



## **School Administrators Alliance**

*Representing the Interests of Wisconsin School Children*

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### **Statement from the School Administrators Alliance on Governor Evers’ 2021 Budget Introduction**

MADISON — John Forester, executive director of the School Administrators Alliance, has released the following statement on the state budget Governor Tony Evers introduced last night.

“Over the course of his first two years in office as Wisconsin’s governor, Tony Evers has been fond of discussing one of the self-proclaimed measuring sticks for his administration: ‘What’s good for our kids is good for the state of Wisconsin.’

As Evers kicked off the 2021-23 state budget process, Wisconsin is faced with two challenging realities affecting school children. First, as the Wisconsin Policy Forum has pointed out, our state has fallen below the national average in per-pupil spending and has lagged behind the nation when it comes to K-12 spending increases for more than a decade. Second, the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare long-festering inequities in our school finance system—inequities that disadvantage some of our most vulnerable learners because of their zip codes and their educational needs.

In his second executive budget, Evers attacked both realities and addressed each of the highest-priority educational needs identified by Wisconsin public school leaders. The budget recognizes that one of the greatest sources of inequity in Wisconsin’s school finance system is the egregious under-funding of categorical aids for many of our most vulnerable students.

In proposing significant increases in categorical aid funding for students with disabilities and English language learners, as well as advocating for additional resources for economically disadvantaged children, the governor’s budget will go a long way toward equitably addressing the needs of our children.

We applaud the governor’s continued recognition that all school districts need at least a \$200 per-pupil general revenue increase in each year of the biennium to support quality educational opportunities for the children they serve.

We are also grateful for the governor’s support of a stronger state commitment to student mental health and for addressing the harmful, long-term fiscal effects facing nearly 80 percent of Wisconsin school districts that experienced a one-time, COVID-induced decline in 2020-21 student enrollment.

As we have said in previous years, budgets are about choices. They are about priorities. Clearly, the governor developed his K-12 education initiatives as an ‘investment in recovery’ for our students. In targeting the systemic inequities exposed by the pandemic, he makes his intentions crystal clear: ‘We must support equitable educational opportunities for all children—no matter their zip code or their educational needs.’

Governor Evers, this budget is a major step forward for our children—and for the entire state of Wisconsin.”

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The SAA is an alliance of the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators (AWSA), Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials (WASBO), Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators (WASDA), Wisconsin Association of School Personnel Administrators (WASPA) and Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services (WCASS). It advocates on behalf of school leaders in their efforts to strengthen Wisconsin’s national leadership in education to ensure that the state’s children receive the highest-quality education possible.