

WisDems: Reality check on the WMC's dishonest new attack ad

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The WMC is going in big for their pal Scott Walker with a new, dishonest attack ad smearing Tony Evers. It makes several claims they can't back up. Here are the facts:

CLAIM: "We've increased school spending by over \$600 million. That's \$200 more per student per year."

REALITY CHECK:

This funding increase in the most recent budget came only after Tony Evers specifically asked Walker for the funds and after years of Walker's failure to fund the schools. What the ad leaves out is that Walker had previously cut education so deeply that the \$600 million didn't even make up for what he had previously cut. The schools are still funded at a lower level today than they were in 2010 in real dollars.

After spending six years of cutting funding, and with re-election prospects looking grim, Scott Walker tried to fix the damage with one budget by accepting much of Tony Evers's own budget recommendations. The fact remains that the schools are worse off because of Scott Walker's refusal to fund them adequately throughout his two terms.

CLAIM: "Tony Evers is squandering Wisconsin's historic investment in public education."

REALITY CHECK:

The money referred to in the ad goes directly to school districts; it is not spent by the Department of Public Instruction. This claim has no basis in fact.

CLAIM: “Evers failed to turn around bad schools. On Evers’ watch, 108 schools are failing.”

REALITY CHECK:

This claim has already been debunked. The law does not give the authority to the State Superintendent to take over failing schools. In a very specific scenario, the law allows for specific interventions, but not a takeover. When an entire district (not an individual school) is rated as failing (one star – “Fails to Meet Expectations”) for four years in a row, only then may the State Superintendent intervene. When Milwaukee fell into that category, Tony Evers worked with local leaders to improve the schools. With Tony’s help, Milwaukee then moved up a level on its next report card, no longer meeting the requirements for DPI intervention.

Tony’s job as State Superintendent is to set education policy. But it’s Scott Walker’s job to fund the schools. Walker’s failure to fund our schools has caused lasting damage across the state.

DPW Response to the WMC’s desperate attack ad against Tony Evers:

“Governor Walker has spent his entire time in office putting politics above our public schools. Instead of funding our schools, Walker delivered massive giveaways of taxpayer money to foreign corporations and his rich donors. It’s no wonder that his big corporate donors are coming to his aid with dishonest attack ads now that he’s in trouble.

“When his prospects for re-election were looking grim, Walker accepted Tony Evers’s budget request for additional education money. But he still hasn’t made up for the massive cuts he’d previously enacted, and the schools remain so underfunded that voters have had to turn to referendums to raise their own property taxes in order to keep schools open. Walker can’t run from the truth, which is that he’s the most anti-education governor in the state’s history.”

SCOTT WALKER’S REAL RECORD OF ATTACKS ON PUBLIC EDUCATION:

Scott Walker has made historic cuts to Wisconsin’s K-12 public schools, to the UW system, and to Wisconsin’s technical colleges.

The record cuts from the 2011-2013 budget have still not been restored, and Wisconsin's public schools are currently funded below 2010 levels in real dollars. Walker's failure to fund our public schools has resulted in school referendums passing at record rates — which means increased taxes at the local level — and school debt skyrocketing to \$1.35 billion.

Last year, Wisconsin slipped below the national average in public education funding, and Walker's budget restricted schools' ability to maintain adequate funding while increasing funding for private school vouchers.

Teacher shortages across the state have led to increased class sizes. A recent study shows a 54% shortage for math teachers and a 50% shortage for science teachers. Eight years of Walker's devastating public school policies have hurt our children, our families, and our businesses.