

# Sen. Keyeski: Introduces bills to attract, hire, and retain teachers

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MADISON - This morning, State Senator Sarah Keyeski (D-Lodi) introduced two bills to address Wisconsin's teacher shortage: LRB-4254, to encourage students to become teachers and LRB-6172, to hire and retain teachers.

LRB-4254 creates a "Grow Your Own" grant program through the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). These grants reimburse for the cost of "Grow Your Own" programs including high school clubs that encourage careers in teaching, payment of costs associated with current staff acquiring education needed for licensure, support for career pathways using dual enrollment, support for partnerships focused on attracting or developing new teachers, or incentives for paraprofessionals to gain licensure. The bill appropriates \$5,000,000 in fiscal year 2025-26 for this purpose.

LRB-6172 requires that school boards pay student teachers at least \$15 per hour and requires DPI to reimburse school boards for paying that wage. Additionally, under the bill, each year on the third Monday in June, DPI must provide aid to school boards in an amount equal to \$15 times the total number of hours student teachers student taught in the school district during the preceding school term.

Senator Sarah Keyeski released the following statement after the introduction of these bills:

"Being a teacher is an honorable, impactful, and rewarding profession. Sadly, however, teachers are also often overworked and underpaid in schools that do not have the resources they need to succeed. These issues contribute to the teacher shortages and teacher turnover rates in schools across the state. Wisconsin should be a place where people want to become and stay teachers.

“Rather than stand idly by, we need to take action to attract and retain teachers. One important step is reducing the barriers to entry into the teaching profession by ensuring those who want to teach have the resources needed to do so. The creation of the ‘Grow Your Own’ program and requirement that student teachers be paid at minimum \$15 an hour are ways we can encourage individuals to pursue this career path and make teaching more financially viable for those who do.”