

# **Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Wisconsin School Administrators Alliance, Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance, Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance: \$4.4 billion in new revenue is an opportunity to invest in Wisconsin school children**

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Wisconsin Association of School Boards  
Wisconsin School Administrators Alliance  
Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance  
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## **\$4.4 Billion in New Revenue Is an Opportunity to Invest in Wisconsin School Children**

K-12 groups call on Legislature to revisit K-12 education budget

The nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau released projections underscoring the state's economic recovery announcing revenue projections are \$4.4 billion higher than had previously been estimated in January. The state now has \$5.8 billion available for budget purposes.

This is an excellent opportunity to revisit the K-12 education budget approved by the Joint Finance Committee that did not meet basic inflationary benchmarks for state support for K-12 education and put vital federal relief funding at risk in the process.

Investing in the post pandemic recovery of our school children needs to be a top priority.

These new revenues would allow lawmakers to invest in:

- **Revenue limits/general aid and/or per pupil aid** to meet the inflationary needs and maintain the operating budgets of school districts as well as ensuring adequate facilities for students.
- **Special Education aid** to better address learning needs of our most vulnerable students and provide opportunities for all students by minimizing how much of school district general funds need to be transferred to fund special education services.
- **Broadband** to close the Homework Gap and ensure that every student in the state has an equal opportunity to access online resources.
- **Mental health aid and grants** to address the social and emotional impacts of the pandemic on school-age children, which is widely acknowledged. It is unknown how long students will need additional resources to recover from the disruptions of the pandemic.
- **Pupil count mitigation** to address the unprecedented impact of the pandemic on student enrollment and in turn, the resources and opportunities available to schools.

According to the Wisconsin Policy Forum:

- Wisconsin ranked 49th in the nation in per pupil spending increase from 2011 to 2018 at 4.3% — nationwide the percent change was 18.9%.

- Since the significant reduction in school spending in the 2011-2013 state budget, total per pupil spending has continued to lag the rest of the country. Wisconsin's spending on K-12 schools increased by 11% between 2013 and 2018, while the increase was close to 18% nationwide.
- Between 2008 and 2018, voters in 189 school districts passed 387 referenda to exceed revenue limits. Without the impact of these referenda, K-12 spending in Wisconsin would have been even lower over those years.

Now is the time for the state of Wisconsin to make long-overdue investments in our children and avoid the property tax increases that occur when schools are forced to go to referendum because of lack of state

investment.