

Rep. Hebl: Back to school

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Summer is nearing an end and a new school year is set to begin. It can be an emotional time for many people- parents may be sending their children off for their first (or last!) year of school, teachers and school staff face the final stretch of planning before another school year begins, and some children will face the daunting task of starting at a new school.

Teachers and schools have also faced many challenges over the past several years, including staff shortages, virtual and hybrid classes due to the pandemic, and what has unfortunately become a chronic underfunding of our education system. Despite that, our schoolteachers and staff continue to do an incredible job making sure our children are well-educated and taken care of during the school day.

Education is the foundation upon which Wisconsin can solve any issue that confronts us. We need a well-educated workforce, whether that education is in science, liberal arts, or the trades. We have to adequately invest in our schools if we are to maintain a high-quality public school system.

The same is true of any public institution or private business. Our roads and bridges will deteriorate if we do not invest in infrastructure. If a company refuses to invest in its employees, it will lose its workers. It is no different with education. If we consistently underfund our schools, qualified teachers will find other fields of employment, valuable educational programming will be eliminated, the quality of education will eventually suffer, and our children and our economy will pay the price.

I have had the privilege to sit on the Assembly Committee on Education for the last several years, where we have the first opportunity to discuss proposals aimed at solutions for education in Wisconsin. While we have our disagreements, all members of the committee recognize the importance of our work for everyone in

the state. Serving on the Committee has been an incredibly rewarding experience, but more work remains. I look forward to seeing what the committee has in store in the future.

This is my last back-to-school column as an elected official. I want to end it by thanking every single schoolteacher, administrator, and staff member in Wisconsin schools for all they have done for school kids throughout the years. I cannot express how eternally grateful I am that you have guided them through their formative years. Thank you so much for all you do and have done for school children, parents, and our communities!