER BOTTOM LINE

for Students with Disabilities

Ensuring workforce and college readiness for Wisconsin students with disabilities is essential to Wisconsin's economy and an important answer to emerging workforce needs in our communities. However, students and schools face obstacles to improving postsecondary outcomes. Most Wisconsin school districts do not have targeted transition programs to connect students with local businesses and teachers receive little training in how to work with the private sector and connect to workforce needs.

Current data **shows business as usual** for Wisconsin youth with disabilities is **no longer acceptable**.

Youth with disabilities who leave school unprepared for adult life often spend a lifetime in poverty and **reliant on public benefits**.



92% of the 2,900 youth ages 18-21 currently receiving "long-term care" supports through the Department of Health Services **are not employed** in their community even though they want to work.



Nearly a quarter of Wisconsin school exiters with **autism** reported never participating in any postsecondary education, training or employment a year out of school.*



More than a third of students with **cognitive or emotional and behavioral disabilities** reported never participating in any postsecondary education, training or employment a year out of school.*

We Know What Works:

Wisconsin's **Let's Get to Work** grant-funded schools have been testing the strategies necessary to prepare youth for workforce success. Over the last three years these schools have **TRIPLED** the employment rate of youth with significant disabilities. Most schools report that their biggest challenges were not having enough time to make employer connections.

LET'S
GET TO Launching youth with disabilities into the workforce
WORK

* Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2014.

OUR PROPOSALS

Better Bottom Line proposals designed by teachers and families and supported by Wisconsin school administrators and the Department of Public Instruction should move forward in the 2015-2017 biennial budget. Aligned with Governor Walker's **Better Bottom Line** initiative to improve overall employment outcomes for people with disabilities, these proposals address the biggest obstacles to youth success.

Pay for Performance Proposal:

Investments in public education are only as good as outcomes when a student exits the schoolhouse door. Offering schools an incentive payment based on how many students have secured and maintained employment or postsecondary school enrollment one year after exit is a fair means to ensure a focus on what parents and students tell us they want: a brighter future. This proposal requires \$5,858,000 in 2016-17 to offer a \$1,000 per pupil payment after a district reports on student outcomes as currently required by federal law.

Provide **\$5,858,000 in 2016-17** for
\$1,000 per pupil incentive payment



Local Workforce Needs Proposal:

Students with disabilities who have at least one paid job in the community before graduation are twice as likely to be employed after high school. Two work experiences increase odds of being employed after high school five-fold. An investment of \$1,500,000 in 2016-17 will create a pilot program to hire specialty job developers to connect schools and students with disabilities to local workforce needs. The pilot program would fund 12 to 15 job development specialists to work directly with area employers.

Provide **\$1,500,000 in 2016-17** for a
school-to-business job development pilot program