

Email shows Evers offered GOP leaders \$1.3 billion package pairing school aid with tax cuts

Posted on Tuesday, Feb 10, 2026

Gov. Tony Evers wants to put more money into schools in exchange for boosting a property tax credit and backing a GOP call to exempt cash tips as part of a \$1.3 billion offer he sent Republican leaders, according to an email shared with WisPolitics.

The office of Devin LeMahieu, though, said the GOP Senate majority leader told the governor a repeal of his 400-year veto “is something the Senate Republican caucus would need to see in any deal surrounding property taxes.”

Evers’ office today shared with WisPolitics an email outlining a proposal sent to GOP leaders last week after Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, said negotiations on a bipartisan bill continued. He added an announcement could come later this week.

The email shows Evers’ staff offered to sign one bill that includes the gov’s priorities of \$200 million to increase reimbursements for special education and \$450 million for general school aid, which would drive down how much districts can raise through property taxes to cover their costs.

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

In exchange, his staff offered support for putting \$550 million into the school levy tax credit, which offsets some of what homeowners would otherwise pay in property taxes for schools. The offer also included \$97.3 million toward exempting cash tips.

Evers’ legislative affairs director Zach Madden wrote in the email that an earlier proposal discussed with legislative leaders wouldn’t pass both houses of the

Legislature, prompting Evers to offer what he viewed as a compromise. The email didn't include details of that plan.

Vos had previously said a deal with Evers would hinge on a repeal of the gov's partial veto allowing school districts to increase their per-pupil spending limit by \$325 each year for the next 400 years.

Madden wrote in the email Evers had indicated he would be willing to discuss changes to the veto if GOP leaders would increase school funding, including for special education reimbursement. He also wanted to make special education aid a sum sufficient appropriation, but Madden wrote, "we understand from our conversation that neither of the two leaders would like to have discussions about the 400-year veto."

In a statement to WisPolitics, Vos rejected that description of the discussion.

"The governor offered removing the 400-year veto in exchange for making it permanent in statute," Vos said. "We are not interested in exchanging a 400-year property tax increase for a permanent one."

Vos at a pre-session news conference today softened his past position on the gov's veto from the 2023-25 budget being part of a deal.

"Certainly we want to see if we can have reforms in there, but the most important thing for us is to get relief. Some of the politics might have to wait until the election cycle," Vos said today.

The speaker said his caucus has been discussing the issue for weeks and had initially planned to announce a proposal last week. But they have instead been negotiating with Evers on a bipartisan deal that Vos hoped could make it through both the Assembly and Senate.

The speaker didn't offer details on what the package could look like other than saying the goal would be to return a "sizable chunk" of the state's projected \$2.5 billion budget surplus to Wisconsinites to help address rising property taxes.

The governor's office provided WisPolitics details of his compromise offer to GOP legislative leaders after Vos' availability.

According to the email, GOP leaders had rejected Evers' call to make reimbursing

special education expenses sum sufficient.

The state budget included a nearly \$505 million increase in special education through a sum certain appropriation. That means that the amount of money for special education aid is capped and districts will receive a prorated amount to reimburse their costs from that pot of money.

When the budget was signed, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau projected the boost in state money would result in a reimbursement rate of 42% in 2025-26 and 45% in 2026-27. But DPI notified districts in November that the interim proration rate for 2025-26 is 35% after costs in 2024-25 increased by 9% rather than the expected 4%.

According to Evers' email, the \$200 million he proposed for special education would take the state to a reimbursement rate of 42% in 2025-26 and 45% in 2026-27.

Evers spokesperson Britt Cudaback said the governor was waiting to hear back from GOP leaders on his latest offer.

"The governor's been clear that any bipartisan bill on property taxes must include investments to ensure our K-12 schools receive the resources they need and were promised in the state budget," she said.

Note: This item was updated with additional content Feb. 11, 2026, at 10:27 a.m.