

# Michels campaign: I don't know why Universal School Choice hasn't happened yet in Wisconsin, but it will when I am governor.

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**West Allis, Wisc.** – Tim Michels, the 12-year veteran Army Ranger officer, successful businessman, and outsider running for governor promises to trust and empower parents with universal school choice.

**“The Walker-Kleefisch administration led the state government for eight years and yet proposed only small steps to expand school choice,”** said Michels. **“Now my opponent says she supports school choice for all families. This sure looks like an election year conversion.”**

The Michels' Education Blueprint calls for an immediate, statewide expansion of the school choice program.

Tommy Thompson, who has endorsed Michels, helped usher in the first modern school choice program in the 1990s. It is a wildly popular education reform that has helped tens of thousands of Wisconsin students flourish thanks to new opportunities.

**“If the Walker-Kleefisch administration had taken bold steps, thousands of families would have had badly needed opportunities during the pandemic,”** Michels said. **“Where was my opponent? This is an example of big talk but weak leadership.”**

**FACTS**

- In 2013, the Walker-Kleefisch administration proposed extending choice beyond Milwaukee and Racine. The proposal used the DPI Report Card, rather than individual parent choice, as the criteria for determining if a district would qualify. It would have excluded more than 350 outstate school districts. The GOP Legislature scrapped the proposal and substituted a statewide program phased in over ten years. When enacted, a resulting Associated Press headline: “Wisconsin’s Walker comfortable with slow expansion of school vouchers”.
- Two years later, a Walker-Kleefisch proposal would have reduced — by an average of more than \$2,000 — the value of a voucher for new choice students. This would have stifled the statewide program, one already burdened with eligibility and enrollment limits signed by Walker in 2013. The nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau wrote: “...[I]t is very likely that the [voucher] amount would be less than...under current law, with the exact amount unknown until after” each school year begins. The LFB added: “It is possible that fewer private schools may choose to participate in the choice program, given the possibility of a lower per pupil payment amount and the uncertainty regarding the payment amount until after the start of the school year.” Yet again, Republican lawmakers scrapped the Walker-Kleefisch plan.
- Prior to 2015, advocates for parents urged Walker-Kleefisch to include a special needs voucher program in the 2015-17 budget. Walker-Kleefisch spurned that request. Thankfully leaders in the legislature developed a plan and amended the Walker-Kleefisch budget.

**“There is no excuse for slow-walking the empowerment of parents,”** said Michels. **“I will introduce universal school choice in my first budget in 2023.”**

In addition to universal school choice, the Michels ‘I Trust Parents’ Education Blueprint includes:

- Legislation that sets higher standards for reading instruction and proficiency.
- Parental Bill of Rights to put parents first in their child’s education.
- Investments in career and technical education and apprenticeship opportunities that provide long-lasting careers.

- Ensuring schools are safe and secure through annual reviews and safety grants.
- Moving School Board elections to the fall to ensure parents have a greater impact on their child's future.

### **About Tim Michels:**

Tim Michels is a conservative businessman and veteran, running for governor of Wisconsin. Tim is a proven leader from outside the political establishment who is poised to clean up the mess in Madison and get things headed in the right direction. After serving in the Army for 12 years, Michels worked with his brothers to run Michels Corporation, which in the last 25 years has grown from a few hundred employees to a nationally-admired, multi-faceted construction company with more than 8,000 employees.

For more information about Tim and his campaign, please visit [www.michelsforgovernor.com](http://www.michelsforgovernor.com).