

# Assembly Dems propose \$1.3 billion for K-12

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Assembly Dems are pushing a proposal to increase general school aid by \$445.9 million and raise the special education reimbursement to 60% as Gov. Tony Evers and GOP leaders have so far failed to agree on a property tax relief deal.

The total cost of the bill, which began circulating Saturday, is estimated at \$1.3 billion, according to a cosponsorship memo. Assembly Minority Leader Greta Neubauer, D-Racine, is a cosponsor of the bill, which is being led by Reps. Christian Phelps, D-Eau Claire, and Angelina Cruz, D-Racine.

Phelps in a statement said the proposal would ensure the state covers public school services while reducing property taxes, saying that “when the state pays its fair share, property taxes stay down.”

“We know this proposal will have bipartisan support in our neighborhoods. What remains to be seen is whether it will have bipartisan support inside the Capitol,” Phelps said. “I hope Legislative Republicans and Governor Evers are ready to listen to public education professionals, parents, and local taxpayers, and pass our bill.”

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The \$445.9 million boost would take effect in the 2026-27 school year under the proposal. The special ed reimbursement increase would include \$432 million in the 2025-26 school year and \$421 million in the 2026-27 school year, according to Phelps’ office.

Funding put into the state budget was designed to provide a reimbursement rate of 42% in 2025-26 and 45% in 2026-27. But DPI notified districts that the interim proration rate for 2025-26 is 35% after costs in 2024-25 increased by 9% rather than the expected 4%. Before the increase in the budget, the rate was 32.1%.

The bill would also prohibit increases in special education reimbursement from being included when calculating the annual per-pupil aid adjustment for independent charter schools and schools participating in the private school voucher program starting in the 2026-27 school year.

Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu, R-Oostburg, and Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, last month [proposed](#) a more than \$2.3 billion property tax package. It would pair a tax rebate Senate Republicans had sought with additional state funding for special education and money to boost a property tax credit.

The proposal did not include a general school increase, which Evers has said must be a component of any property tax deal. He dismissed the tax rebate proposal as “a joke” and likened it to “buying votes.”

Vos and LeMahieu did not immediately return requests for comment on the Assembly Dem proposal.

Senate Minority Leader Dianne Hesselbein, D-Middleton, said her caucus has called for the state to follow through on funding 42% and 45% of special education costs and to reduce property taxes by adequately funding public schools.

“So far, Republicans have ignored opportunities to do either of those things. We understand conversations between the Governor and Republicans are ongoing about a number of proposals on both those fronts,” Hesselbein said.