

Wisconsin Public Education Network: Response to passage of voucher increase and shared revenue bills

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15 minutes after our board of directors publicly called on Gov. Evers to reject a deal that deeply underserves Wisconsin public school students, we learned he had already signed into law the largest stand-alone voucher aid expansion in state history and a shared revenue bill that undermines Milwaukee Public Schools. The move is part of a larger deal that fails to meet any of the priority needs of students in Wisconsin's public schools, **marking 16 YEARS of preK-12 budgets that fail to keep pace with inflation.**

This deal will provide private voucher schools more guaranteed state aid than the average public school is even allowed to spend per student, while public schools will see a less-than-inflationary increase to state aid and a less than 2% increase to special education, cementing funding discrimination for kids with disabilities. Raising the low revenue limit ceiling by \$1000 is a nice gesture, but it doesn't even bring those districts up to the state average in spending authority. Public school students and local property taxpayers will pay the price, while private schools that can legally discriminate and pick and choose their students get a blank check from the state. With voucher enrollment caps set to come off entirely in 2 years, this is the most reckless and irresponsible thing Wisconsin could do with its massive surplus, especially when we consider that the nearly 80% of students participating in the statewide voucher program never attended a public school.

The three top concerns of the public at all four of the budget hearings (preK-12 public schools, higher ed, and childcare) were all put on the chopping block to reach this "compromise" and nearly \$2 BILLION of Gov. Evers' original budget proposal for public schools was exchanged for this massive, unconscionable, unconstitutional

voucher expansion. The state is already not meeting its obligation to its children, and this budget demonstrates a refusal to use the biggest surplus we've ever seen to make a meaningful start toward doing so. It's time to hold Wisconsin accountable for doing better.

All we can do at this point: **CALL ON LAWMAKERS TO FIX THIS BUDGET SO THAT PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS' NEEDS ARE MET BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE, AND CALL ON GOV. EVERS TO VETO THE ENTIRE BUDGET BILL IF IT DOESN'T.**

And let them know: we are watching *every single vote that betrays Wisconsin students.*

Find your lawmakers [here](#) or call 800-362-9472 for the Wisconsin legislature hotline. Contact Gov. Evers at [\(608\) 266-1212](tel:6082661212) or online [here](#).