

Rep. Pope: Commends Governor Evers' investment in Wisconsin schools

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MADISON— In anticipation of the start of the 2022 school year, Gov. Tony Evers today announced a \$90 million investment in K-12 education using available American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. \$75 million of this is supplemental funding designed to provide nearly \$100 in per-pupil aid. \$15 million will go towards the Governor's "Get Kids Ahead" initiative which provides mental health services in K-12 schools. Rep. Sondy Pope (D-Mt. Horeb) released the following statement in response to this announcement:

"Governor Evers' latest announcement of funds for our schools comes at a time when students and staff are busy preparing for the upcoming school year. Teacher shortages, rising costs due to inflation, and the ongoing ramifications of the COVID pandemic have exacerbated existing challenges resulting from a decade of Republican disinvestment in education. Our schools need all the support we can provide, but Republicans consistently reject efforts by the Governor and legislative Democrats to invest in our kids' educational success. While Republicans refuse to provide our schools with the funding they so desperately need, students suffer the consequences and communities are forced to raise their own taxes to cover the costs the state will not. This must not continue.

"While Governor Evers has made historic investments in public schools which include special education, mental health, sparsity aid, and transportation costs, Republicans have cut over \$4 billion from his proposed education budgets as State Superintendent and Governor. The last state biennial budget passed by Republicans failed to adjust revenue

limits and thus froze local district spending at a time when our schools need it most. In light of this, I am pleased to see the Governor continue demonstrating his commitment to doing what is best for our kids by investing in our schools.

“The start of a new school year is an exciting time. Returning students deserve to be welcomed back to schools with the resources required to provide the highest quality learning experiences, prioritize mental health and wellness, and ensure every student has the support needed to thrive. The \$90 million announced by the Governor today will deliver a strong start to the school year that will continue into the future.”

The \$75 million investment for public K-12 schools and independent charter schools can be used for any school operating expense that is needed, such as addressing staffing needs, providing school bussing support, mitigating the rising cost of school supplies, and providing direct support to students and classrooms. Included in this investment are increased flexibilities for districts and an extension of how long districts are able to use these funds. Gov. Evers’ “Get Kids Ahead” initiative was originally announced during his 2022 State of the State Address. Following the success of this initiative, the \$15 million announced today doubles his previous investment.

A list of school districts and the allocated amount of funding through the first and second rounds of the Get Kids Ahead initiative is available [here](#). A list of school districts and their allocated amount of additional per-pupil funding is available [here](#).