

# Gov. Walker: Highlights historic K-12 investment and rural school initiatives at Elmwood School District

Posted on Tuesday, Nov 21, 2017

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

**Contact:** Tom Evenson  
[\(608\) 266-2839](tel:6082662839)

Madison, Wisconsin — Governor Scott Walker visited Elmwood School District in Elmwood today to discuss the 2017-19 budget's historic \$11.5 billion investment in K-12 education and highlight his support for efforts to increase aid for rural school districts by expanding Sparsity Aid.

"Our budget increases funding for K-12 education to \$11.5 billion over two years, the highest level ever in actual dollars. This increase benefits every school in our state," said Governor Walker. "We're working to boost rural schools even further through efforts to increase funding for Sparsity Aid. Today's students are tomorrow's leaders, and we want to ensure they have the tools they need to excel."

The 2017-19 state budget increases K-12 funding by \$636 million, bringing the total K-12 investment to \$11.5 billion, the highest in state history in actual dollars. The budget also includes a \$10.4 million increase for High Cost Transportation Aid in rural areas, expanded efforts to provide broadband access to underserved schools through \$21 million in broadband infrastructure grants, \$6.65 million in support to address students' mental health needs and vulnerable populations, and \$3.7 million in turnaround funding to improve student outcomes, among many other provisions.

In addition, Senator Howard Marklein (R - Spring Green) and Representative Jeff Mursau (R - Crivitz) recently introduced legislation that increases Sparsity Aid for

the 2018-19 school year. The Sparsity Aid Program aims to offset the challenges faced by low-population school districts through providing \$300 in per-pupil funding for districts with 745 students or less and a population density of less than 10 students per square mile.

The new bill provides an increase from \$300 per pupil to \$400 per pupil for districts that currently qualify for Sparsity Aid, and creates a second tier of Sparsity Aid by providing \$100 per pupil for districts with 746-1000 pupils.