

Dept. of Public Instruction: Submits 2023-25 biennial budget request

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MADISON — The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction today requested \$2.5 billion in its 2023-25 biennial budget submission to the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

“Wisconsin children and Wisconsin communities – all of us – deserve the best public education and library systems in the country, and to obtain this goal, we need robust and ongoing investment,” State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Jill Underly said. “This investment was made in the past, and it needs to be made again. This biennial budget is a necessary investment in Wisconsin’s schools and libraries, and it comes at the most critical time, as the needs right now are incredible. I am so proud of this budget, and I hope you join me in advocating for it. Our state deserves no less.”

The biennial budget request includes, but is not limited to, funding for the following:

- **Creating predictable and sustainable funding for schools**

- Increase per-pupil aid payments to support school districts as they navigate challenges created by increased costs and no per-pupil revenue limit adjustment in the previous biennial budget.
 - *\$66.3 million over the biennium: Increase per-pupil aid from \$742 for the current year to \$766 per pupil in FY24 and \$811 per pupil in FY25.*
- Provide additional state support through general aid to school districts to offset the impact of additional revenue grown statewide – ensuring a nearly neutral statewide property tax impact.
 - *\$284.4 million in FY24 and \$611.4 million in FY25 (annual changes of 3.6 percent and 7.9 percent) and reallocate \$16.8 million in each*

year from high-poverty aid to state general aid.

- Increase revenue limit authority so school districts do not have to rely on referenda to do so.
 - *Create a \$350 per-pupil adjustment in FY24, and an additional \$650 per-pupil adjustment in FY25.*
- Increase the low revenue ceiling threshold to assist school districts with the lowest levels of per-pupil revenue.
 - *Raise the low revenue limit ceiling from \$10,000 in the current year to \$10,350 in FY24 and \$11,000 in FY25.*
- Increase state support of the Special Education Categorical Aid Program so districts can account for rising costs of special education and the increasingly complex needs of students.
 - *\$753.9 million over the biennium: Increase reimbursement rates to 45 percent in FY24 and 60 percent in FY25.*
- Assist districts in covering the costs of providing special education services above a specified threshold.
 - *\$10.9 million over the biennium: Increase reimbursement rates of High-Cost Special Education Aid to 45 percent in FY24 and to 60 percent in FY25.*
- Fully fund the Sparsity Aid Program to provide additional aid to rural school districts with relatively small economies.
 - *\$1.26 million over the biennium: \$400 per pupil for the smallest districts and \$100 per pupil for districts with 746-1,000 members; \$630,200 each year.*
- Fully fund High-Cost Pupil Transportation Aid and remove the statutory limit on the total amount the DPI may distribute as one-time stop-gap payments for qualifying school districts.
 - *\$21.2 million over the biennium: \$10.5 million each year.*
- **Increasing, diversifying, and strengthening the educator pipeline**
 - Support future educators while they complete required student teaching of educator preparation programs and future librarians as they complete valuable experience in the field by providing stipends, as well as providing stipends to cooperating teachers in recognition of the significant amount of time they dedicate to work with student teachers and interns.
 - *\$10.8 million beginning in FY25.*
 - Reimburse school districts and independent charter schools for building teaching capacity in Wisconsin's schools through grow-your-own initiatives and programs, including pathways for staff to complete a

program leading to an education degree and/or licensure, as well as supporting student organizations that encourage high school students to pursue careers in education.

- *\$10 million beginning in FY25.*

- **Addressing student mental health and expanding support to students**

- Replace the current School-Based Mental Health Services Grant (\$10 million annually) with a new program to support comprehensive mental health services for students during both in-school and out-of-school time. This new program has a reimbursement model that provides a predictable level of resources schools can use to directly address mental health needs of students.

- *\$235.8 million over the biennium: Net increase of \$117.9 million each year.*

- Expand aid for school-based mental health professionals to include all pupil services categories.

- *\$36 million over the biennium: \$18 million each year.*

- Increase the maximum award for peer-to-peer suicide prevention grants to cover more of the costs associated with implementing programs.

- *Raise the maximum grant award from \$1,000 to \$6,000 per LEA.*

- Expand grants that support Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention programming in schools.

- *\$5 million over the biennium: \$233,900 each year for an existing program, and \$4.5 million in FY25 for new AODA programs.*

- Increase support for existing mental health training programs to expand the types of training offered and make trainings available for out-of-school time program staff.

- *\$1.16 million over the biennium: \$580,000 each year.*

- **Establishing strong foundations of learning**

- Create a two-pronged approach to improve reading outcomes for Wisconsin students: one effort focusing on evidence-based literacy instructional practices for students in 5K through 12th grade; a second effort focusing on early reading instructional transitions from 4K to 5K to first grade.

- *\$20 million over the biennium: \$10 million each year.*

- Expand state support of bilingual-bicultural programs within school districts.

- *\$22.3 million over the biennium: Raise reimbursement rate to 15 percent in FY24 and 20 percent in FY25.*

- Provide aid for English language acquisition in the form of English learner categorical aid to ensure all school districts and independent charter schools serving English language learners receive state support.
 - *\$34.8 million over the biennium: A minimum of \$10,000 in aid for districts with 1-20 English learning pupils, and \$500 for each additional English learning pupil.*
- Formalize the process of obtaining the Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy and expand access.
 - *\$310,500 over the biennium.*
- Provide resources to school districts and independent charter schools to start new or improve existing financial literacy curriculum and programming.
 - *\$5 million over the biennium: \$2.5 million each year.*
- Create a state-funded grant program to provide ongoing support to out-of-school-time programs (school districts and community-based organizations).
 - *\$20 million beginning in FY25.*
- Offset costs to school districts, CESAs and independent charter schools of providing driver education instruction to students who are economically disadvantaged.
 - *\$6.5 million beginning in FY25.*
- Maintain current services to school districts under the Academic and Career Planning program.
 - *\$704,000 over the biennium: \$322,500 in FY24 and \$381,500 in FY25.*
- Subsidize testing fees for Wisconsin residents taking the GED.
 - *\$500,000 beginning in FY25.*
- **Ensuring Wisconsin students have access to healthy meals**
 - Create supplemental nutrition aid for a universal free meals program to ensure all Wisconsin students have access to nutritious meals at no cost.
 - *\$120.32 million beginning in FY25.*
 - Fully fund school breakfast aid at 15 cents per meal and expand the school breakfast program to include independent charter schools, state residential schools and residential childcare institutions.
 - *\$8.9 million over the biennium: \$4.3 million in FY24 and \$4.6 million in FY25.*
 - Incentivize school meals that include locally sourced foods to benefit local producers, communities, and economies.

- *\$2.75 million beginning in FY25; 10 cents for each meal that includes a locally sourced food.*
- Create a new grant program that assists school food authorities in purchasing milk coolers and dispensers
 - *\$50,000 beginning in FY25.*
- **Strengthening Wisconsin public libraries and lifelong learning**
 - Increase state support to the public library system.
 - *\$10 million over the biennium: \$5 million each year.*
 - Recollection Wisconsin: Provide a dedicated funding source to support libraries in digitally archiving documents of Wisconsin cultural and historical significance.
 - *\$450,000 over the biennium: \$150,000 in FY24 and \$300,000 in FY25.*
 - Increase state support in resources for lifelong learning.
 - *\$336,000 to fully fund BadgerLink and Newslines for the Blind databases.*

The DPI's full budget request will be available [on the DPI's Policy, Budget, and Research webpage](#) in the coming days.