

Wisconsin Federation for Children: Statement on Wisconsin budget proposal

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Milwaukee, Wisc. February 19, 2021 - The following is a statement from Wisconsin Federation for Children's State Director, Justin Moralez on Governor Evers' biennial budget proposal which includes an enrollment cap on choice programs, elimination of the Office of Educational Opportunity (OEO) and stricter licensing requirements for teachers in private schools:

"Governor Evers' renewed attacks on Wisconsin's successful Parental Choice Programs is a disappointment, especially at a time when so many families are struggling with unending school closures that threaten their mental, academic and economic stability.

Families across the state want a return to safe in-person instruction. The ongoing closures represent political interests, rather than science-based facts. For many families in communities like Milwaukee and Madison, schools in the Parental Choice Programs have provided a lifeline as the only options providing in-person instruction.

An enrollment cap on the Parental Choice Programs does not represent the needs or desires of Wisconsin parents. In the past eight years, enrollment in the statewide choice program has increased by more than 2200% to 11,740 students annually. Unfortunately, rather than listening to parents, elected officials, bureaucrats and public unions have once again shut them out of the decision making process.

Additional provisions of the budget proposal, such as eliminating the Office of Educational Opportunity (OEO) and requiring stricter licensing for private school

teachers, can be seen as nothing more than needless attacks on high performing charter and private schools.

Our state's school choice programs are successful, and we should be trying to expand them to provide the highest quality education to more Wisconsin students. Instead, this budget proposes unnecessary, onerous requirements that seek to obstruct their growth.

It's clear that Governor Evers' budget does not represent Wisconsin families or as he claims, 'what's best for our kids.' We're confident that, as with the previous budget, the state legislature will do the right thing and strip these provisions so the Parental Choice Programs can continue to serve students across our state."