



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**CONTACT:** [info@blahaforauditor.org](mailto:info@blahaforauditor.org)

**State Auditor Julie Blaha's campaign responds to opponents school plan**

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Auditor Blaha's Republican opponent Ryan Wilson released a plan today for school audits that was incomplete, unworkable, and threatens to politicize the Office of the State Auditor.

“Wilson's numbers just don't add up,” Auditor Blaha said.

Without crediting Auditor Blaha, Wilson cited the groundwork Auditor Blaha and education stakeholders created to build school audit expertise in the Office of the State Auditor. Auditor Blaha secured bipartisan funding and legislation for a school team that could complete annual financial audits for school districts that would not disrupt their budgets. The team would include five to six auditors who could complete about five medium and small school district financial audits per year at no cost to the school districts.

But because of additional oversight needs across the state due an influx of federal COVID-19 relief money, and the extra pressures on school districts to adapt to the pandemic, Auditor Blaha put the plan on hold until next year. At that point, much of the new COVID-19 oversight requirements will be completed and schools will have had time to adjust back to in-person learning. It's worth noting that school districts are, and have been for decades, audited annually by private CPA firms.

During his press conference, Wilson claimed the funding Auditor Blaha secured would cover his plan to complete “several dozen” financial and performance audits over the next four years with four to six new staff members. By even the most conservative estimate of the meaning of “several dozen,” completing 12 audits per year will take at least three times the staffing he proposes at a cost of at least \$1.5 million more per year. Wilson did not provide a breakdown of how he would fund his plan.

Wilson's plan would also push the Office of the State Auditor into politically charged, subjective issues.

“Wilson cites auditing issues including racial achievement gaps, mental health in schools, and the role of test scores in assessing learning as purely objective and non-political,” Auditor Blaha said. “If he believes that, he is either naive or not up to speed on education issues.”

Auditor Blaha plans to continue her focus on objective, financial data that helps local communities make their own decisions about their schools. The groundwork she laid will create the additional oversight Minnesotans want for their schools.

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*Stay up-to-date on State Auditor Julie Blaha's re-election campaign by following @BlahaForAuditor on Facebook and Twitter, and by visiting [www.blahaforauditor.org](http://www.blahaforauditor.org).*