

# Flynn campaign: Matt Flynn Announces K-12 Education Plan, Calls for Supporting Teachers on National Teachers Day

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(Milwaukee) - Democratic gubernatorial candidate Matt Flynn today released his plan for K-12 education and affirmed his support for Wisconsin teachers.

"Public education and teachers are under attack all over this county. But across America, teachers are rising up and demanding the respect they deserve," said Flynn. "Here in Wisconsin, Scott Walker and the GOP have spent the last 7 years disrespecting teachers, driving people away from the profession or away from the state. This is unacceptable. As governor I will make sure that all teachers receive the compensation and respect that reflects their great value to our state."

"The education system in Wisconsin has fallen below the high standards we have come to expect. Under Walker, we have seen a major drop in the quality of education our children are receiving. This is going to end. The Badger State will once again lead the nation in public education."

## **Matt Flynn's Priorities for K-12 Education:**

### **1. Teachers need and deserve a better deal. Period.**

I will repeal Act 10 as soon as possible when I am governor. Teachers deserve to collectively bargain just as any other workers. As the recent strikes in Arizona, Colorado, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and Kentucky have shown, the Republicans'

assault on public schools has resulted in dire conditions not just in Wisconsin, but across the nation. The same is no less true of our state, and Walker's cynical attacks on our teachers has left them demoralized and badly underpaid. It's only through collective bargaining that teachers will get the compensation, benefits, and fair treatment they deserve.

**2. It's not just about money. The time has come to restore not only the salary, but also the dignity and respect of the teaching profession.**

Teachers serve a highly important role in our society - they prepare the next generation of our country's citizens and leaders. Yet, as the dramatic fall-off in the numbers of undergraduates aspiring to be teachers shows, the Republicans' attack on school teachers has discouraged college students from following in the footsteps of those adults who most inspired them as children by becoming teachers themselves.

**3. Education is about far more than "workforce development."**

Of course our schools need to prepare students for life after their graduation by helping them to be ready to find good-paying jobs in the economy. Yet, Walker and his wealthy donors fail to understand the 21st century economy. Jobs that exist today may not exist tomorrow. Now more than ever, they also need to foster creativity, critical thinking skills, and a love of learning in our students. In doing so, they prepare students to live as engaged citizens who are ready to accept their share of responsibility for the well-being of our country, as well as the flexibility and skills to be prepared for tomorrow's jobs. An educated citizenry also has to receive an education in the liberal arts to make them well-rounded citizens.

**4. The achievement gap between white and black students in Wisconsin is a national embarrassment and a shameful example of inaction by our state's leadership.**

As recently documented by the National Assessment of Education Progress and described by Alan Borsuk in the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, the achievement gap between majority and minority fourth- and eighth-graders with respect to reading scores is among the worst in the nation and has barely changed in twenty years. (Among white and black eighth graders, it is the worst in the nation.) Walker's answer to this situation several years back was to convene a "Read to Lead" task force, which, like the Legislature's new blue-ribbon task force on K-12 funding, was

designed primarily to bury an issue, instead of tackling it and resolving it. This situation must change. As governor I will actively work to reduce and end that gap.

**5. The time has come to reform the voucher and school choice system by renewing the state's commitment to public education.**

We must stop further expansion of the voucher and charter school program immediately. We should require voucher and charter schools to meet the same standards that are required of public schools, and stop the practice of some voucher schools avoiding their obligations to accept all students.

The burden of funding special education falls disproportionately on the public schools, and especially on public school districts that are located near major hospitals. I will fight to increase funding directly from the state for special education students to more fully reflect the actual costs of their education.

**6. Rural school districts need both state and federal help. Now.**

Rural schools have to provide all the services that larger urban school districts provide, but they do so with far fewer resources. State equalization payments, intended to redress imbalances in the property taxes available to local school districts, have fallen far short of keeping up with rising costs. This situation is made worse by state aid formulas being determined on a per pupil basis, which again disadvantages rural districts. The state needs to make a much more determined effort to increase equalization aid for its poorer school districts, both rural and urban. It also needs to urge the federal government to provide direct support to keep small rural schools open.